



SWINDON VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA

DRAFT CHARACTER APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN



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PART 1 – CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a Conservation Area

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, where its character or appearance is seen to be worth preserving or enhancing. It is given special protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Government policy in relation to Conservation Areas set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15). This legal protection enables the best features of an area to be preserved and new buildings designed sympathetically in-order that they are in keeping with the area.

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.

1.2 The need for an appraisal

PPG15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character and appearance of all Conservation Areas in their districts. The Government has also made the preparation of such appraisals for all conservation areas a Best Value Performance Indicator for local authorities. This assessment should be reviewed every five years.

The appraisals provide an assessment of the character of conservation areas or their parts. This appraisal provides the basis for an accompanying management plan which gives guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area can be achieved. It also provides a sound basis for development control and other decisions made by local authorities (such as the design of highways or open spaces).

Both documents will have a period of public consultation before the management plan is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, and used in conjunction with the Local Plan as a material consideration on determining planning applications.

1.3 Conservation Area boundaries

There is a requirement for existing conservation areas to be re-assessed from time to time. This character appraisal for Swindon Village is not intended to look at reviewing the boundary of the Conservation Area. However, it may be desirable to review the boundary in the future, and notes have been made for such a time.

1.4 Swindon Village Conservation Area

Swindon Village is an outlying parish and district of Cheltenham located to the northwest of the town. It has a population of approximately 1450. Swindon Village Conservation Area was designated by Tewkesbury Borough Council on 11 November 1986 and designation was taken over by Cheltenham Borough Council on 1 April 1991 when the Council’s boundaries were revised.

The conservation area contains 19 Grade II listed buildings and structures, one Grade II* listed building and some local listed buildings/structures.

1.5 Summary of special interest

Swindon Village Conservation Area is special because:

- a The village has a long history dating back to the 10th century and the Church of St. Lawrence contains a Norman tower, dating back to around 1100AD;
- b The area has retained its unique character and appearance through the dominance of historically and architecturally important buildings and their historic settings;
- c The area has a diverse mix of building type and style including grand historic buildings dating from the 17th - 19th centuries;
- d Large areas of open space and mature tree growth contribute significantly to the overall appearance and character of the area.

2 LOCATION AND SETTING

2.1 Location and context

Swindon Village is located to the north west of Cheltenham, approximately 2 miles from the town centre and 9 miles from the historic town of Tewkesbury. The village is set within a low-lying landscape which is predominantly agricultural land. Parts of this land are gradually being encroached upon by the growth of the housing and retail industries.

2.2 General character and plan form

Swindon Village Conservation Area captures the historic heart of rural Swindon Village. It contains historic houses and an historic farm, and also important resources such as the original school, post office and large recreational field.

Historic houses are loosely clustered around the Church of St. Lawrence within large plots surrounded by mature trees in spacious grounds. Housing of the 1960s and onwards has been more densely developed on smaller compact plots, within land to the north and west of the conservation area.

2.3 Wider landscape setting

Swindon Village's physical character has, to a large extent, been determined by the presence of the built environment, for example the raised railway to the east, which has created a physical barrier to development. There is an industrial park to the south of the parish between Tewkesbury Road and the southern boundary of the conservation area, and greenbelt land to the north and west which has sustained the village's physical, predominantly rural setting.

The physical character is also determined by open spaces and gaps between the buildings which provide constant views of Cleeve Hill to the east, Bredon Hill to the north and agricultural land to the west. Views of mature tree groups growing adjacent Wyman's Brook, for example, are evident from the Kingsditch Industrial Estate, and are important in establishing a sense of atmosphere and character.

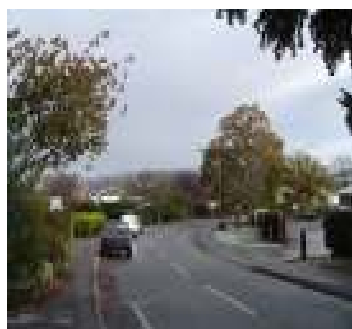


Fig. 1 Cleeve Hill from Church Road

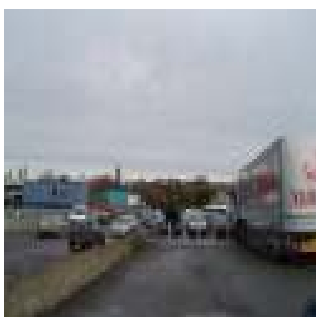


Fig. 2 Agricultural land to west



Fig. 3 View from Kingsditch Industrial Estate where mature tree groups form southern boundary of Conservation Area

Prominent historic 'landmark' buildings such as Swindon Manor and Swindon Hall are visible over tree growth from Manor Road and Wyman's Lane respectively, but are generally eclipsed from public view by their high walls and spacious grounds. Although there is a distinct mixture of building styles within the village, it can be seen that there is generally a common building height between many of the historic buildings which are predominantly two storey, with more modern developments (many of which are bungalows) occupying subservient positions.

3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Archaeology

Roman remains including Roman coins have been excavated within the village but generally very few archaeological remains have been discovered.

3.2 Origins and historical development by 1841

Numerous maps of Swindon Village have been studied and interpreted for depicting the village's historical development. These maps being the 1841 Tithe map, the 1923 Ordnance Survey map and present day maps available online.

Swindon may have been in existence as a small village in 909 when land in the area was granted by Aethelflaed to the Priory of St Oswald in Gloucester on its formation. Swindon was known as a manor owned by the priory at the time of the Conquest. Domesday describes the manor as having less than a square mile under cultivation with some 13 families in residence.

The oldest structure is the tower of St Lawrence's Church, which is one of only two six sided towers in the country. The remainder of the church illustrates some 12th century work but the nave and aisles were largely rebuilt by the Victorians.

The Homestead, located just off Hayden's Lane outside the Conservation Area marks the site of a mill known as Priest's Mill and later Bedlam Mill, with a history traceable from 1200. A second mill and mill pond was located on Wyman's Brook just to the south of the Manor in the 15th century, but was removed in the last century. The older buildings including Maude's Cottage (also known as Church Cottage) and parts of the Swindon Hall and Swindon Manor

date from the 17th century. However, it was the 18th century that impinged most upon the village with Old Swindon House, Queen Anne Cottage and The Old Rectory being constructed in the then new Georgian style, while some older houses such as Swindon Hall were expanded in the same style.

The 18th and 19th centuries also saw the enclosure of almost all the open fields, resulting in major landscape changes with the introduction of both natural and 'man-made' boundaries – walls, fences and hedges. Swindon Hall was further expanded in the mid 19th century and Grange Cottage, Swindon Hall Farm and Swindon Hall Lodge were built in close proximity to serve the estate. The Old Rectory was also expanded in this time. These larger houses together with a number of small houses remained clustered around the church with fields, gardens and orchards surrounding them.

By 1841 roads had been constructed both within the village and as connections to Cheltenham through the construction of Wyman's Lane, Church Road and Quat Goose Lane. The nearby Turnpike Road connected Cheltenham to Coombe Hill. The Birmingham & Gloucester Railway is also sited on the 1841 Tithe map, being constructed through the parish in 1840. In part on an embankment, the railway cuts through the eastern side of the parish and provided employment for the villagers. It encroached on open land thus creating a strong visual impact, and an enduring boundary to most of the village's growth in the east.

3.3 Development by 1945

The 1923 Ordnance Survey map shows the form and layout of the village remained relatively unchanged, with historic buildings in the heart of Swindon continuing to be dominant features. Other buildings constructed by this time included the original school (originally built in 1845) located across the road from the church.

The road layout altered slightly to the north of the village with the erection of a few buildings near to 'Cotteswold' and residential development was evident to the north on the eastern side of the railway. Wyman's Lane also became better established as a road.

The grounds of Swindon Hall had become open with less distinction between meadow and orchard. Ponds and a path through the grounds into Swindon Hall had also been introduced.

Some areas of open space had become enclosed, for instance around Swindon Manor, where the mill pond to the south was filled in during the 1930s. There was also a loss of wooded land to farmland and allotment gardens to the northwest of the village. At this time Swindon Manor was a meeting point for the local hunt but during World War II the Manor, Swindon Hall and the current playing field area were commandeered and used as an army camp and later as a camp for Italian POWs. A shadow aircraft factory was built by Tewkesbury Road which was the first sign of the industrial development to come.

3.4 Development from 1945 to present day

After World War II, the majority of the land south of Wyman's Brook was converted from market gardens and fields to light industry and retail as Cheltenham town expanded. The area continued to be developed on over the last two decades of the 20th century and became present day's Gallagher and Kingsditch retail parks. This has impacted on the visual appearance of the village, nevertheless Wyman's Brook, bounded by trees forms a natural yet distinctive boundary between the retail park and the southern boundary of the Conservation Area. Although this land has been developed, open land to the west, north and east is declared as greenbelt. This has contributed to preserving the physical landscape and setting of the village.

Since 1959, Swindon Village expanded significantly as a dormitory area and a population rise saw a large number of fields being developed for modern housing. This has impacted on the character of the surrounding landscape. However, this housing may be considered to be relatively sympathetic to the existing built environment in terms of use of materials and size of buildings. A large area of open land was retained when much of Swindon Hall's grounds were sold to the Borough of Cheltenham in 1951 and became the present playing fields. These grounds are a well utilised resource for recreation and impact greatly on the visual green environment. They also contribute largely to the character of the village on approach from the east and south.

Despite modern development and encroachment onto open land, the heart of the village has managed to retain its unique qualities with a distinctive mix of historically important buildings predominantly from the 18th-19th centuries. To a large extent, these have determined the modern appearance of the village which has remained relatively unchanged despite the developments of the mid 20th century. These are set within a quiet and tranquil 'village' atmosphere.

Fig. 4 Examples of historical properties within the Swindon Village Conservation Area



Swindon Manor



Laburnum House (site of old post office)

The Homestead with Green Lodge in background



Swindon Hall



3.5 Historical development of Swindon Village Conservation Area

Fig. 5 Historical development of Swindon Village

Historical development of Swindon Village Conservation Area



4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

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

The character of the Conservation Area can most readily be experienced through the quality of its spaces and views. Swindon Village offers a surprising range of such experiences.



The busiest street for through-traffic is Wyman's Lane, from Hyde Lane to Kingsditch. The nature of the railway embankment in the north east gives no views from Hyde Lane into the Conservation Area until passing under the railway bridge. Here the view opens up to the extensive playing field. This is framed by trees and there are views over the hedge and fence all the way to its western edge, where a mature parkland tree-line screens the Hall and scatter of housing beyond from all but glimpses.



Travelling south along Wyman's Lane, there is a contrast between the open aspect over the space to the west and the enclosure opposite of the railway embankment, itself part-screened by modern detached and semi-detached housing. South of Swindon Lane, there is more enclosure to the playing field from the Larkfield, with its high hedges, and denser coppice planting. Views from Swindon Lane into the conservation area are poor quality – being spoiled by a plethora of road signs and the blank utilitarian façade of the rear of the playgroup, which also closes the space and curtails the view.



The playing field itself is a significant feature and dominates the space in this part of the Conservation Area. Moving into the space when the pitches are not in use, is a calming experience – traffic noise from Wyman's Lane, in particular, drops markedly.



There is a progression of views north along Wyman's Lane which are variously stopped by the housing at bends in the road and ultimately by Boleyn Cottages. There are, however, distance views beyond the cottages to Dixton Hill.



Distance views of hills – and occasionally the lack of any such views – have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area and are all the more important because these views regularly change. At various points in the north of the Conservation Area, views are stopped at a considerable distance by the Malverns, Bredon Hill, Dixton Hill, Cleeve Hill and other parts of the Cotswold Scarp. At some points (for example looking across the playing fields towards Hyde Lane, from about its junction with Quat Goose Lane) the scarp, viewed through trees, takes up more of the view to the horizon than does the sky. There are also middle distance views here over the railway embankment to Hunting Butts and housing on Swindon Lane. Distance views of hills are characteristic of this part of the Severn Vale and a common experience for its inhabitants, where they exist they should be retained. In contrast, views to the north and north-west from central parts of the playing field are devoid of these distant stop points, due

to the effect of a slight ridge at about Church Road. Here the view beyond Church Road is only of the sky and gives the area a markedly different feel. Views to the south and south west across the space or within enclosed parts of Church Road have no length and are stopped at close distance by buildings, boundary walls or planting or middle distance by tree screening.



A progression along Church Road to the west has a series of spaces and enclosures which lead to a number of changes in character. This character change is affected by the drop in traffic noise and activity moving away from Wyman's Lane and the railway – although there are localised areas of activity, for instance around the school. In the east, the open aspect of the playing field dominates, with its low hedge line and intermittent tree planting, overlooked from the north by set back housing. Beyond the village hall, the enclosure tightens as a result of higher boundary walls and denser planting and a narrower highway realm. Forward views are also shortened and frequently change, as a result of bends in the road and the presence of high enclosing brick walls. Eventually this enclosure gives way to a sense of space framed by the building group around Queen Anne Cottage. Here the road turns north-west and there is a limited enclosure from buildings and boundary treatments either side, which open up at St Lawrence's Church and give out to extensive forward views in which the church at Elmstone Hardwicke and the Malvern Hills beyond are dominant.



In the south-west the public areas are largely enclosed by high hedges in the lane beyond St Lawrence's, which dips towards the Kingsditch Industrial Estate. Here there are glimpses to the north-west and views to the south west to the estate through trees lining Wyman's Brook. The footpath drops to Wyman's Brook and there remain views through the trees to the industrial buildings beyond. The public space along the Brook is set within enclosure by the trees and high boundaries to Manor Court, giving out to Manor Road with its views over hedges to the Malverns. To the south east the Brook passes through trees, past an orchard and the playing field to Wyman's Lane.





Many buildings may be viewed as being landmark buildings, as their size and positioning enables them to be viewed from some distance away. St. Lawrence's church may be seen as a landmark building which can be viewed from Queen Anne Cottage as the road sweeps around. Its raised elevation creates a sense of grandeur and importance as a village focal point.



Fig. 6 View of St. Lawrence Church from
Queen Anne Cottage



Fig. 7 Church of St. Lawrence

5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

5.1 Use of area and how use creates special interest

In the past, Swindon Village remained predominantly an agricultural settlement, until relatively recently when it has become a dormitory village and suburb of Cheltenham.

In present day, the village is predominantly urban in nature. However, despite threats from industrial, retail and housing developments in recent years, the village has remained largely well conserved and unspoilt. Farming has historically played a key role in the development of the village and the continued working of Manor Farm makes a significant contribution to the rural character. The farm also provides an example of traditional economic activity within the village.



Fig. 8 Manor Farm

Swindon Village also hosts an important recreational resource by way of the historic playing field, which is frequently used by sports teams and villagers. It was gifted to Cheltenham Borough Council to preserve for the benefit of the parish. The field greatly enhances the rural character of the village and creates a positive and striking impact on its appearance, accommodating many mature trees, and provides a setting for Swindon Hall.



Fig. 9 Playing fields with railway bridge in background and Cleeve Hill in the distance

The village contains well established public services such as the primary school, church and village hall which have all played a key role in creating a community and in turn character. The former post office building has been converted into private residence (Laburnum House), similarly the Wyman's Brook post office outside the Conservation Area has been converted back into private residence. The loss of these important services within the village has negatively impacted on available community facilities, forcing residents to travel outside the village.

It does not appear that a public house was ever located in the village centre. The nearest public house being the Cross Hands on the Tewkesbury Road. At one time, however, Old Swindon House was a rest stop for stage coach services.

Outside the northern boundary of the Conservation Area, residential housing development from the 1960's has attracted many people to reside in the village and commute to work in Cheltenham and elsewhere. The village may be seen to appeal to residents through its rural setting and peaceful atmosphere, and practical attraction of being located within close proximity to Cheltenham.

The large industrial area to the south is in complete contrast to the residential characteristics of Swindon Village with regards use, building type, age, size, design and character. This strong contrast emphasises the special qualities and particularly historic interest of the village.

5.2 The influence time has had in the development of the area

The majority of buildings within Swindon Village span a period of four Centuries from the 17th to 20th Century, with most of the historic houses being built between the 18th and 19th Century. Architectural improvements, particularly in the 19th Century, affected all classes of domestic building, which has to a large extent, shaped the character of the modern appearance of the village.

The rural origins of the village are evident in the survival of single storey cottages such as Maude's Cottage (Church Cottage) which is located next to the church, constructed in the 18th Century and Grade II listed. However the presence of larger, more impressive and distinguished buildings such as Swindon Manor and Swindon Hall built in a roughly similar period indicates the relative wealth of parts of the village.

Modern housing of the 1960s and onwards has generally been designed to be smaller in size, scale and architectural design than the older properties, with the majority of modern dwellings being bungalows (e.g. in Manor Court and Smythe Road). The density of this development is sympathetic to the village character, maintaining deep frontages and relatively spacious plots to retain the 'openness' and uncrowded character.

5.2.1 Impact of the Enclosure Act

Enclosing land caused one of the greatest changes in the landscape of rural England. The practice of enclosing land formerly subject to common rights dates from the 12th century, reaching its peak in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Enclosed land was seen to promote agricultural production during the early 19th century when the population was growing rapidly.

The 1841 Tithe map of Swindon Village shows much land was already enclosed into meadow, orchard and agricultural land by this time, and became further enclosed as illustrated by the 1923 map. However, much of the land in Swindon Parish was privately owned, which allowed cottages to be built on larger plots, to permit residents to supplement their income with their own crops and animals. The physical features as well as built environment shaped the size and extent of these plots in certain instances. For example, the

private gardens of Manor House were of a limited size due to the location of the mill pond to the south and the Church of St. Lawrence to the east.

The majority of houses within the Conservation Area were also positioned along Church Road within relatively close proximity to the Church. Outside the Conservation Area, historic houses were also located in Quat Goose Lane (for example no's 25 and 27) and Kingsditch Lane. These houses were surrounded by enclosed orchard and agricultural land.

5.2.2 Impact of improved transport industry

The historic development of the transport industry has had a major impact on the architecture of historic buildings particularly the type of building materials used.

Before the construction of the canal at Coombe Hill, older dwellings in the village such as Maude's Cottage had been constructed using traditional local materials including brick, timber and thatch. The range of materials was limited due to an undeveloped transport industry in the 18th Century. The architectural design of Maude's Cottage is simple and in keeping with its size and scale.

The Church of St. Lawrence, the tower of which dates from the 12th Century, was largely rebuilt in neo-Norman style in the mid 19th Century. The Gothic Revival of the 19th Century influenced both the richly ornamented internal and external appearance of the building. The archway within the stone built porch and exquisite corbels in the form of king's and queens' heads illustrate this decoration.

In 1792 work begun to cut a canal from the Severn at Wainlodes to Coombe Hill. This provided a link with Gloucester Docks so that stone, coal, timber and iron from the Forest of Dean could be brought by barge, then along the 5-mile turnpike road into Cheltenham on wagons. The timber shortage in England in the 18th century also led to a reliance of brick and stone as construction materials. A toll house was erected on the junction of Kingsditch Lane and Tewkesbury Road on the presently vacated Indalex site. Close proximity to Swindon Village allowed materials to be taken into the village with relative ease. The opening of the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad in 1811 caused the canal to fall into gradual decline, and by 1876 it had stopped being used.

During the Victorian period, engineering works such as railways made possible industrial conurbations of ever-increasing size. One of the reactions to this increasing industrialization, and also seen by some, as an increasing secular society, was the emergence of the Gothic Revival movement. The influence of this movement as an architectural style was wide spread, and in 1850 Swindon Hall Lodge was constructed in the Tudor Gothic Revival style.

As transport links developed, buildings could be constructed using a greater range of materials. For example, with the emergence of railways, Welsh slate became an important and widely used alternative roofing material. Welsh slate was used on the shallow pitched roofs of St. Lawrence and The Old Rectory.

The emergence of travel to the Continent brought about architectural influences from abroad which led to a contrast in architectural styles, for example, two single-storey extensions are influenced by Italian architecture with round-headed archways forming an enclosed loggia in Swindon Hall.

5.2.3 Impact of Education Act

The Education Act of 1870 did not influence the construction of Swindon Village school, due to it being built 24 years previous. Wealthy villager and land-owner John Surman Surman gave land and money towards the construction of the original school in the village which was built in 1846. By 1889 the average attendance at the school during that year was 20 children. In the latter half of the 19th Century the Church played an important part in school life and it is likely that this role led to the positioning of the school opposite the church in Church Road.

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

Swindon Village has remained predominantly a rural farming settlement through its history, with very little industrial or commercial activity occurring within the conservation area boundaries, with the exception of Priest's Mill (a grist mill then later a cloth mill).

Manor Farm, a historic working farm, is situated close to the Church in the conservation area. The farm buildings have impacted on the plan form of the village, strongly contributing to the rural setting and special historic interest.

Many other farm cottages have been lost in modern day and therefore it is unknown how these impacted on the plan form at their time of existence, and they do not impact on the plan form of the present day.

The majority of buildings within the conservation area are historic residential properties of a large size set within spacious grounds. The design and architectural detail of these properties is diverse and creates visual as well as historic interest. Many were constructed as residential dwellings and this usage has remained so in present day.

5.4 Architecture and historic qualities of buildings

The majority of historic buildings sited within the conservation area date from the 17th to the 19th centuries. They were predominantly constructed for residential usage, with the exception of the old primary school, the church and the Homestead which originally housed the post office. Generally the buildings are an interesting and diverse mix in terms of their size, age, architectural style and design and use of construction materials.

The majority of the historic buildings within the conservation area are two storey. Most are of a masonry construction, either being with facing brickwork or stucco finish, and sash windows. The roofing materials include slate and clay tile and some roofs have original dormer windows. In addition, there is a timber framed vernacular cottage with thatched roof.

Historical architectural styles within the conservation area include Regency Villa (evident on St. Lawrence and The Old Rectory), Gothic Revival (evident on Swindon Hall Lodge) and Italianate (evident on the extensions at Swindon Hall).

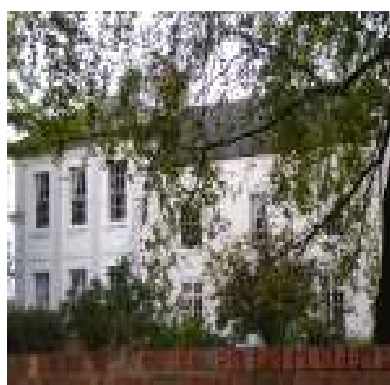


Fig. 10 St. Lawrence and
The Old Rectory



Fig. 11 Swindon Hall Lodge



Fig. 12 Swindon Hall

All of these buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. But it is important to recognise the special architectural qualities of those that are not listed, and how they positively contribute to the overall appearance and identity of the village. Their qualities need to be preserved and enhanced where possible.

The listed buildings are –

BUILDING	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
Church of St Lawrence and six tombs and six headstones	Church II* tombs/headstones II	4.7.1960
Church Cottage (Maude's Cottage)	II	4.7.1960
The Old Rectory	II	25.2.1987
Old Swindon House	II	4.7.1960
St. Lawrence	II	25.2.1987
Swindon Hall Lodge	II	19.11.2002
Swindon Hall	II	25.2.1987
Swindon Manor	II	4.7.1960
Queen Anne Cottage	II	4.7.1960

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

5.5 Local List detail

A local list is currently being prepared for Swindon Village. At present it is still in draft form, and will be used as a Supplementary Planning Document. Sites included within this list, which are located within Swindon Village Conservation Area are the iron kissing gate along a public footpath off Church Road; brick boundary walls along Church Road and a red granite horse trough by the village hall on Church Road.

5.6 Contribution of key unlisted buildings

Key unlisted buildings may encompass qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Grange is seen as a key unlisted building within the conservation area because:

- It is located within a visually prominent position in the centre of the village;
- It was built in the mid 1800's and the coachman's house was later converted to Swindon Hall Farm for use by Swindon Hall;
- Although used for residential purposes now, it was originally built as stables, coach house and kitchen gardens for Swindon Farm;
- It is of a considerable size and has retained some of its original features and has historic interest.

Fig. 13 The Grange



Larkfield is seen as a key unlisted building within the conservation area because:

- It was built in the 1800's by John Surman Surman as a second lodge to Swindon Hall;
- It's physical location terminates a long vista on approach to the village from Wyman's Lane;
- It is unique in that it is the only residential building along the eastern boundary of the conservation area within the grounds of the playing field.
- Larkfield was built in a Swiss cottage style of architecture, some features of which have been retained. It is believed to have been designed by John Middleton, a prominent Cheltenham architect.



Fig. 14 Larkfield

Manor Farm and its buildings is seen as a group of key unlisted buildings within the conservation area because:

- The farm provides an important resource and contributes greatly to the historical economic background of the village and its rural setting;
- Although some buildings are not well maintained, it is important that they are preserved to maintain their unique character and appearance.



Fig. 15 Farm buildings



Fig. 16 Farmhouse

The original school house is seen as a key unlisted building within the conservation area because:

- It was built in 1846 by John Surman Surman, rebuilt in 1908 and was used as a school for 126 years before being converted to residential use;
- It has retained many of its original architectural features which have been well preserved, including the low wall and railings.



Fig. 17 Original school house

Little Manor is seen as a key unlisted building within the conservation area because:

- It is believed to have been a stables and coach house in the 19th century which enhances the historic identity of the village;
- Heavily restored and converted to a dwelling in the last century, it occupies a visually striking position seen from Church Road. Its walls and attractive wrought iron gateway also enhances its setting.



Fig. 18 Little Manor

5.7 Local details

Swindon Village conservation area contains a variety of interesting historic local features which strongly contribute to the character of the village and its local distinctiveness.



Fig. 19 Church tower

The tower within the Church of St. Lawrence comprises its main feature of interest. It is hexagonal, and there is only one other six-sided tower in the country located at Ozleworth near Dursely in Gloucestershire. None of the sides of St Lawrence's tower are the same making it unique.



Fig. 20 War memorial

The World War I and World War II memorial, erected in 1948, is an important focal point within the churchyard, and is clearly visible from the road. It is an important historical memorial which demonstrates the role Swindon Village and its residents played in the war (Swindon Manor and Swindon Hall for example were used by the army as billets and an Italian prisoner of war camp).



Fig. 21 Kissing gate

An iron kissing gate is located along a footpath within the village and dates back to the early 20th Century. It is an agricultural relic and a reminder of the village's rural past.



Fig. 22 Pedestrian and double carriage gates at Swindon Hall

Ornate pedestrian gates and double carriage gates to the entrance of Swindon Hall, adjacent Swindon Hall Lodge, are Grade II listed.



Fig. 23 Pedestrian gates at Churchyard

Elaborate pedestrian gates also front the Churchyard and create an attractive setting. A lantern hangs above the gates which adds to their character and provides a welcoming atmosphere upon entering the Churchyard.



Fig. 24 Bench mark

An interesting local feature is the old bench mark etched into the wall outside Swindon Hall Lodge.



Fig. 25 Commemorative horse trough

A commemorative red granite horse trough located on the green by the village hall dates back to 1909. (It was originally located by the Cross Hands Public House on Tewkesbury Road). It has an inscription recording the donation of the trough to the village by the daughters of a former MP for Cheltenham and a former resident of Swindon Hall. It is seen as a memorial of local historical significance.

5.8 Materials

Building material

The use of building materials reflects the availability of materials at the time of the construction of historic buildings.

Earlier buildings such as Maude's Cottage are timber framed with painted white brickwork, and these materials would have been available locally at the time of construction in the early 18th century. Some of the larger and grander buildings have rendered red brick and some are rendered with stucco. Colours used in paintwork include creams and neutral pastel shades which are innocuous and blend in well with the village surroundings.

Red brick is the prevalent material for chimney construction in all periods of buildings and for boundary walls.

Roofing material

Maude's Cottage has a thatched roof which contributes to its vernacular style. Welsh slate tiles are prevalent on some of the larger buildings. Cotswold stone slate is another prevalent roofing material, and red clay tiles are used on the roof of Queen Anne Cottage.

Door material

Some of the older doors in properties are studded which enhances their character. In the larger properties, many are panelled and part glazed.

Ground surface material

The public highway is surfaced in tarmac with concrete kerb stones at the edge of the footway. Private drives are a mixture of brick, gravel and tarmac. The use of brick and gravel is more in keeping with, and sympathetic to, the character and visual appearance of the area.

Street furniture

Street signage is of a well-established traditional design, for example, the limited use of colours on sign posts and speed limit signs create a smart appearance and uniformity. There is a lack of intrusion of large, modern, inappropriate signage which would greatly detract from the village's visual appeal.



Fig. 26 Street signage within the Conservation Area

5.9 Contribution of trees and green spaces

The green environment makes a hugely significant contribution to the quality of Swindon Village. The dominance of large tree groups and open spaces has to a large degree shaped the rural character and appearance of the area.

The visual impact of the public playing field with mature trees sited within its grounds provides an important recreational resource which needs to be maintained. Its southern and eastern edges feature heavy tree growth, particularly evident to the south alongside Wyman's Brook. The playing field also offers an attractive setting when entering the village from the south and east.



Fig. 27 Mature tree growth alongside Wyman's Brook



Fig. 28 Mature tree growth along eastern edges of playing field



Fig. 29 Mature tree growth outside Swindon Hall. Some of these trees have Tree Preservation Orders

The grassed triangular plot of land in front of Queen Anne Cottage and Old Swindon House, on the curve of Church Road provides an attractive focal point within the village. Created in 1845 and known as 'the green', it is viewed as the heart of the historic village which strongly contributes to its character.



Fig. 30 'The green' in front of Queen Anne Cottage and Old Swindon House

Historic properties including Swindon Hall, The Old Rectory and Swindon Manor are sited within spacious private grounds housing mature trees which create an impression of grandeur. Tree Preservation Orders have been placed on the majority of trees within these grounds. Trees evident within the grounds of The Old Rectory include oaks, limes and yews. The more recent housing outside the northern boundary of the conservation area has good sized back gardens which are important undeveloped spaces and establish a sense of openness.

The existence and positioning of mature tree groups is highly significant in forming the shape of the conservation area and contributing to its predominantly rural appearance and village character. Heavy and mature tree growth is evident along the southern boundary of the conservation area adjacent Wyman's Brook. Trees include oaks, hornbeams and willows. This group of trees form a distinctive natural boundary between the village and the Kingsditch Retail Park to the south of Wyman's Brook, and are very important in creating a setting for the conservation area. From the retail park, the village is completely concealed from view by the towering trees which creates an exclusive atmosphere.



Fig. 31 Trees form a distinctive natural boundary between the village and the Kingsditch Retail Park

Along the eastern edge of the playing fields, groups of sycamore, lime and fir trees are also prevalent, particularly to the south east. They allow only glimpses across the playing fields on approach to the village which creates intrigue. They also help separate the playing field from the road of Wyman's Lane by forming a natural boundary.

Other significant tree groups include mature trees evident within the grounds of Swindon Hall which help conceal the building from public spaces thus creating privacy. Tree groups include mature yews, cedars and redwoods. Trees surrounding the pond outside Lakeside Cottage provide it with protection and create an attractive and natural habitat for wildlife. Trees located on the old mill site in Manor Road include oaks and willows, the majority of which have Tree Preservation Orders placed on them.



Fig. 32 Pond surrounded by trees creates an attractive setting



Fig. 33 Trees on the old mill site

There is a presence of long expanses of hedgerow around the playing field, evident along Wyman's Lane and Church Road near to the village hall. The hedgerow provides segregation between the field and road. This soft natural boundary enhances the green environment, and contributes to an attractive setting when entering the village from the south and east.

Hedgerow is also prevalent along the front of the churchyard, separating it from Church Road and concealing the churchyard. The hedgerow covers railings which replaced fencing. Hedgerow is also used as a natural boundary in the front gardens of many houses including Laburnum House, Green Lodge and the Old School House. This softens edges within the village between public and private spaces.



Fig. 34
Hedgerow outside Churchyard

5.10 Negative factors

Much of the Conservation Area remains largely unspoiled in present day. However, there are some negative factors that detract from the character and appearance of the village. These include -

- 1). In present day, there has been a loss of traditional architectural features within some of the older buildings, which has adversely affected the buildings' overall qualities of character and appearance.
- 2). The presence of replacement windows on some properties in uPVC, and velux roof lights erodes local building detail.
- 3). 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 qualities.
- 4). A few poorly maintained structures, such as barns at the farm, harm the physical appearance of the site and village generally.
- 5). A high level of utilitarian street signage is present on the junction of Swindon Lane and Wyman's Lane. This causes street clutter and is visually unattractive.

5.11 Neutral areas

Areas within Swindon Village which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, but have potential for enhancement include:

- 1). Buildings and structures within Manor Farm which are important in maintaining the village's rural setting, but are in need of maintenance. Maintenance of these buildings would enhance the overall appearance of Manor Farm.
- 2). The village hall and car park could be enhanced to help them sit more comfortably in their surroundings within the playing field. This enhancement could be achieved through the addition of hanging baskets or potted plants to the hall in-order for it to compliment its setting. This addition would also soften the hall's appearance and create uniformity with the floral bedding in the horse trough memorial outside the hall.
- 3). The building which houses the playgroup and toddler group and accompanying car park located to the eastern side of the playing fields could be enhanced to enable it to be positioned more comfortably within its green surroundings. Similar to the village hall, this could be achieved by the planting of shrubbery or placement of hanging baskets to soften the external appearance of the building.
- 4). The development of houses adjacent the pond on the western edge of the playing field is very different in character and appearance to the other houses within the conservation area. However they have uniform characteristics and their size and scale does not detract from the historic buildings within the village.

5.12 General condition of area

The condition of the built environment and physical environment of the Conservation Area as a whole is good.

Historic buildings have been generally well maintained with credit to their owners and occupiers, and remain in a generally satisfactory condition. Some farm structures are in need of better maintenance and restoration in order to secure their safety and condition.

Few social problems such as vandalism and littering are apparent in the village. An investment in public services is apparent through the existence of the well-maintained playground within the playing field and numerous litter bins, and natural and manmade seating in the playing field and outside the old village school house.

5.13 Problems, pressures and capacity for change

In present day, the Swindon Village conservation area has remained relatively well preserved with a moderate amount of recent development. This preservation has enabled the village to retain its special qualities, characteristics and tranquil village atmosphere.

Modern alterations to some buildings in the form of replacement uPVC windows and doors, satellite dishes and aerials, have negatively impacted on the character of buildings and on their external appearance to a large degree. The loss of traditional architectural features on some buildings has also altered their appearance. Where possible, owners should be encouraged to retain original features and conserve rather than replace them.

The designation of the Conservation Area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character or appearance of the area. It seeks to ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area.

There are two plots of open land which may come under pressure for development in the future. The first area is the open plot of land adjacent Manor Farm, located behind the churchyard. The second area is the open land surrounding 'Kynance', adjacent the western boundary of the playing field.

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

The special qualities of the Conservation Area have been identified in the Character Appraisal which forms Part 1 of this document. The Management Plan draws on the themes identified in sections 5.10 'Negative factors' and 5.11 'Neutral areas'.

The proposals are written with the awareness that, in managing Cheltenham's Conservation Areas, resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the Conservation Area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

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

Legislative background

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

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

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

2. Article 4 (2) Directions

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

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

Permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation areas for works which include –

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

Article 4 (2) Directions provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations. The effect of a Direction is that certain alterations to unlisted residential properties which formerly did not require planning permission would now need planning permission. This only applies where the change affects those parts of a property fronting a highway or public open space.

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

- changes to windows, doors, chimneys and roofs;
- the painting of previously unpainted walling;
- the construction of external porches;
- the provision and removal of walls, gates and fences;
- the provision of hardstandings on front and side gardens.

It is proposed that within the Swindon Village Conservation Area, these Article 4 (2) directions will apply, following all necessary legal procedures for the Article 4 Directions, to:

- those parts of a building which front a highway or public space.
- unlisted dwelling houses at:

Aberdare
Cornerways
Grange Cottage
Green Lodge
Homestead
Ivanhoe
Jasmine Cottage
Kyance
Laburnum Cottage
Lakeside Cottage
Larkfield
Little Manor
Longleat
Manor Farmhouse
No. 42A Church Road
Old School House
Swindon Rectory
The Coach House
Woodfold

3. Undeveloped Sites

It is essential that any development should preserve or enhance the setting of any adjacent historic buildings and existing landscape features and trees, and the overall special qualities of the conservation area. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the size, scale, urban grain, layout, design, massing, height, plot width, frontage development and use of materials in any such development.

Preservation and enhancement of the conservation area will be achieved by refusing permission for:

- a. the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage the character or appearance of the Conservation Area
- b. the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;

- c. development which would be harmful to the setting or character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
- d. development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the Conservation Area.

The above principles will be applied throughout the conservation area to any sites proposed for development within the Conservation Area.

4. Management Proposals

1). Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings

Some of the older buildings within the Conservation 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.

ACTION SV1: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the conservation area, the Council will

- *Keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over minor works in the Conservation area through an Article 4 direction;*
- *ensure that unauthorised development is subject to enforcement action ;*
- *encourage owners to repair rather than replace original features - current guidance published on living in Conservation Areas informs owners what works they can and cannot do within Conservation Areas;*
- *produce detailed design guidance and information regarding materials and suppliers, to enable owners to have a clear idea of what is/isn't acceptable.*

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

2). 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 Conservation 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 impact, they are probably best positioned away from public view or prominent positions.

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION SV2: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area the Council will

- *Keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over equipment or installations in prominent locations in the Conservation area through an Article 4 direction;*
- *encourage owners to re-position equipment or installations away from public spaces and views, so as not to detract from views within the street scene and the overall character of the conservation area. This will partly be achieved through the implementation of guidance which will advise on the acceptability of renewable energy schemes.*

3). Presence of poorly maintained structures, such as the barns at Manor Farm

The existence of poorly maintained structures at Manor Farm harms the character and physical appearance of the farm and the overall Conservation Area. The buildings are highly important and significant in establishing the rural setting of the village and portraying Swindon Village's history. At present, some barns convey a sense of neglect which is detrimental to this historically valuable site.

ACTION SV3: As the opportunities arise, the Council will use its powers under planning and other legislation to secure enhancement of the buildings and/or setting of Manor Farm, in a manner which protects acknowledged sensitive wildlife and habitat issues either through design of the scheme or mitigation.

4). Street clutter on junction of Swindon Lane and Wyman's Lane

The presence of excessive or redundant street signage, causes street clutter and is visually unattractive. It is a particular problem on the junction of Swindon Lane and Wyman's Lane. The potential for additional signage throughout the conservation area is a cause concern in respect of its impact on the character of the conservation area. PPG 15 Section 5 gives additional transport measure in historic environments.

ACTION SV4: The Council will lobby the Highway Department at Gloucestershire County Council to minimise unnecessary or redundant signage and ensure that any new signage and traffic management schemes preserve and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.

5). Buildings with a neutral impact on the Conservation area

A number of buildings are identified as having a neutral effect on the Conservation Area. These include the village hall and pavilion which are particularly important because of their prominent locations and importance as community buildings. Their architectural design, the inactivity of their facades and the limited landscape treatment fail to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

ACTION SV5: As the opportunities arise, the Council will use its powers under planning and other legislation to secure enhancement of the landscape (including enhancement of wildlife habitats), buildings and setting of buildings and areas within the Conservation Area which have a neutral impact.

6). Drives and loss of front gardens

Historically, many buildings in the conservation area had front gardens with enclosing low railings, hedges or walls. Their gardens would be planted. The trend for parking on front gardens is having a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area in two ways – the loss of boundary treatments and the introduction of inappropriate surface treatments such as tarmac. In addition to their adverse visual impact, some of these surface treatments add to run off and impact on the sustainability of the drainage regime. Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policy BE 23 indicates that additional parking on front gardens will not be permitted. Where it already exists, there may be opportunities to seek its removal or introduce more sympathetic boundary or surface treatment.

ACTION SV6: Where parking on front gardens exists or is permitted, the Council will use its powers under planning and other legislation to secure the use of appropriate, traditional and complimentary boundary and surface treatments and encourage the retention or reinstatement of front gardens.

7). Tree management

The presence of trees makes an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. They need to continue to be well protected and managed in the future.

ACTION SV7: The Council will continue to maintain and protect trees by implementing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) where appropriate and replanting species once they have reached the end of their life. This will include trees both within and outside the Conservation Area, where they contribute to the setting of the area or views identified in the appraisal. Owners will be encouraged to do likewise for privately owned trees. This will maintain the overall character and appearance of the area and avoid the occurrence of gap sites.

8). Boundary enclosures

At present, some poorly maintained boundary treatments harm the character and appearance of buildings and the overall street scene. See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan BE 16 and CP3.

ACTION SV8: The Council will use its powers under planning and other legislation to secure the repair of poorly maintained boundary treatments and the reinstatement of traditional and historic boundary treatments to enhance the historic character of the village.

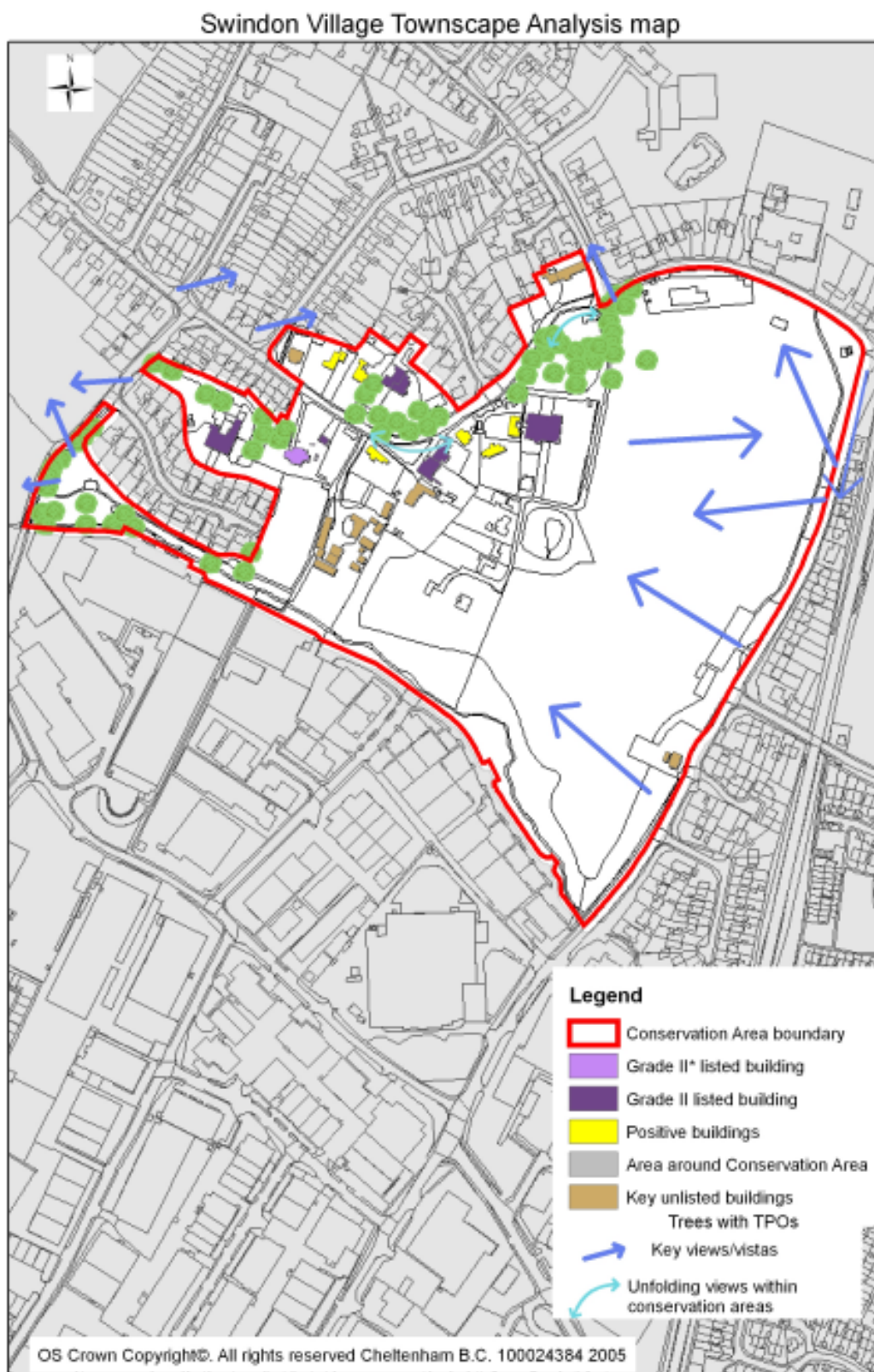
9). Setting and views

The setting of the Conservation Area is very important and proposals for development which impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and long distance views, into and from the Conservation Area, will be refused. The important views are identified on the Townscape analysis map in the character appraisal. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.

ACTION SV9: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Conservation Area, as identified in the appraisal. The Council will ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

5. Townscape Analysis map

Fig. 37 Townscape Analysis map



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