

**Assets of Community Value
Assessment Process Summary**

Name of nominating organisation	St Pauls Road Area Residents Association SPRA
Name of nominated property:	Hardwick Green
Address of nominated property	St Paul's Road Cheltenham GL50 4BS

Stage 1 assessment – eligibility criteria

All of the criteria must be fulfilled for the nomination to be taken to stage 2 assessment.

Criteria	Evidence Required	Assessment
<p>A. Is the nominating organisation eligible?</p> <p>Nomination must be received by a qualifying community organisation, as set out in government regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parish council, including neighbouring parish council • unincorporated groups (Nominations can be accepted from any unincorporated group with membership of at least 21 local people who appear on the electoral roll within the local authority) • neighbourhood forums • community interest groups with a local connection (charity, community interest company, company limited by guarantee that is non-profit distributing, industrial and provident society that is non-profit distributing) 	<p>In the case of community interest groups, the constitution, memorandum and articles of association or governing document.</p> <p>In the case of an unincorporated group, evidence of the membership of at least 21 people who appear on electoral roll.</p>	<p>The nomination has been submitted by St Paul's Road Area residents' association.</p> <p>St Pauls Road Area Residents Association (SPRA) is an unincorporated group.</p> <p>It has included a list of 21 names who appear on electoral roll.</p> <p>The aims of SPRA are: - to promote and protect the quality of life and amenities of the residents in the area defined - to understand and represent the interests of residents of SPRA with local authorities and other organisations</p> <p>The nominator has provided a short summary about the work of SPRA</p> <p>“St Paul's Road Area residents' association, or SPRA for short, was formed in 2007 to capture and address the common concerns of the community of the St. Paul's area in Cheltenham. Our objective is to help improve the quality of life in the area, and to represent the residents by maintaining effective communication with the many authorities and organisations influencing life in the area. We also organise and raise funds for events and activities</p>

		to bring the community together, from litter picks to parades and street parties.”
<p>B. Can the nominating organisation demonstrate a local connection to the asset?</p> <p>The organisation must demonstrate that its activities are concerned with the local authority area where the asset is located or with a neighbouring authority.</p>	<p>Any evidence demonstrating local connection for example: website, publications, reports, maps.</p>	<p>SPRA has a specific focus in a particular part of St. Pauls, that whilst does not include Hardwick Green, the panel concluded that SPRA have demonstrated that its activities are concerned with the local authority area where the asset is located.</p> <p>From the SPRA constitution:</p> <p>Name of the association The name of the Association is St Paul’s Road Area Resident’s Association (hereinafter referred to as SPRA).</p> <p>2. Area of SPRA The area boundaries of SPRA are: - Wellesley Rd and Monson Avenue to the East - Marle Hill Rd, Larput Place, connected by Hanover Street, to the North - Victoria Street to the West This includes all streets between these limits which run south to Swindon Road/St Margaret’s Rd</p> <p>The assessment panel noted that the boundaries of SPRA do not specifically include Hardwick Green, but that the land is c.320m away from its western boundary at Victoria Street.</p> <p>The Hardwick Green site is within the boundary of St. Pauls ward.</p>
<p>C. Does the nomination include the information requested on the nomination form?</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the land and proposed boundaries • details of any information the nominating organisation has regarding ownership, occupancy, freeholders and leaseholders 	<p>Nomination form to be checked for this information.</p>	<p>Yes, the site is owned by the University of Gloucestershire.</p> <p>The assessment team are aware of an ongoing planning application to construct housing on the site. The University were asked to confirm whether there was any contractual relationship in place with the developer. The University confirmed the following. <i>The sale of Hardwick Campus has been agreed to a local developer, Hardwick Cheltenham No 1 Ltd (the “Developer”).</i></p>

		The University has subsequently confirmed on 3.7.25 that the site had been sold to the developer.
<p>D. If the asset is outside one of the categories of exempt assets, as set out in schedule 1 of the regulations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A residence and land associated with a residence, except where an otherwise eligible asset contains residential quarters. • Licensed caravan sites. • Operational land of statutory undertakers as defined in section 263 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. 	Evidence will be checked against known information and planning history.	No

Stage 2 assessment – determining community value

All of the criteria must be fulfilled for the nomination to be successful.

Criteria	Evidence Required	Assessment
<p>E. Is there evidence of the use being described in the nomination, and that this is the main and non-ancillary use of the land or premises, or this has been its use within the last 5 years?</p>	<p>Any evidence of usage history including number of individuals or groups, publicity, calendar of events, bookings schedule etc.</p>	<p>Yes, the nominator states that the green space has been used by the local community for many years.</p> <p>“We have recollections from a former resident of Marsh Lane who recalled playing on the Green as a child between 1969 and 1979 (approx.)”</p> <p>“During the lockdowns of 2020 Hardwick Green really showed its value as a community asset, being used by residents from the neighbouring area for their daily allocated exercise and socially distanced catching up with neighbours and friends.”</p> <p>Evidence from photographs demonstrate community usage over the past 9 years including a Big Local community event held in April 2016.</p> <p>Following feedback from the University claiming that the community use of the site is ancillary and not the primary use of the site, the nominator supplied additional information.</p> <p><i>“Hardwick Green is physically separated from the rest of Hardwick campus by 2.1 m palisade fencing. This palisade fencing (or similar) also acts as the boundary for the rest of the campus. Hardwick Green itself has 1m high metal hoop top fencing on the sides facing the public highway on Swindon Road and Marsh Lane. Both boundaries were installed following a planning application in 2011 (ref. 11/00534/FUL). New gates were installed to Hardwick Green at the same time.</i></p> <p><i>There is no direct access from the rest of the campus to Hardwick Green for students and staff other than a vehicle access gate for maintenance which is kept locked when not in use, and a pedestrian gate near the Severn halls of residence which is kept locked and never used.</i></p> <p><i>There are many students living in shared houses in the surrounding area and they, like their neighbours, use the Green for informal recreation. The absence of any direct access to Hardwick Green from the rest of the Hardwick campus, due to the physical barrier created by the palisade fences and locked gates, means that the Green has not been used by staff</i></p>

and students working or living on the campus as much as it might have been otherwise.

To our knowledge, the University use of Hardwick Green has been negligible. There were a few outdoor teaching sessions during the pandemic, and a landscape architecture student session when Hardwick Green was the subject matter. Despite Hardwick being the centre for sports education for the university (including its predecessor institutions) for decades, Hardwick Green was not used for formal sporting activities. These were hosted at The Folley or Rosehill.”

The University responded on 22 May 2025 to state four reasons why the nomination should not be accepted:

- *“The high palisade fencing referred to on p.3 of the April Nomination was installed by UoG for the protection and safeguarding of students, staff and property rather than to prevent any of its primary users from accessing the Nominated Area.*
- *The vehicle and pedestrian gates next to Maidenhorn, as referred to on p.4 of the April Nomination, have been kept locked by UoG primarily to stop the campus being used as a cut-through and not, as the Nominator has asserted, to close off direct access or restrict use of the Nominated Area by its staff and students.*
- *UoG confirms that its staff and students actively use the Nominated Area as outlined in its Objection Statement. Access for staff and students is through the same entrances as the community. As noted by the Nominator, there are numerous UoG students living in the vicinity who enjoy convenient access to the Nominated Area from those same entrances*
- *UoG is a university with numerous campuses across Cheltenham and Gloucester including the nearby Francis Close Hall; the staff and students of UoG who use the Nominated Area are not exclusively those that use the buildings located on Hardwick Campus. The placement of the entrances at the exterior of the site demonstrate the fact that it can be used and accessed by all members of UoG, including those that live in the surrounding area but who may not use the Hardwick Campus specifically.”*

To support the assessment of the nomination, the assessment team made a site inspection on 5 June 2025. It found:

All gates within the palisade fencing (both pedestrian and vehicular) were locked. There is therefore no direct access between the University campus to Hardwick Green, albeit this could be facilitated via the locked gates.

		<p>Students who wish to use Hardwick Green will do so via the public entrances located on Swindon Road and Marsh Lane.</p> <p>Within the Green, there are signs erected in two locations which identify that the land is owned by the University and it is not defined as public open space.</p> <p>There is clear use of the site being used as a cut-through for the public from the entrance from the corner of the site at Swindon road diagonally to the furthest access on Marsh Lane. This cut-through serves a large residential area, linking communities of Elmfield with Swindon Rod/St Pauls Road. Both students either utilising the Hardwicke and St Pauls Campus and/or living in the local area and the wider local community will benefit from this.</p> <p>It was noted that boundary to Swindon Road and Marsh Lane was formed by a 1m high hoop top railing that gave a visual sense of connection between Hardwick Green and the public highway. This is aided by the three pedestrian gates that do not appear to be ever locked.</p> <p>This contrasted with the high palisade fencing that marks the boundary with the University campus through which mature vegetation has grown. As a result, the campus felt visually cut-off from the Green by the three padlocked gates. The reasoning provided by the University for this locked boundary is understood.</p> <p>On the site visit it was also noted that the litter bin was well used, that handmade signage has been positioned by the local community and that there were families walking through the site.</p> <p>It is therefore appropriate to conclude that the current use of the asset is not deemed ancillary as there appears to be a primary use of Hardwick Green by the local community, this being an informal green space used by both the local community and university staff and students.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, the use of the asset by the local community seems to be independent to the use by the University.</p>
<p>F. Does this use further the social wellbeing and social interests of the local community? In particular:</p>	<p>What evidence is there that the asset furthers social interests including (a) cultural interests; (b) recreational interests; (c) sporting interests.</p>	<p>In terms of social interests, the nominator has supplied the following evidence</p> <p>“There are 3 public pedestrian gates: 2 to Marsh Lane and 1 to Swindon Road in the southernmost corner. These gates are not locked, but dog</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current level of use of the asset and who uses it? • Is it used by particular communities of interest or need? • What do communities gain from their use of the asset and what would be the impact if it were lost? 	<p>What evidence is there that the asset furthers social well-being in terms of promoting social interaction and engagement and generating a sense of involvement with other people and their communities.</p>	<p>walkers and parents of small children like to keep them closed when using the Green for extra security. There are various paths across the site which can be seen in the aerial photo (<i>fig. 1</i>) as well as a clearly visible desire path from north to south connecting two of the pedestrian gates installed in 2012.”</p> <p>The nominator goes on to state: <i>“The land is owned by the University of Gloucestershire, but it has been open for public access for many years now. It is widely used by the community, for informal recreation, e.g. picnics, rounders, frisbee, informal football matches, for dog walking, and as a cut through to avoid the congested Swindon Road. See Fig. 2 for images of community recreation on Hardwick Green over the years. 1st Cheltenham Boys Brigade who meet at Gas Green Youth and Community Centre use the Green for outdoor activities. Fig. 2.3 shows a kart the Boys Brigade made to celebrate their 75th anniversary. Neighbours of the Green regularly litter pick there. The area is described on older maps from the 1970s and ‘80s as playing fields. To our knowledge it has only been used for informal recreation and has not in our collective memory been laid out in pitches. We have recollections from a former resident of Marsh Lane who recalled playing on the Green as a child between 1969 and 1979 (approx.).</i></p> <p><i>As well as these informal uses, Hardwick Green has paid host to community events. These include:</i></p> <p><u><i>Big Local Music in the Marquee 9 April 2016</i></u> <i>A free live music event funded by SPTM Big Local. Many of the musicians had been regular performers at the recently closed St Paul’s Tavern. Fig.3.1 shows the poster for the event, and fig. 3.2 shows attendees braving the cold, wet weather that day.</i></p> <p><u><i>Cheltenham Paint Festival</i></u> <i>held free paint workshops on the Green in September 2017, 2018, and 2019. The 2019 workshops were specifically for children living in St Peters, St Pauls and The Moors. Fig 4 shows the set up for the 2018 workshop on the Green”</i></p> <p>In terms of social wellbeing, the nominator has supplied the following evidence:</p> <p><i>“During the lockdowns of 2020 Hardwick Green really showed its value as a community asset, being used by residents from the neighbouring area for their daily allocated exercise and socially distanced catching up with neighbours and friends.</i></p>
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		<p><i>In community ownership we would seek to ensure that a sufficient area of the Green would be kept aside for community recreational use for such as games of rounders.”</i></p> <p><i>From Spring 2021, in partnership with the University and other community groups, a community growing project, Field Fare, was set up on Hardwick Green, growing food and herbs in temporary planters. https://www.we-create.org.uk/field-fare This created a well-used meeting point on the Green for people to share the produce and help with growing and tending for the plants. Hardwick Green was also the focal point for a number of one off spin-off activities, such as a foraging workshop, which were well attended.</i></p> <p><i>Field Fare demonstrated the potential for a community growing project in the area. It also offered the opportunity to increase the bio-diversity and opportunities for pollinators in what was previously a very non-bio-diverse green space. There was an appetite to continue the project beyond 2021, and funding had been secured for this. Unfortunately, the university which had hitherto been very supportive pulled the plug on the project. One of the legacies of the project is a Community Garden toolkit written by lead gardener, Cynneth Bonanas for anyone wanting to replicate the scheme. https://www.we-create.org.uk/files/ugd/9fbf2f_aa7d83aa0d5d4ca08cb303574df96550.pdf</i></p>
<p>G. Could the asset realistically continue to be used for this, or another qualifying community purpose (or could this be achieved within the next five years)?</p>	<p>Evidence that there has been no significant change to the asset, which might impact on its fitness for purpose for proposed use or any business plans available for the asset.</p> <p>Condition of the asset and likelihood of funds being raised to remedy any defects to ensure it is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Evidence of a suitable organisation in a position to take this on.</p> <p>Market intelligence to support the case for sustainable community use of the asset.</p>	<p>There has been no significant change to the asset</p> <p>The nominator sets out the following: <i>“From conversations with community members, we know there is an appetite for increased community use. Priorities are increasing biodiversity, which could be done through planting, including edible crops and a community orchard. We would seek funding for flood mitigation methods which could also enhance bio diversity. We know from groups such as the Boys Brigade that informal recreational space is also important, so we would undertake to keep an open space which is large enough to cater for this and for air ambulance landings. We would also seek funding to improve accessibility by levelling the access points. Community ownership could also facilitate the use of the land for events and organised activities.</i></p> <p><i>SPRA has over a decade’s experience of partnership managing an Edible Garden community growing space. However we would support neighbours of Hardwick Green to establish a dedicated Friends group to manage and promote Hardwick Green in the longer term, partnering with other groups and organisations.”</i></p>

<p>H. Is there any evidence that the local community feel strongly that the asset should be retained as a community asset?</p>	<p>Any evidence of surveys, petitions, awareness raising, publicity, evidence from parish plans, neighbourhood plan or other local document to support the case.</p>	<p>Link to article on BBC Gloucestershire https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyg8x4g1yeo</p> <p>and Gloucestershire Live https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/cheltenham-news/calls-save-much-loved-green-9529437</p>
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Recommendation:

To be designated an Asset of Community Value (ACV), a building or land must demonstrate that its current or recent primary use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and it is realistic to think this use can continue.

The local authority assesses this by considering the asset's purpose, whether it's currently meeting community needs, and whether it's likely to continue to do so in the future.

Based upon the evidence to date received both from the nomination form together with the site visit, there is clearly a shared primary use of Hardwicke Green, this being an informal green space used by both the local community and University staff and students.

In my view, on the evidence presented to date, I consider that Hardwick Green has met the definition of an Asset of Community Value and is added to Cheltenham Borough Council's list of Assets of Community Value.

Made by:

Tracey Birkinshaw
 Director of Community & Economic Development
 Cheltenham Borough Council
 Date 27 June 2025