

Bath and North East Somerset Council
Development

Draft North Road and Cleveland Walk Character Appraisal Bath Conservation Area

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**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**



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1. Introduction and description of the Character Area

General description and form

This document is a character appraisal for the North Road and Cleveland Walk Character Area of Bath Conservation Area.

The area is divided into two portions linked by Bathwick Hill. The lower section consists of the early 19th century developments adjoining the completed parts of the Bathwick Estate at the foot of Bathwick Hill, Sydney Buildings and Darlington Place and the wedge of land later developed stretching north to meet North Road. The upper section follows the early 19th century expansion up Bathwick Hill until it meets North Road, including the buildings of North Road itself. At its north-east edge, the Character Area includes the open green slopes below Bathampton Down as far east as the land immediately below Sham Castle. For much of its length elsewhere, the irregular boundaries of the Character Area are defined by the property boundaries of the houses forming the Character Area.

The entire area is situated on moderate to steep gradients and most of the residential suburb was established here in order to exploit spectacular southerly and westerly views across either the Bathwick Estate or Smallcombe Wood to Prior Park. It marked the move from urban living in the closely packed terraces of the town to a semi-rural environment after 1830. At its lower tip is the last of the Bathwick Estate developments, Raby Place of 1818-1825, rising up from St Mary the Virgin and behind it Raby Mews. As the ascent of the Bathwick Hill progresses, the terraces of the lower slopes give way to widely spaced villas in designed landscapes. The amphitheatre-shaped land between Bathwick Hill and North Road is filled at the lower level with mid-Victorian and post-War comfortable houses bordered by Cleveland Walk. The Kennet and Avon Canal cuts across and forms the westerly boundary of the Character Area.

North Road and Cleveland Walk Character Area and the World Heritage Site

Core values and significances of Bath:

- Bath is a World Heritage Site, the only entire city in Britain to be so designated
- It is not a museum but a living city
- It has a remarkable degree of visual homogeneity
- Authenticity of the Site is of the essence; its preservation and enhancement are key criteria for all development
- Its complex and delicate hierarchy of interrelated urban spaces, landscape and architecture could be easily disrupted by overbearing or misinformed development and by the accumulation of harm.

Bath was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1987. The designation describes the city as “a masterpiece of human creative genius whose protection must be the concern of all”.

The World Heritage Site designation was awarded for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) with six attributes:

1. Roman archaeology

Many of the City's Roman remains are centred around the Roman Baths. These include the archaeological remains of the Roman temple of the Goddess Sulis Minerva and the extensive bathing complex. The Roman town of Aquae Sulis was a walled settlement. Beyond the city wall are Roman and Iron Age remains including hill forts, field systems and villas, demonstrating the extent of the settlement. The road system and Roman street plan influenced the Medieval and Georgian layout.

2. Hot springs

Bath's hot springs are the only ones in Britain, producing 250,000 gallons of water every day. There are three main springs - the King's Spring, the Hetling Spring and the Cross Bath Spring. They have been central role to every stage of the city's development, creating a unique social history and culture where the waters are central to healing and recreation.

3. 18th century architecture

Neo-classical architectural style dominates in Bath. Architects including John Wood the Elder, John Wood the Younger, Robert Adam, Thomas Baldwin, John Palmer, John Eveleigh and John Pinch followed Palladian principles to build houses, public buildings, bridges and churches. The Georgian arrangements of crescents, squares, the Circus and terraces form iconic, internationally recognisable structures. The widespread use of local limestone and the uniform scale and height of buildings contribute to Bath's beauty today.

4. 18th century town planning

In the 18th century Bath was re-invented as a fashionable health resort, expanding dramatically beyond its city walls. Medieval streets were transformed into a spacious and beautiful classical city, where architecture and the natural landscape complemented each other. Uniformity of design was enhanced with the universal use of honey-coloured Bath limestone. Innovative forms of town planning including squares, crescents and the circus were introduced. Attractive views and vistas were deliberately created. Bath's Georgian town planning influenced subsequent developments in the UK and beyond.

5. Green setting

The City of Bath lies within a hollow of the hills. There are green views in every direction from the city centre. The countryside stretches right to Bath's doorstep. The hilly, green landscape was exploited by Bath's 18th century architects and developers, who created elegant terraces and villas on the slopes. The hills to the south of the city provided the oolitic limestone from which the city was built. Trees and woodlands populate the skyline, and lend natural beauty to the river, canal, parks and gardens. Open agricultural land on the edge of Bath is still used for grazing animals, just as it was by the Georgians.

6. Social setting

Bath's Georgian architecture reflected 18th century social ambitions. The city was a destination for pilgrimage, and for playing out the social aspirations of fashionable spa culture. The social, economic and physical re-birth of the city as an internationally famous spa resort was largely due to three key characters: the architect John Wood the Elder, wealthy postmaster and stone entrepreneur Ralph Allen and

Bath's famous Master of Ceremonies Richard 'Beau' Nash. Visitors flocked to Bath. The list of famous and influential people who visited, lived in or wrote about the city is extensive. Customs and practices associated with 'taking the waters' were practiced and developed here. The fashion for promenading influenced the design of Bath streets and gardens. The rules and etiquette governing polite society were embodied in buildings such as the Assembly Rooms and Pump Rooms.

How does this Character Area contribute to the World Heritage Site?

1. Contribution to Roman archaeology

The lower part of the Character Area has yielded up several Roman burials, suggesting that a route to a river crossing passed through the area. It is also suspected that stone for the Roman civic buildings was quarried at the lower edge of Bathampton Down, adjoining North Road.

2. Contribution to hot springs - none

3. Contribution to 18th century architecture

The most prominent building in this Character Area is St Mary the Virgin, Raby Place, which has been described as "Bath's finest Georgian Gothic Church". The final Georgian development of the Bathwick Estate, Raby Place, begins the ascent of Bathwick Hill, passing a series of terraces and villas, the majority designed or approved by John Pinch the Elder, including Darlington Place. Pinch's contribution to completing the Bathwick Estate after Baldwin's financial difficulties therefore unites this part of the Character Area with the most accomplished examples of late Georgian architecture in the adjoining area.

4. Contribution to 18th century town planning

The ambitious plans for a new town east of the river were fading by the time the lower parts of Bathwick Hill were developed. However, St Mary the Virgin had been seen as a visual stop to the end of Great Annandale Street, planned south of Great Pulteney Street, so it remains a fascinating part of an incomplete story. Raby Place continues the accomplished handling of town houses on steep gradients in a convincing way, reminiscent of Pinch's work ten years earlier in Sydney Place. Above this point, however, the layout follows the winding course of the hill in a less formal manner, and mostly clearly demonstrates the transition from the formal 18th century planning ideals to the 19th century suburban dream.

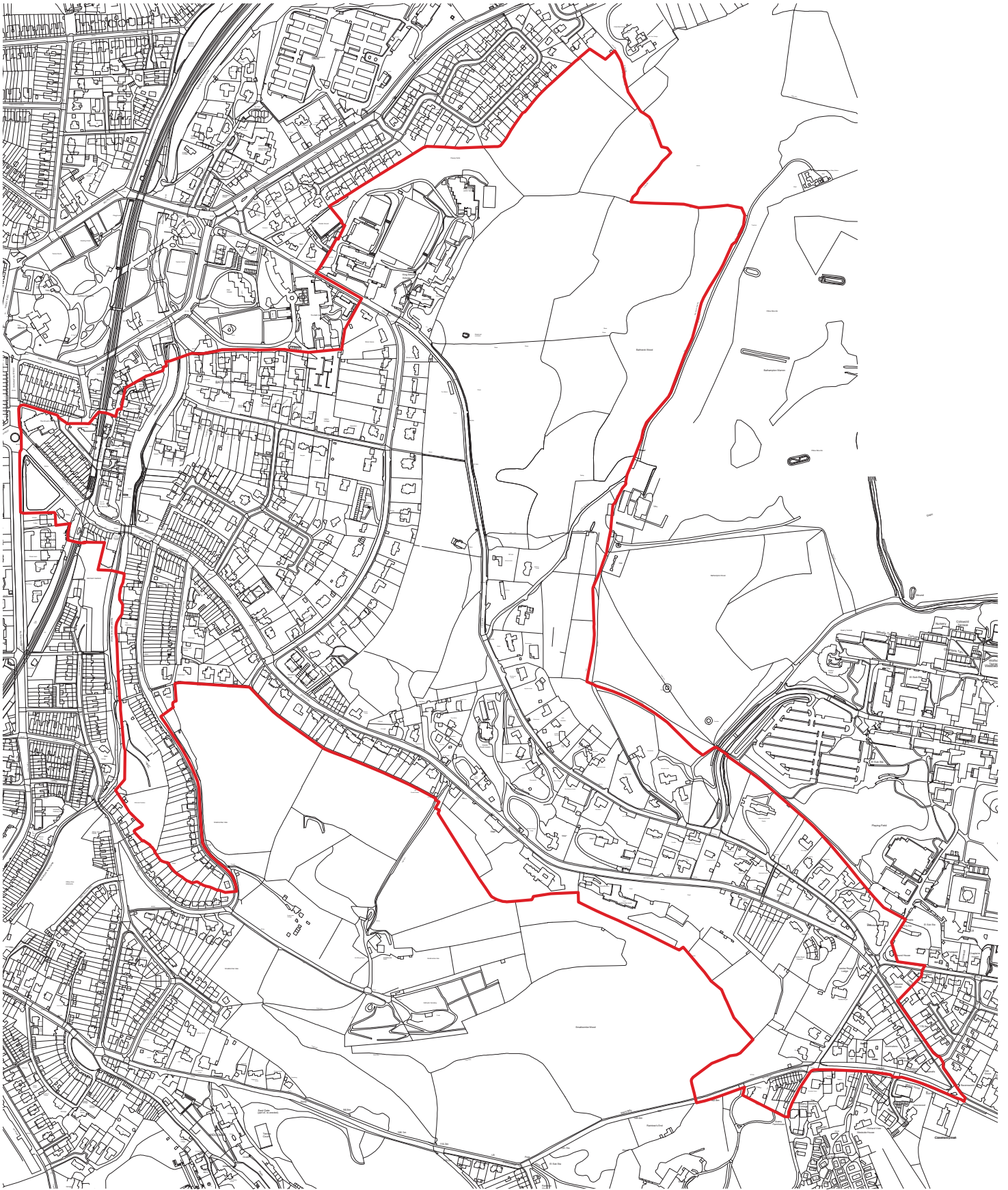
5. Contribution to green setting

Sydney Buildings and Darlington Place were placed to exploit the dramatic view across the meadows to the city and the east front of Bath Abbey in particular, which they continue to enjoy today. Raby Place was built single-sided to benefit from a view over the triangular gardens opposite, whilst the villas climbing Bathwick Hill were contrived to enjoy southerly views over Smallcombe with scarcely another building in sight. These contrasting approaches to the relationship with the natural landscape remain one of the most characteristic features of the gradual ascent of the southern slopes forming the Regency development. The National Trust stewardship of the land at Smallcombe and Bathwick Wood has maintained these aspects by limiting development, while the open green slopes ascending to Bathampton Down offer fine views over the city of

Bath. The eastern slopes between North Road and Bathwick Wood are specially important as the immediate setting for Ralph Allen's Sham Castle (1762) designed to be seen from key points in the city.

6. Contribution to social setting

The gradual expansion east of the river after 1800 is an expression of changing tastes as the Georgian era came to an end. For those with wealth, the increasingly congested terraces of the lower-lying developments, no doubt with a smoke-filled air quality to match, were becoming less attractive. The popularity of "taking the waters" had declined in favour of, first, Cheltenham, then Brighton, so the need to be within a sedan chair's ride of the centre was less a determining factor. Not only did some of the more ambitious villas on Bathwick Hill offer cleaner air and more space for entertaining, but also an opportunity to explore new fashions and, in particular, the love of Italianate design, as can be seen in some of H.E. Goodridge's creations. In addition, it marked the transition from the temporary occupation of terraced houses by visitors to the more permanent occupation of villas in the new suburb. Consequently it represents a significant change in the social make-up of Bath.



North Road and Cleveland Walk Character Area Map



2. Summary of key characteristics

- The lowest parts of the Character Area share the architectural style and density of Bathwick, but become markedly more suburban as the altitude increases.
- The northern portion remained undeveloped until the mid 19th century with only Nethersole House pre-dating the first Italianate houses in Cleveland Walk after 1856. Subsequently a spacious residential development filled the amphitheatre - shaped space to the west, with views of the city.
- The south-west part marks the post-1810 phase of the Bathwick Estate with terraces above the canal offering excellent westerly views to Bath Abbey.
- The first villas lining Bathwick Hill date from 1810, but the majority were built after 1825 and display Greek Revival features in many cases, but reserve the best views for the open south-west aspect.
- The upper parts of Bathwick Hill conceal picturesque villas in densely planted landscapes, many displaying Italianate features.



The Character Area is really made up of two separated neighbourhoods of quite different character and topography. Whilst both lie on sloping sites, density reduces steadily as the hill is climbed, and particularly above the crossing of the canal:

The north tip of the area, beyond North Road, includes the grounds of King Edward's School. This sloping site of 14 acres contains buildings ranging from the 19th century Nethersole House to the modern Wessex Building opened in 2015. Above and eastward are the open slopes below Bathampton Down, fringed at the top by Bathwick Wood.



The centre of the lower part of the Character Area consists of a large residential neighbourhood which forms a segmental shape following the contours between North Road and Bathwick Hill. Its upper rim is made up of Cleveland Walk, containing some large mid-19th century Italianate houses at the centre, and Edwardian detached houses either side and below on a generous scale. As the land funnels west, a network of streets centred on Sham Castle Lane radiates out, containing mainly inter-War and post-War semi-detached houses.

The Kennet and Avon Canal separates off a rectangle of land to the west containing the last formal part of the Bathwick Estate. At its tip is the Church of St Mary the Virgin, followed by Raby Place and a network of mews behind. A landlocked strip of land between the railway and canal has recently been developed for luxury housing and a retirement apartment building adjoining Sydney Wharf fronts the canal.



South of Bathwick Hill, bordered by the canal to the west, is the neighbourhood made up of Sydney Buildings and Darlington Place. Both streets were built between 1810 and the mid-1820s and follow the contours, with Darlington Place containing more spacious houses and enjoying a view over Sydney Buildings to the city centre, through being at a higher level. They connect to the lower part of Bathwick Hill, developed as George Street in 1815 by Pinch the Elder.

The lower portion of the Character Area is completed by the wide lower section of Bathwick Hill, set at a considerable gradient, and containing Pinch's Dunsford Place on the north side, with the 1960s' St Patrick's Court opposite. Pairs of Greek Revival semi-detached

houses follow up the hill before a sequence of large villas takes us to the base of the upper portion of the Character Area.

The upper part of the Character Area consists of two phases of picturesque development along Bathwick Hill and, above it, North Road. The villas set in the steep slopes above Bathwick Hill exploit the south-westerly views to the maximum and often feature self-conscious ensembles of Italianate features such as campaniles. They are set in spacious tiered grounds, usually approached up twisting drives cut into the hillside.

Above them, North Road climbs steadily from King Edward's School to meet Bathwick Hill. This was the site chosen for Combe Royal, a very substantial Bath stone villa of c. 1855 amidst mature deciduous trees. Its Jacobean Revival style perhaps marks the demise of the Tuscan Italianate fashion on this hillside. Behind Combe Royal (south-east) lies the triangle of roads around Copseland. The mid-sized villas here were mostly built c. 1880 – 1940, and form the eastern tip of the Character Area. The grounds of a small number of large Victorian villas set below North Road have been subdivided to support the building of a number of late 20th century detached houses. Edwardian and inter-war detached houses sit in large gardens high above the road.

The area is characterised particularly by wooded plots between Bathwick Hill and North Road, offering a semi-alpine feel, and the unrestricted south-westerly views towards Widcombe Hill, over protected fields owned by the National Trust. The University's rear entrance, Quarry Road, joins North Road near the summit.

3. Historic development

Physical influences: geology, landform and drainage pattern

The Character Area falls into three zones. At the top is the greater Oolitic Limestone forming the Bathampton Down plateau. Below this, the upper slopes consist of the Fuller's Earth series, steeper and often unstable, continuing around the wooded slopes at the edge of Bathampton Down. Finally, the lowest part, at Cleveland Walk and King Edward's School, is of a further band of Oolitic Limestone.

The whole Character Area slopes, often steeply, with a total level change of 110m. The aspect is principally to the west towards the city centre, but southerly views are very rural, principally over land protected by the National Trust.

The only notable watercourse is a spring in the grounds of Oakwood House, contributing with others to become the Smallcombe Brook, eventually discharging into the Kennet and Avon Canal near Abbey View Lock.

Historical influences

The plateau north-east of the Character Area is likely to have supported civilisation from the earliest times, as with Solsbury Hill to the north. 'Pillow mounds' and tumuli litter the landscape of Bathampton Down, many being visible from the 'skyline walk' which passes through the area, and substantial late pre-historic and Roman field systems appear as low banks, notably on the golf course. Whilst these may or may not have impinged on the Character Area, it is very likely the Roman quarries believed to have existed near the present golf club would have used routes similar to the present North Road to bring quarried stone down to Bathwick and Walcot for shaping prior to the construction of major buildings.

These or other routes leading to a river crossing have been indicated by Roman burials discovered by excavations in the area of Sydney Buildings.

A number of undated cultivation terraces known as strip lynchets are located on the hillside about 100 m east of the King Edward's School site; evidence of early agricultural activity probably related to the settlement at Bathwick.

Savile's map of 1608 shows a ferry just north of the present Pulteney Bridge, from which three paths headed east and north-east, the central one leading to Claverton Down. This is likely to have been the earliest route through the Character Area, and appears as a pathway on the 1727 map, and long-preceded the Bathwick Estate developments. As late as 1801, the only building shown on maps east of the river is the first phase of the Bathwick Estate along Great Pulteney Street and the remnants of the mediaeval village of Bathwick, which was soon to be subsumed. Further south, houses are shown lining the quay at Claverton Street near Bath Old Bridge, and both sides of Holloway on its steep climb up the hill to the south, but open fields still lay between Bathwick and the old village of Claverton whose manor had been built in the 1580s and a painting of 1789 shows no sign of any development on the hill above the river.

The 1818 map gives us our first glimpse of the intended Bathwick

Estate development east of the river and by this time St Mary the Virgin (1817-20) was under construction and the road beside it carried up and over the newly completed Kennet and Avon Canal. The first portion of George Street had been completed three years earlier, and several Canal Company buildings are in evidence in Sydney Buildings, together with the southernmost few houses of Darlington Place. However, the future Bathwick Hill then became a narrow lane and is referred to merely as “road to Claverton Down”, with only a sprinkling of the villas (which Pinch had begun in 1810) located along the upper length.

Soon after this, the pace of development began to accelerate, with Pinch the Elder’s elegant Raby Place lining the road between the church and canal bridge in 1825, and his Bathwick Terrace opposite, of the same year, adjoining George’s Place. Above the canal, George Street was completed by Pinch in 1820 up to Darlington Place, and Dunsford Place opposite. Meanwhile, grander houses were being built in Darlington Place after the success of those built in 1812, and Pinch was involved at least in Nos 1-8, which were complete by 1824. Below it houses were being built in Sydney Buildings southwards from the canal buildings above the top lock, roughly south from the present No 21, since the north part was mainly taken up with wharf buildings.

Moving up the hill, Pinch began Sion Place as another stepped terrace, but never completed it. Hereafter, Pinch’s commissions moved to individual villas on defined plots in response to changes in taste, although many will have been merely approved by him, rather than of his design. The desire for a more rural outlook is reflected in the villas climbing Bathwick Hill, where often the garden elevation shows more imagination than the (generally) three-bay plain front to the street. Opposite, Pinch designed two pairs of bow-fronted semi-detached houses of considerable size, which were completed in 1827, sporting Greek Revival Ionic doorcases, underlining further the move away from the urban feel of the lower Bathwick Estate. Nonetheless, Raby Place was not completed until 1841 when the final house, No 18, was built over the new Great Western Railway tunnel which passed under the road.

Development moved steadily up the hill from 1825 with many villas of great character, with some very individual interiors, mainly under Pinch’s supervision, although some had been built as early as 1810. Increasing use of Greek motifs, such as the ‘key pattern’, appears in these houses, and also often inspires the designs of porticos. These were all built on the south side of the road to exploit the long views across the valley, and often presented a rather severe face to the street itself.

As the last of these villas is passed, a quite different form of development characterised the period after about 1830, when the steep upper slopes began to be developed. Here, the taste for the Italianate found a perfect home, and the work of Henry Edmund Goodridge is the most conspicuous expression of the style. Goodridge had designed much in the Greek Revival style, including probably Bathwick Hill House, a large house half-way up the upper slopes, but after a visit to Italy in 1829 he was taken by the Italianate as the perfect expression of the Picturesque. The result is a spectacular series of villas occupying often vertiginous sites high above Bathwick Hill, in some cases approached up winding carriageways cut into the hillside to exaggerate the distance and remoteness of their situation. Perhaps the most interesting example is Bathwick Grange (1829) which Goodridge built for himself, with a colonnade, an octagonal corner tower and a very high campanile. However, his later work, particularly Casa Bianca and La Casetta of 1848-9, and Fiesole of 1846, are more refined and contain more strictly Italianate features. A further Italianate house of a slightly earlier date, Oakwood, by Benjamin Barker and enlarged by Edward Davis from 1833, is to be

found near the summit of the hill, and still contains a rare surviving Italianate garden. Beside it stands a terrace of six houses of 1826 by Goodridge, but being prior to his Italian visit, are in the Greek Revival style. Opposite it stands Woodhill Place, a pair of villas by Goodridge of 1820, indicating an intention to build right to the top of the hill.

As the summit of Bathwick Hill was reached, the quest began for further sites offering dramatic views. North Road first appears on maps in 1814 although it seems likely the alignment may have been adjusted to a more gentle incline some years later. Quarries lay just north of the upper part, as reflected in the name of today's Quarry Road. Near the bottom, Nethersole House had been built in the late 1840s, probably for Capt. Edward Marsh who was living there in 1849. A few years later the gently curving Cleveland Walk was built opposite, following the contours across to join Bathwick Hill. Not listed in 1856, Cleveland Walk, situated some 150 feet above the canal level, would have offered excellent views to the west and the city, and seems to have begun with four houses built near the centre about 1857. The four houses, Byland House, Queenborough Villa, Caerbaddon House and Lorraine House were complete by 1861 with Byland House apparently the first to be occupied by John Roche in March 1857, with the others following and Caerbaddon House used from the start as 'Miss Desbrisay's ladies' boarding school'. The massing and details are Italianate but are unlikely to have been designed by Goodridge, as has been suggested, having more in common with James Wilson's work at Glen Avon in Lansdown. The layout needed to accommodate the narrow path between them running up to Sham Castle on the ridge above, built for Ralph Allen in 1762. The lower portion was later developed as Sham Castle Lane, a residential road running down the hill to the canal. As the 19th century drew to a close, Cleveland Walk began to be developed further with very large detached houses situated mainly on the lower (west) side enjoying far reaching views to Bath Abbey until the land below was laid out for housing in the 1950s.

As Cleveland Walk developed, the space between Bathwick Hill and North Road began to be built upon once again at the end of the 19th Century, with large houses reached from above rather than from Bathwick Hill. Examples include the ungainly 'Ravenscroft', just below the summit of North Road, and several houses near the merging of it with Bathwick Hill. Meanwhile, at the foot of the hill, a mixture of commercial and residential buildings filled the space between the canal and railway above Raby Mews, and a range of buildings in what became Vellore Lane ceased to be connected to the large house (now Bath Spa Hotel) after 1912 and found new uses, mainly residential.

The Edwardian period began with the construction of some large houses on Cleveland Walk and some accessible from North Road, several later to be absorbed into the University. At the same time Copseland, the short road linking the head of Bathwick Hill with Widcombe Hill, was developed with mid-sized villas, some with picturesque Old English details. Infill development on the triangular plot east of Copseland continued until the Second World War. The end of austerity following the financial problems of the 1920s saw renewed enthusiasm for building in the 1930s, but not always in the form of the ubiquitous 'semi'. In 1935, the electrical engineer Anthony Greenhill commissioned the design of a new house on an old quarry site above North Road. Mollie Taylor's design is Bath's only Modern Movement house, built of reinforced concrete and banded Crittall windows turning the corner. Originally known as Kilowatt House, it is now known as Woodside House.

Returning to Cleveland Walk, some building activity had begun in the early 1920s, both on the street and below it, accessible from Sham Castle Lane and Vellore Lane. However, the development of the land either side of Sham Castle Lane began in earnest at the start

of the 1960s when local builder, Beazer, commenced St Ann's Way, connecting Sham Castle Lane to Bathwick Hill, using a generous but conservative design in reconstituted stone. Two culs-de-sac, St Mary's Close and St Catherine's Close, then followed in a similar style with large gardens, the former reaching down to the canal. To the north, Nethersole House had ceased to be a private house and had functioned as St Christopher's Preparatory School until 1959 when it and the land surrounding it, some 14 acres in all, were purchased by King Edward's School. King Edward's School had been founded in 1552 using funds from dissolved abbeys (including Bath Abbey), settling eventually in a new building in Broad Street in 1754, but this had become too small by the late 1950s. All but the junior school moved across to North Road in 1960, using Nethersole House as the main school building, and an expansion period followed in which a new main block was built, and also the Holbeche Centre, Porter Library and Sports Hall. A biology and ICT lab was added in 2008 and a new library, dining and conference suite was opened by the Earl of Wessex in 2015.

The post-war period saw the subdivision of many large houses into apartments. In Cleveland Walk, Lorraine House was divided into two, the other part named Haisboro House, while Caerbadoon House became Brandon House. On Bathwick Hill some of the very large houses were impractical for the lifestyle of the late 20th Century, one example divided into apartments being Claverton Lodge. The former Smallcombe Villa, near the top, was one of the largest and was divided into Oakwood and Bathwick Tower in 1992-3 by Forsyth Architects, having previously served as a Salvation Army nursing home since 1928.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a gradual filling-in of sites throughout the Character Area as the value of land in locations affording space and a good view became recognised more fully. Larger gardens above and below North Road were subdivided for new detached houses, and a new pressure was steadily exerted from 1965 with the foundation of the University. A number of the larger Edwardian houses found new uses as University ancillary facilities, such as the Medical Centre on North Road. The desire for new houses in steeply sloping sites with good views has continued to the present day, with a number of individual houses (and even the 2001 Combe Royal Crescent) built on sites adjoining Bathwick Hill. The western tip of the Character Area has also witnessed further consolidation since 2010 with a new group of houses in the Italianate style built beside the canal, reached from Sydney Mews, and the conversion of remaining mews buildings into residential use.

4. Cultural influences

Leisure

The story of the final part of the Bathwick Estate development up Bathwick Hill is one of the quest for the semi-rural idyll. Prior to its development, excursions from the city to Claverton had been popular, giving a taste of the potential of the hillside landscape. The formal and geometrical Georgian garden layout, typified by, for example, the Circus, had been superseded by a wild and picturesque landscape with distant views beyond. In its most accomplished form, the Italianate villa expresses the mid-19th Century concept of the ideal backdrop for the leisure time of the growing middle classes.

Sporting achievement

Today, the Character Area is dominated at its upper edge by the University with its outstanding sports facilities, many of Olympic training standard. The development of Bathwick Hill embraced the greater desire for fresh air and brisk walks, in contrast to the sedate pace of city life.

Music and the performing arts

Many of the Bathwick Hill houses were built for patrons of the arts. Oakwood and Bathwick Grange were known to have housed galleries for their owners' art collections, and so it is likely many of the occupants will have supported the Theatre Royal in its new home from 1805, and music, at this stage mainly performed in the Pump Rooms, although from 1832 choral performances in Bath Abbey were a regular occurrence.

Industry and transport

The lower part of this Character Area was developed after the completion of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, and the upper part substantially later. The wharfs adjoining Raby Place and the top lock were major transshipment points, and buildings such as the Somerset Coal Company warehouse dominated the canalside view. Sydney Buildings began to develop more as a residential neighbourhood as the canal traffic declined through the railway competition in the late 1840s, and most of the warehouses and the maltings have now been converted into office use. The development up Bathwick Hill also marks the change in accommodating horses and coaches from detached buildings to the first coach houses forming part of houses such as Woodland Place and Bathwick Grange.

5. Archaeology

There are known Archaeological sites in this area including quarries and evidence for Roman settlement, particularly around Sydney Buildings where there are a number of Roman burials, as well as the sites of mediaeval farms, surviving cultivation terraces above North Road, and numerous Georgian buildings. Without doubt significant archaeology remains to be discovered in this area.

6. Landmarks and views

See map, Annex 1.

Landmarks

The linear development of much of the Character Area deliberately avoids a focus on individual buildings so that the townscape unfolds as a progression. However, the positioning of St Mary the Virgin as the equivalent focus of the perspective of the proposed Great Annandale Street, as the Holburne Museum serves to Great Pulteney Street, is worthy of note. Although the scheme was never implemented, its axial position opposite Vane Street and oblique view from Pulteney Road are two of the more memorable moments of passing through the area. Furthermore, the accomplished use of “Georgian gothic” is remarkable in itself.

It was some years before Raby Place was completed, but soon this elegant terrace became a complementary backdrop to St Mary’s and a natural line to lead the eye up to Rennie’s canal bridge. George Street and Dunsford Place start the climb up the hill in a measured and deferential way, but the two pairs of bow-fronted villas on the north side after St Ann’s Way, Nos 36-37 and 39-40 Bathwick Hill, appear as significant landmarks whether ascending or descending the hill.

Half way up the hill, the austere bulk of Claverton Lodge looms up on the south side, and after it the Italianate gable of Oakwood, but the more dramatic villas above cannot be seen easily until the descent, and then only fleetingly. The oblique views, first of Bathwick Grange and then of La Casetta, are well worth the effort, for the drama of the cluster of forms that makes up the composition.



City Centre seen from North Road, just above Cleveland Walk

Views

This Character Area owes its existence as a sought-after residential area to the desire for a view. At the lower levels, the sitting rooms of Raby Place, many with Regency balconies, exploit the south-west view over the city, whilst a more direct westerly view can be obtained from Sydney Buildings and, above it, from Darlington Place. Similarly the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath below Sydney Buildings offers views westward to the city centre from a number of points.

In a similar way, the situation of Cleveland Walk is determined by the westerly aspect, now much higher than from Sydney Buildings, and the newer developments below it enjoy the same view in steadily diminishing degrees with reducing altitude.

However, more than elsewhere, the upper portion of Bathwick Hill, and above it North Road, was built upon primarily to exploit the southerly view across Widcombe Hill and its open fields, still undeveloped today. The first phase, the last part of the Bathwick Estate development up to 1840, provided a formal front to the street but an open aspect across the rear garden to the distant view, with all houses situated south of the road. The more picturesque houses, showing the love for the Italianate, are in the majority of cases situated to the north of the road, cut into steeply sloping sites and creating an immediate Tuscan hill-town landscape in addition to the long southerly view. Crowning the hill at the start of Claverton Down is Combe Royal, now surrounded by tall trees. In the 1850s this must have had the finest of all the views down onto Bathwick and the city.

Views into the Character Area are harder to achieve, owing to the steep incline, but a general prospect of the Bathwick Hill phenomenon can be obtained from the open sections of Widcombe Hill, notably beside Macaulay Buildings. A good panorama of the Cleveland Walk neighbourhood can be had from Sham Castle and the Skyline Walk. A southerly view is harder to obtain, owing to the wide valley floor, but a good general view can be obtained from Grand Parade, elevated a little by climbing the Abbey tower to achieve greater height. From Terrace Walk glimpses can be obtained of Sham Castle nestled in the trees of Bathwick Wood: a deliberately sited eyecatcher designed to be seen from Ralph Allen's town house south of York Street nearby.

7. Land uses and their influence

The western tip of the Character Area developed concurrently with the completion of the canal, and this assisted the construction work, with Pinch the Elder leasing part of the wharf (now occupied by the malthouse) to unload building materials. The industrial character is now only a memory, with all the former canal-side buildings converted to new uses, predominantly as professional offices.

Miles House, a former rectory immediately above the canal, once an NHS mental health facility, is now a nursery. Below the canal bridge, the small parade of shops at George's Place remains in retail use with the former John Tallis garage now converted into a mini-supermarket serving the locality.

Other than these minor exceptions, and the educational use of King Edward's School, the remainder of the Character Area is entirely residential. Indeed, as has been set out above, it is the desire for a non-urban residential setting that had driven the considerable effort expended in building on the steep hillsides.

A spring line on the steep slopes east of North Road towards Bathampton Down was utilised in the late 18th or 19th century to feed a stone-lined underground reservoir below Golf Course Lane and Bathwick Wood.



View down Bathwick Hill to Dunsford Place



8. Buildings, architectural quality and townscape

Building age

The first buildings in the Character Area appear on the 1817 map, by which time St Mary's was under construction, the first part of George Street was finished and the first eight houses of Darlington Place are shown, together with sundry canalside buildings on Sydney Buildings. We know that Pinch had by the time approved several villas higher up Bathwick Hill, and the lower part of the hill, together with the remainder of Darlington Place, were completed between 1812 and 1828. The remaining gaps had been filled by 1939.



The next phase of development relates to the villas set on the hillside above Bathwick Hill, mostly in the Italianate style, and these were built between 1825 and 1849. A number of large detached Victorian villas, reached from North Road above, followed at the end of the century and the first rambling detached houses set above North Road in the early part of the 20th Century.

The land below North Road had seen little activity since the construction of Vellore in 1835 and its enlargement in 1878, but Nethersole House began the development of the hill about 1849, with Cleveland Walk laid out eight years later. The earliest houses were built at the centre of Cleveland Walk between 1857 and 1861, and were followed by further large detached houses over the following half-century.



The twentieth century saw substantial expansion throughout the Character Area, initially with the development of individual plots off Vellore Lane and Sham Castle Lane between the World Wars and the building of further houses above North Road. However, the period since 1960 has seen still further expansion, first with the move of King Edward's School to North Road, and then the building of the large housing development filling the space between Cleveland Walk, Bathwick Hill and Sham Castle Lane. A series of small one-off houses and small terraces continued the expansion up the north side of Bathwick Hill above Cleveland Walk into the 1970s, and pressure from the growing University saw further development near the top of North Road, including some building in the grounds of Combe Royal.

Building form

The Character Area divides into three main zones which generally coincide with the date of development. The lower development within sight of the tributary streets to Great Pulteney Street tends to follow Baldwin's precedent. Consequently, Pinch's work at Raby Place (1818-25), Bathwick Terrace (1825) and George Street (1815 and 1820) follow the height and proportion of the many terraces he had built for Henrietta Pulteney and Harry Vane ten years earlier, such as Sydney Place. Raby Place is unusual in that the attic storey rises directly above the cornice to present a full four storeys plus basement, without dormers.



The Church of St Mary the Virgin is a main "anchor building", like the prow of a ship at the corner of the Character Area, and provides valuable vertical emphasis through the use of a tall tower modelled on the 'Somerset tower' design with polygonal pinnacles and a pierced embattled parapet.



The height and form are retained until Dunsford Place is passed, when Pinch the Elder's large bow-fronted semi-detached pairs of houses are reached, alternating with large three-bay villas, probably by Pinch the Younger, creating the first change in massing and also a break in the skyline. The south side of Bathwick Hill then becomes more varied as numerous variants on the Neo-classical villa are treated as experiments, some with projecting porticos, some without.

The second group of building types is then reached as the mid-point of Bathwick Hill is passed. These are the predominantly picturesque villas set above the road on the north side. A few retain the early 19th Century symmetry of the earlier villas (such as Upland House and, to a lesser extent, Woodhill Place), but most avoid symmetry in the pursuit of the Italianate influence which derives its effect from the seemingly unplanned cluster of wide-eaves roofs, double or triple round-headed windows and simulated campaniles.



Finally, the expansion of the residential suburb below and above North Road, and the developments below Cleveland Walk after 1860, extend to only two storeys in general. Exceptions exist in the form of several Victorian houses below North Road and the earlier large houses in Cleveland Walk, but the use of Bath stone as ashlar and a roof with eaves rather than a parapet is more-or-less universal after this date.

Many of the houses filling the sub-divided sites below North Road, and the majority of the post-war development off St Ann's Way, use reconstituted stone as the facing material with clay pantiles on plain tiled roofs. Whilst casement windows would have been of redwood at the time of construction, a high proportion has now been changed to upvc.



Buildings of merit

All buildings and features cited here are examples only, not a definitive list of all buildings of merit. They are cited to give guidance as to the sort of features significant to the Character Area. Almost every street may have isolated buildings of merit, whether listed or not, and many streets are listed in their entirety.

Anchor buildings



- The Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II*) is the most conspicuous landmark in the Character Area and is a first-rate example of 'Georgian gothic'.
- Raby Place (Grade II*) is a supremely confident example of Pinch the Elder's handling of building on steep sites, unusually expressing the third floor as a full storey rather than an attic with dormers
- Adelaide Place (Grade II) is an assertive pair of Neo-Grecian villas seemingly guarding the entrance to Darlington Place
- The bow-fronted (Grade II) pairs of villas at 36-37 and 39-40 Bathwick Hill, together with their later neighbours, Baysfield House (38) and Lomond House (35) all express the Grecian influence in a confident way and stand in a most conspicuous location on the curve in the hill.
- The group made up of Oakwood (Grade II*) and Woodland Place (grade II) act as an introduction to the early 19th Century delights to come, as the descent of Bathwick Hill begins, and are excellent examples of the larger domestic architecture of the late 1820s.
- The Italianate (Grade II*) group of Bathwick Grange followed by Fiesole, La Casetta and Casa Bianca, whilst only glimpsed on the descent of Bathwick Hill, form an important experience in

setting the scene for the Picturesque movement fascination in the mid-19th Century.

Other listed buildings of historical/townscape significance

- Both Sydney Buildings and Darlington Place represent understated but first-rate examples of domestic architecture of the early 19th Century, either designed by or influenced by Pinch the Elder.
- The facing terraces of George Street and Dunsford Place are important stepped townscape elements in the start of the ascent of Bathwick Hill.
- The numerous villas lining the south side of Bathwick Hill's lower part make a significant contribution to the first impression of the Bath panorama on descending the hill. Individual houses of note include Bathwick Lodge, Cumberland Villa, Devonshire Lodge, Cornwall Lodge, Mendip Lodge, Spa Villa, White Lodge, Heron Lodge and Priory Lodge.
- Combe Royal (c. 1855) forms an unusual interjection of the Jacobean Revival style, taking the prime spot on the crest of Bathwick Hill and in very spacious grounds with a lodge and stable yard behind.
- The centre of Cleveland Walk imparts the sense of a mature neighbourhood, largely through the imposing central four houses: Byland House, Queenborough Villa, Caerbadon House and Lorraine House and their garden frontage to the street.
- The lodges to several of the villas on the north side of Bathwick Hill create a sense of expectation in addition to their own merit.
- At the easternmost point of the Character area, Claverton Down Gospel Hall (Silcock & Reay, 1896-7) forms a minor but unexpectedly high quality religious building. The Arts & Crafts style and superb Art Nouveau angels kneeling on the gable ends raise its status.

Unlisted buildings of merit

- The terrace of small bay-fronted houses to Sydney Wharf, north of The Moorings, contributes a significant degree of harmony to this small street.
- In Copseland and Oakley at the head of Bathwick Hill, several handsome and nicely detailed smaller houses represent the architecture of c. 1880 – 1914, with eclectic and cottagey details.
- Clarence Terrace, at the top of Widcombe Hill near the junction with Copseland, is a well detailed terrace of ten modest houses c. 1890 – 1900. Of pinkish rock-faced masonry. Slight variations of design, e.g. three houses with bay windows, one with a group of three upper windows rather than a pair. Sadly one house has lost its stone garden wall and gate for a tarmac parking space, giving a gap-toothed effect. Remarkably all but one retain the original panelled doors, and all have original timber sashes.

Townscape features of merit

- St Mary's, Raby Place, and the curving road up over John Rennie's canal bridge.
- Raby Mews and the south-east view of St Mary the Virgin Church.
- Northerly view along the Canal framed by The Moorings, with moored hire boats.
- The gentle curving ascent of Bathwick Hill framed by George Street and Dunsford Place, suddenly narrowing at Cleveland Walk.
- The downward view and townscape as the Regency villas give way to the greater enclosure at the foot of Bathwick Hill, still with a panoramic view.

- The fleeting glimpses of the Italianate villas on the north side, high above the descent of Bathwick Hill, and the carriage house beneath Bathwick Grange at road level.

Buildings at risk

The area is generally well cared for and, partly on account of the high property values, there are few buildings in a poor state of repair.

Negative buildings and townscape features

- St Patrick's Court, immediately after Darlington Place, interrupts the well-proportioned Regency progression up Bathwick Hill. This apartment building of 1966 handles the climb up the hill very clumsily and the standard windows are of a proportion which fights the elegant "golden section" of the adjacent windows. Below the canal bridge, the supermarket frontage on the south side uses primary colours, jarring against the more subdued frontages of other shops.

9. Materials and detailing

The universal facing material for all buildings in the area is Bath stone. Usually, the front and side elevations are of finely-jointed ashlar stone whilst the rear elevations are often of loosely coursed rubble. The only exceptions to this rule have been the extensive post-war development of St Ann's Way, St Mary's Close and St Catherine's Close, together with some more recent houses in Sham Castle Lane and North Road. Each of these has used a form of reconstituted stone for economy.

Some of the finest craftsmanship is to be seen on Pinch's St Mary the Virgin. Here the finest mediaeval tracery, buttresses, pinnacles and pierced balustrades have been created in the Georgian era perpendicular-style church most convincingly.

This standard of attention to detail and workmanship is continued in the fine rusticated ground floor, ramped cornices and shallow pilasters of Raby Place, adjacent. Although the scale reduces as Bathwick Hill is ascended, the workmanship and care taken in creating surface decoration and Greek-revival features such as porticos and parapet-level embellishments remains undiminished.

The Italianate villas on the upper slopes require an even higher level of craftsmanship in order to appear convincingly Tuscan. At Bathwick Grange, the campanile and restored octagonal corner tower (based on the Tower of the Winds, Athens) display exceptionally high stonework craftsmanship. Such attention is also to be seen on the relief panels of Goodridge's Woodhill Place, near the top of the hill.

The Georgian houses hid the roof covering behind a parapet and, therefore, made the material invisible, but Welsh slate was the usual choice, laid in two double-pitches with a central valley to span the considerable depth. Where mansards are used, it is common to find clay pantiles on the steeper slope, but slate used for the shallower pitch. With the fascination with the Italianate, the roof profile and silhouette became critical, so the selection of suitable Roman clay tiles to be seen at the eaves of (typically) pyramidal roofs was an important aspect of the design. Ironically, however, only La Casetta and Casa Bianca use Roman tiles as the low pitch (and Somerset rainfall!) of the other houses left Welsh slate as the only feasible material. Indeed, very shallow campanile roofs are often covered in lead sheet.

The sash window remains the more-or-less universal window form through the Character Area, being most at home in the early 19th Century houses which followed the Bathwick Estate development up the hill. Even Goodridge's later Italianate houses used the sash window for the majority, even where the technical challenge of semi-circular headed sashes had to be entertained. Many of these houses have balconies, however, and Goodridge and Davis opted not to use the tall sashes of their predecessors to afford access, instead creating a fine transomed light with French windows of some slenderness. Many of the large Edwardian houses lining Cleveland Walk mix sash windows with stone-mullioned lights to halls and staircases, sometimes with leaded lights, sometimes with metal casements with plate glass. Finally, the standard softwood casement window appears in most of the 1960s' housing developments, in many cases replaced by uPVC substitutes in the 21st Century.

In character with the remainder of the Bathwick Estate, entrance doors offered great scope for imagination. Owing to the scale of many of the larger villas, it became common to offer paired front doors, usually of three panels each, matching the six-panel doors in most respects, with flush lower panels and raised and fielded upper

panels. The six-panel door remains the most popular 19th Century design, and many have excellent fine-traceried semi-circular fan-lights over. Later houses, particularly Edwardian villas, offered partial glazing, usually in the upper panels only, and fully-glazed doors are common after 1960.

Some of the Greek-Revival houses display particularly fine ironwork, usually using Anthemion motifs in remarkably fine sections to balcony railings and the like: a good example can be seen at Lomond House on Bathwick Hill. Stothert's cast-iron bridge over the tail of the top lock (reached between Nos 29 and 30 Sydney Buildings) on the canal is another fine example of the filigree balustrade, here in a more utilitarian setting.

Claverton Down Gospel Hall (Silcock & Reay, 1896-7, now residential) is low and modest, with 17th century style mullioned windows, asymmetrically placed porch and Voyseyesque battered buttresses announcing its Arts and Crafts credentials. Unexpectedly large and nobly detailed Art Nouveau angels kneel perilously on the gable copings. It forms an unusual interlude here in terms of architectural style, yet manages to seem at home with its neighbours.

Boundary treatments in the Character Area generally follow the era of construction. The early 19th Century developments were built with basements which were accessible from external areas fronting the street, so were protected by railings set into a stone kerb. These can be found throughout Raby Place, Bathwick Terrace, George Street and much of Sydney Buildings. The topography and changes in style saw more 'suburban' treatments as the houses climbed the hill, with low garden walls to the pavement supporting half-height railings, in some cases replaced by hedges, with short front gardens separating the houses from the street. Some gate posts, notably to the Italianate houses in Cleveland Walk, are very fine.

Mews buildings generally directly abut the pavement, as they always have done, despite the conversion of many to residential use. Higher up Bathwick Hill, a number of larger houses turn a blank or minimally windowed front to the pavement, since the emphasis is placed on the garden elevation.

A number of the larger houses above Bathwick Hill merited entrance lodges, a sign of status sometimes accompanying extended winding drives cut into the hillside. A good example is that to Bathwick Grange, added after 1848 when Goodridge had left.

The Victorian development below Cleveland Walk used low stone walls with partial height railings above, but in many cases the wall to the pavement is acting as a retaining wall to a higher ground level. As the 19th Century drew to a close, low walls with dense evergreen shrubbery or hedges took over. 20th Century boundary treatments are usually either low walls, usually in rubble stone, with hedges planted to make up the remaining height, or in the most recent cases vertical close-boarded fences.



10. Streets and movement

Density and degree of enclosure

The density of occupation of the Character Area reduces generally with altitude. Closely-spaced terraced houses exist only at the lowest part of Bathwick Hill, giving way to spacious villas after the junction with Cleveland Walk. Hereafter, the density decreases still further as the widely-spaced villas of the upper part of the hill are reached. The post-war development off Sham Castle Lane is also of medium-to-low density, typical of the period.

The scale of Bathwick Hill remains quite urban at Dunsford Place, owing to the height of the buildings, but any sense of enclosure disappears once the row of villas is passed at the mid-point, save for the high retaining wall on the north side of the road. Enclosure is artificially created around the higher villas by the proximity to the rock face and density of picturesque landscape planted there.

Elsewhere, there is a feeling of openness which pervades not only the upper parts of North Road and Bathwick Hill, but also the newer suburb of Cleveland Walk, where more mature planting is the main means of enclosure. The green corridor around the Kennet and Avon Canal offers an area of open space bordering the gardens below Sydney Buildings.

Street pattern

The formality of Baldwin's 'grand plan' for the Bathwick Estate stops abruptly at St Mary's Church, edging forward only as far as the top of Raby Place. Hereafter, the late phase of the Estate development is essentially linear, following the tastes of those who wished for a rural outlook. Some formality may be ascribed to the sinuous curves of Sydney Buildings, reminiscent of Lansdown Place East/Lansdown Crescent, but in reality this is dictated more by the pre-established course of the canal below it.

Bathwick Hill, and a few years later North Road, were probably a compromise for re-using old lanes but avoiding the most severe inclines of the mediaeval routes. Indeed, North Road is supported on vaults in some sections where the terrain is steepest.

Cleveland Walk broadly follows the contours, so the development below it, whilst still on considerable gradients, is able to follow a typically mid-20th Century suburban layout with culs-de-sac to either side of St Ann's Way, minimising disturbance.

Since the considerable expansion of the University,

Bathwick Hill has become the arterial link between it and the city. Most conspicuously, it runs frequent bus services up and down the hill, currently running over 24 hours during term time. Despite this, it is not a principal route from the city centre, as the A36 carries heavy traffic through Bathampton towards Warminster, and Widcombe Hill is a more direct route to Claverton from the city centre. To the north, King Edward's School generates significant congestion in term time, particularly around 16.00 hours when parent parking sometimes obstructs the road and occupies much of the north end of Cleveland Walk. North Road is a popular part of the Bath Tour Bus itinerary which offers the skyline views as an optional part of the sightseeing tour. Congestion around King Edward's School can consequently lead to long delays, since North Road is relatively narrow at this point.

Public realm

The Character Area has retained its paving materials according to the date of construction of adjoining buildings. Thus Bathwick Hill, Darlington Place and Sydney Buildings retain almost all of their original pennant stone pavements whilst Cleveland Walk and the streets below, together with most of North Road, are paved in tarmac, indicative of their later construction date. These have been well maintained.

Vitality and tranquillity

This last flowering of the Bathwick Estate was created primarily for the tranquillity it might offer, high up on the slopes above the city. Beginning with Darlington Place, the emphasis moved to providing a quiet and serene outlook over undeveloped fields, free from the bustle of the town. With the full development of most attractive sites on Bathwick Hill, this shifted to the new suburb surrounding Cleveland Walk, well away from the through-routes to north and south.

Today, most activity is centred around the foot of Bathwick Hill, where Raby Place feels very close to the heavily trafficked A36, and the shops serving the neighbourhood are all grouped just below the



canal. The canal itself is a busy artery in the summer months, with a boat hire base adding vitality to the retirement housing development which overlooks it, and the moorings between it and the top lock perennially popular with holidaymakers. To the north, King Edward's School is a hive of activity in term time, with a constant traffic of pupils coming and going, concentrated at a morning and afternoon peak.

However, save for the constant bus and pedestrian traffic between the University and city, the remainder of the character Area enjoys a high degree of tranquillity at most times, at its most idyllic in the grounds of the more picturesque villas.

11. Trees, open space, parks and gardens



Trees and vegetation

The lower part of the Character Area retains a strongly urban character, as set out above, with high-density occupation. Appropriately, therefore, it also contains the only area of formal parkland, a roughly triangular garden opposite Raby Place, set well below the inclination of the street at the level of Pulteney Road. Greek Revival stone piers and railings surround the garden and dense peripheral planting fills the acute angle between the two streets. This privately-owned and maintained garden provides a green outlook for the residents of Raby Place and softens the north end of Pulteney Road.

Above this level, the main contribution to public awareness of the landscape comes from the front gardens of the more widely-spaced houses climbing the hill, beginning with Dunsford Place. Darlington Place represents the best example of houses approached through the long and often heavily-planted front gardens, unusually with a long rear garden also, entered from the high pavement above Sydney Buildings.



The character changes as the ascent of Bathwick Hill continues, as the natural landscape takes over. As the hillside steepens, a semi-alpine character asserts itself, as intended by Goodridge and others to emphasise the remoteness and individuality of the villas being created. Specimen conifers, including Lombardy cypressus, were often planted in strategic, eye-catching positions, but the dense tree cover is, for the most part, of indigenous deciduous trees.

Cleveland Walk was set out from the beginning as a tree-lined street, planted on the west side only since the tree and shrub planting in the gardens of the first houses on the east side were of equivalent height, effectively creating an avenue to the viewer. Below it, the landscape character of the post-war suburb is dictated by individual planting decisions, although some homogeneity is created by the use of low walls surmounted by hedge planting, but larger trees in front gardens can have a significant enclosing effect on the street scene.

The central part of North Road is, in effect, a country road, once the Golf Course Road is passed on the east side, and is bordered by open fields on both sides until King Edward's School is reached at the foot. Dense artificial tree and shrub planting at the upper end changes the character again as the University nears. Several non-indigenous tree species, notably several types of pines, have clearly been planted for effect.

Open space and parks

There are few designed open spaces as part of the Character Area. Instead, the essence of it is derived from the relationship between the built form and the natural landscape adjoining it. The major green spaces within the Character Area are:

- Bathwick Wood and the covered reservoir above North Road and King Edward's School.
- The foot of Bathampton Down and the Skyline Walk sloping down to Cleveland Walk from Sham Castle, near the summit.

Open spaces outside the Character Area but adjoining it include:

- The linear open space created by the route of the Kennet and Avon Canal through the area.
- The open space (owned and managed by the National Trust) south of Bathwick Hill, stretching across to Widcombe Hill and beyond, down to Sydney Buildings.

The Character Area owes its existence primarily to the desire for open aspects from the new villas being built. Therefore, most open spaces are natural parts of the landscape which constituted the views being sought.

Man-made open spaces are few in number, and mainly result from the formal planning of the western parts of the Character Area, most notably Raby Place and the gardens opposite.

Private gardens

Private gardens form an integral part of the landscape of the Character Area. The large Regency and Victorian villas here were provided from the first with large and well-planted gardens creating both privacy and an impression of exclusivity. This character has been carried through to some extent in more recent building and private gardens form screens of vegetation between houses and streets in almost all parts of the Character Area.

12. Night-time character

As a predominantly residential area, the night-time character is subdued, with merely a minor centre of activity around the extended hours supermarket at the parade of shops at George's Place. Evening events at King Edward's School generate further activity along the northern edge of the Character Area, but this impinges little on local residents.

The main night-time activity results from the University's location at the top of the hill and the transport routes between it and the city centre. Although the University is, in many ways, self-sufficient, many students enjoy the atmosphere of central pubs and clubs and the many cultural events held there. Consequently there is a constant movement on foot and by bus up and down Bathwick Hill, and at present a regular bus service operates throughout the night in term time.

13. Issues affecting the Character Area

What are the assets of the Character Area?

- Outstanding example of 19th century picturesque ideas with interaction of buildings with the landscape.
- Formally planned Georgian set-piece of St Mary's Church and Raby Place.
- Surviving mews buildings at the lower level, many now in residential use.
- Vitality created through the success of the Kennet and Avon Canal holiday industry since its re-opening in 1990.
- Outstanding example of a late-Regency semi-rural suburb composed of individual villas lining Bathwick Hill, of varying design.
- Rare group of Italianate villas generally occupying their originally designed landscape.
- Protected landscape maintained by the National Trust ensures a green 'buffer' will retain continuity of the setting of the most important groups.
- Success of the University potentially offers a use for any under-used assets.
- A calm and leafy suburb defined by the variety of spectacular views from its various parts.



What are the weaknesses of the Character Area?

- The already heavy traffic on the A36 and the concentration of traffic around North Road in term time.

What opportunities exist to improve the area?

- Attractive sites for one-off houses will continue to be sought on the upper slopes where it is important that designs are of a high standard which respond to the special qualities of the context.
- Traffic management to limit the damage currently caused by traffic on the A36.
- Identification and recognition of undesignated heritage assets of architectural and historic interest.

What factors might be seen as threats?

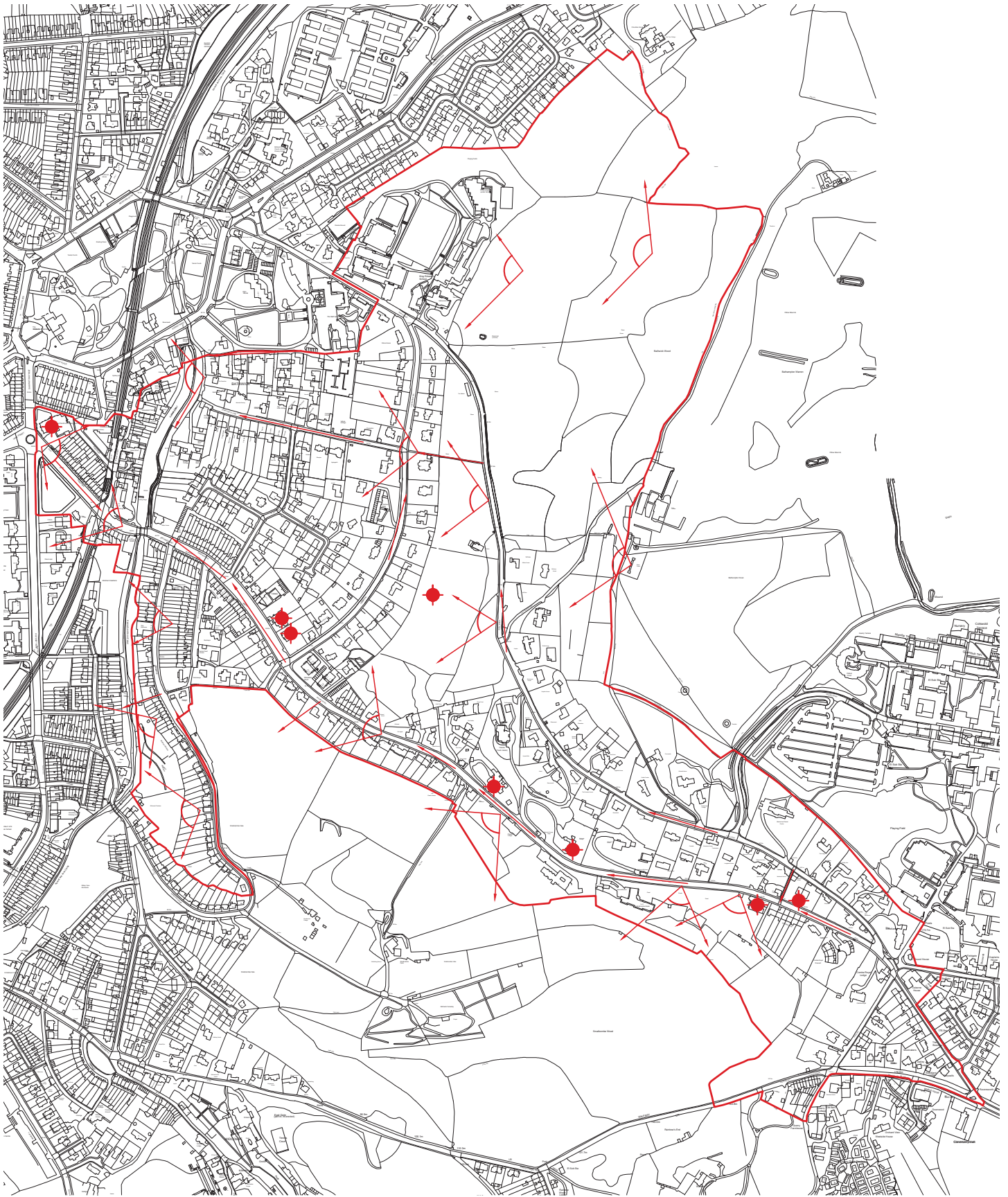
- Much of the special appeal of the Character Area derives from the imagination and attention to detail of the 19th century designers. Loss of even small architectural details or landscape features could steadily erode this special character.
- Traffic levels in this area may lead to erosion of the historic fabric with pollutants likely to cause surface damage particularly to Bath stone.
- Gentrification may encourage a tendency to add formal Georgian architectural treatments and features to conversions of mews buildings or other relatively low-status buildings; such features are historically inappropriate to such building types and erode



their specific meanings and visual qualities.

- Development pressure on the eastern perimeter of the Character Area through the continuing growth of the University leads to seasonal overload during major events.
- Unsympathetic alterations to unlisted buildings are a threat to the character of the Conservation Area as a whole and specifically to this Character Area.
- Building height of new development exceeding the traditional limits of Baths historic core and disrupting the hierarchy of public and private buildings.
- The relative narrowness of roads in the Character Area reflects the early 19th century development history. Increasing pressure from expansion of King Edward's School and the University is likely to render these inadequate without constructive dialogue to research alternatives.
- Attempts to build in the gardens of the villas.
- The increasing prevalence of uPVC glazing and doors erodes the character of pre-1950 unlisted buildings. The visually heavy white plastic frames are inappropriate against Bath stone, Pennant rubble and brick walls.
- Widespread use of reconstituted Bath stone for new building extensions. It provides a generally appropriate colour match but this advantage is eroded by wider mortar joints and a dull, lifeless character which (unlike Bath stone) does not improve with weathering.

Annex 1 - Maps



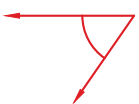
Key:



: Landmarks

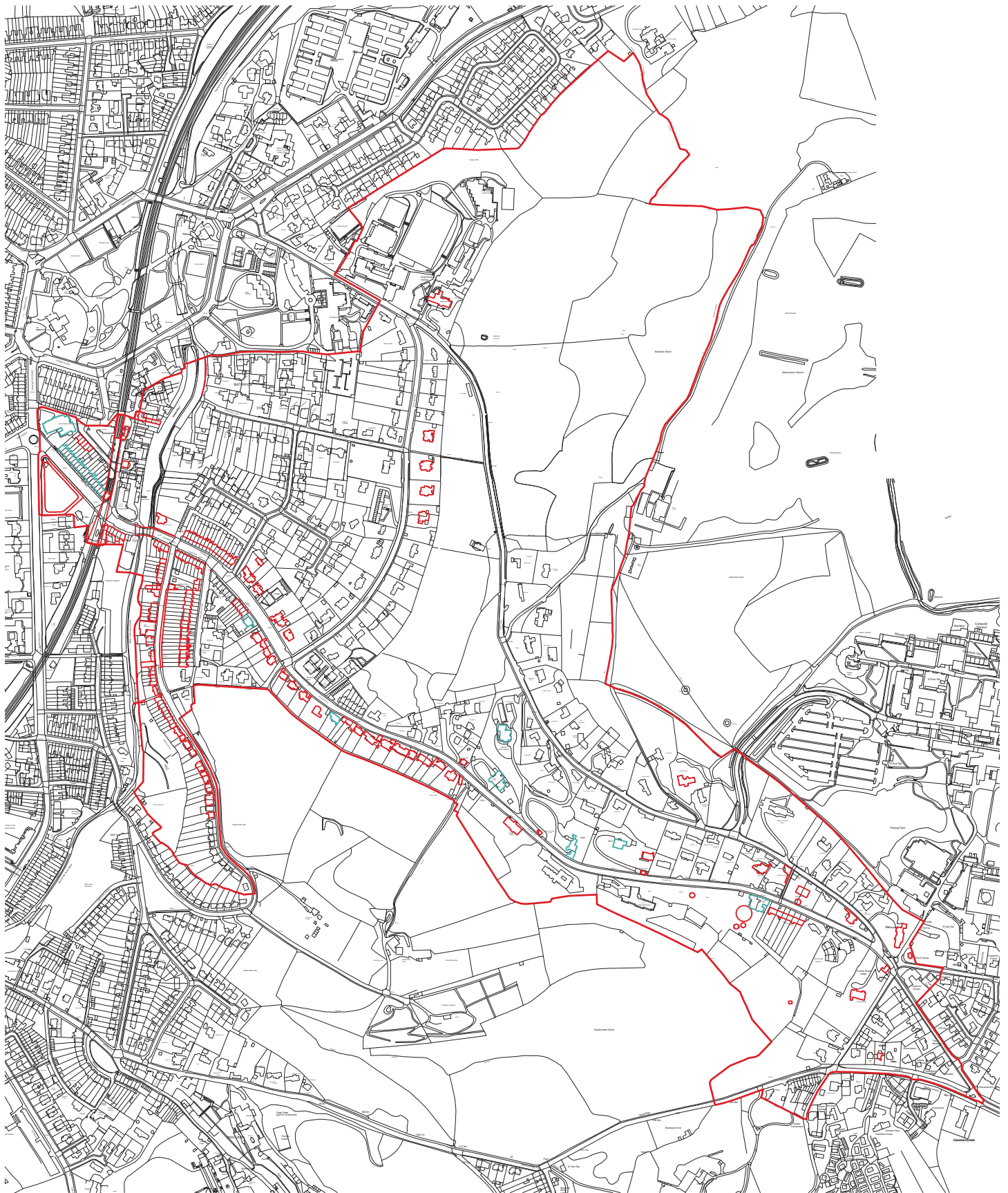


: View



: Panoramic view

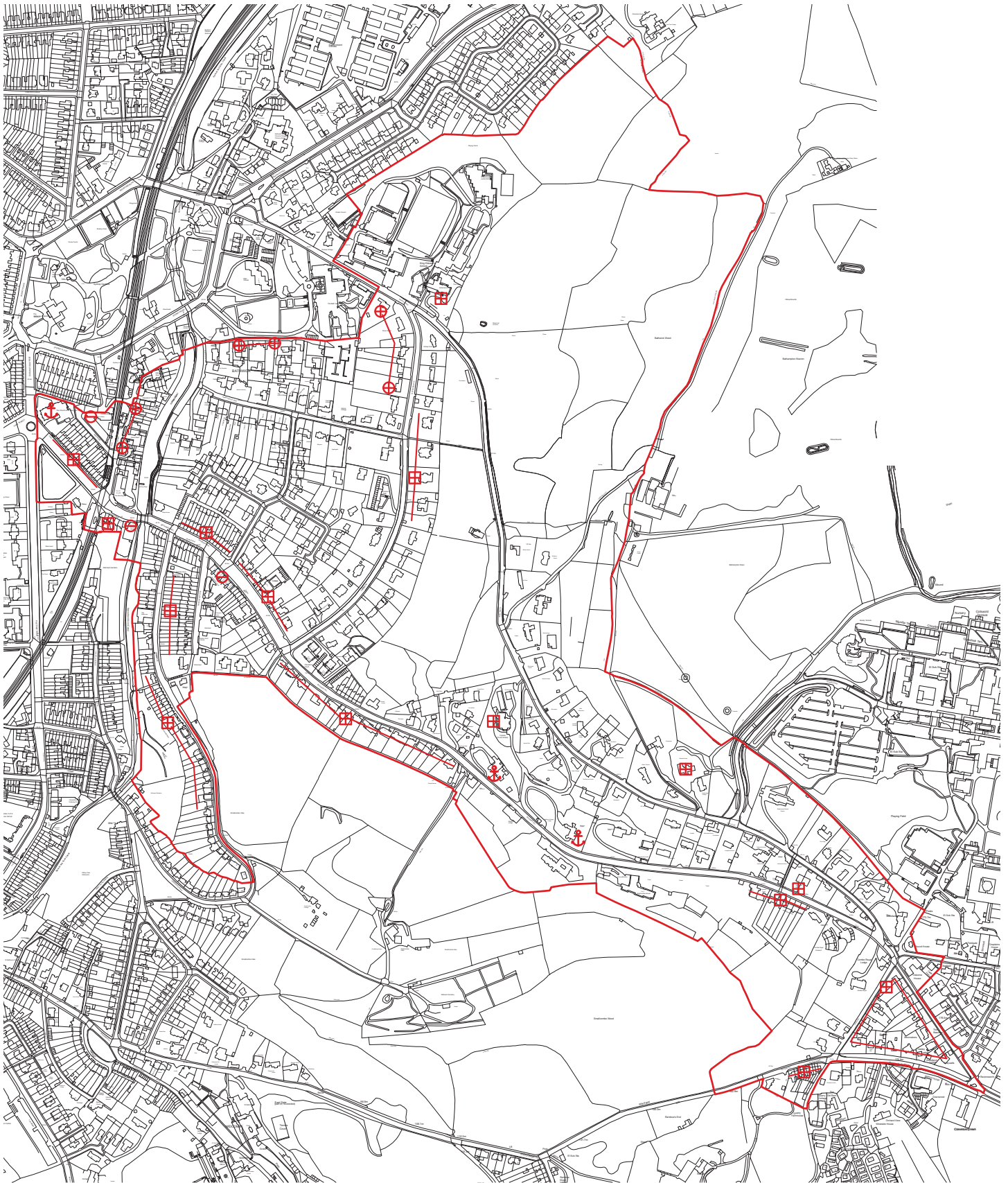
Landmarks and views



Key:

	: Grade I
	: Grade II*
	: Grade II

Listed buildings



Key:

⊕ : Unlisted building of merit

⊖ : Negative building

⊞ : Positive townscape feature

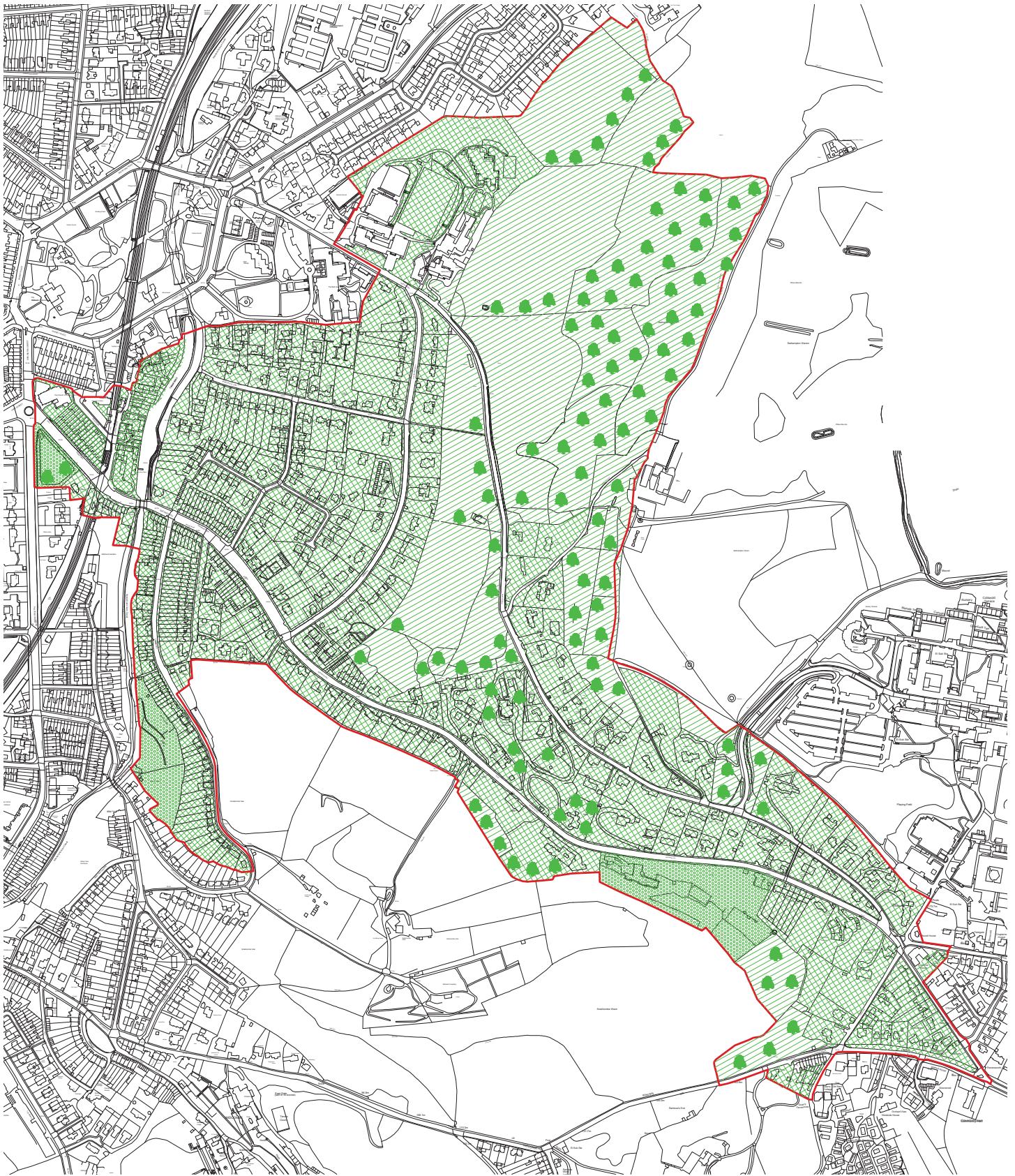
⊠ : Negative townscape feature

! : Building at risk





⊥ : Anchor building

— : group/included

Townscape features



Key:

-  : Open space
-  : Parks
-  : Private/Semi-private gardens (where significant)
-  : Trees

Trees, open space,
parks and gardens

Annex 2 - Context

A conservation area is designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. The quality and interest of the area as a whole, rather than individual buildings, is the main consideration when designating such areas.

Section 71 of the Act requires the local planning authority to periodically formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas within the district. Section 72 requires that in considering applications for development in a conservation area, attention shall be paid to the desirability of conserving or enhancing the character of that area.

Conservation area appraisals are considered by Historic England to be vital to the conservation of these special areas.

More detailed policies are to be found in the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan.

Annex 3 - References

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