

Swindon Old Town

Prospect Place Conservation Area

Appraisal and Management Plan



- Conservation area designated in June 1990
- Appraisal and management plan adopted 29th April 2008

This appraisal of Prospect Place Conservation Area in Swindon Old Town was adopted by Swindon Borough Council as “a proper assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of [the] conservation area and approved as guidance for decision makers dealing with planning matters” on 29th April 2008



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1. Introduction

This appraisal of Swindon Prospect Place Conservation Area was adopted by Swindon Borough Council as “a proper assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of each conservation area and approved as guidance for decision makers dealing with planning matters” on 29th April 2008

Prospect Place Conservation Area is historically part of the Old Town area but its individual and separate designation in June 1990 requires that it be considered and assessed separately.

1.1 Purpose of the Appraisal

This appraisal defines the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area, providing a sound basis for development control decisions. It will help planning officers, developers, designers and the public at large assess whether a proposed development affecting a conservation area would, or would not, preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

1.2 Conservation Policy

A conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). When considering applications for development which affect a conservation area “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.” (Section 72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with policies contained in the current Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 and with national planning policy guidance, especially Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

The information contained in this appraisal was originally collected during the year 2001 and revised in March 2008. To be concise and readable, it does not record all features. The omission of any feature from the text or accompanying maps does not, therefore, mean that it must not be of interest or value.

2. Background

2.1 Designation

Prospect Place Conservation Area, first designated on 25th June 1990, covers a mainly residential area in Swindon Old Town, adjacent to the western end of the Old Town Conservation Area.

2.2 Location and Boundary

Prospect place Conservation Area lies to the north of Bath Road and abuts the Old Town and Town Gardens Conservation Areas. The boundary has been drawn to include a number of streets that were built during the first half of the 19th century, before the arrival of the Great Western Railway and the subsequent expansion of Old Town and the development of Swindon 'New Town'. By 1841, the date of the foundation of the GWR works, there were already 21 houses in this locality, which was then known as 'Prospect'.

2.3 Historical Development

The post-railway history of the Prospect Conservation Area relates closely to the development of Swindon's Old Town. Its pre-railway origins gives it a special interest and a distinct character and appearance clearly different from the red-brick terraces that, after c1850, became the norm for this type of urban housing.

Historically the area is contemporary with the earliest buildings in Devizes Road, Bath Road and the top of Victoria Hill. Prospect Place was begun by 1830 and the area's earliest terraces, such as 44-49 Prospect Place or 7-13 North Street were built by the 1840s.

2.4 The Conservation Area Today.

Prospect Place Conservation Area is mainly residential, characterised by a mixture of Victorian stone and brick-built terraced houses built along narrow streets. Other uses include a nursing home, school, two pubs, chapels, and shop. The close proximity to the Old Town shops and the heavy demand for on-street parking by residents has necessitated a 'residents parking zone', whilst a public car park is available for use by visitors to the shops and businesses of Old Town.

There is currently a bus depot on a prominent corner site formerly occupied by an engineering works. Most of the site is open and used for bus and employee parking and is a site where any future development would need to have regard to the prominent location. There is no public open space within the conservation area; the closest available being Town Gardens.

3. The Special Interest of Prospect Place Conservation Area

3.1 Street Pattern

The streets are narrow, particularly Union Street, which has a 'kink' adding to the sense of enclosure. Prospect Place has a sharp bend where it turns towards Victoria Road. They could be described as 'urban lanes'.

3.2 Architectural and Historic Interest.

The predominant built form is two storeys with pitched roofs, traditionally of Welsh slate with substantial brick chimney stacks. The earliest houses in Prospect Place are of fine, cut stone and they contrast markedly with the local vernacular random rubble walling used in some of the lower status cottages in the area, or where used for the side and rear elevations of 14-20 Prospect Place. Most of the South Street properties are rendered/painted and the various light coloured exteriors, though not original, add variety to the street scene.



Photograph 1
Typical rendered cottages
in South Street.

The original window design in the area is a wooden sash window, either typical Georgian 12-pane or a split-pane of particular design in the locality, with fine glazing bars. These houses are generally larger than the standard brick, late 19th century terraces found throughout Swindon.



Photograph 2

An example of an early house in Prospect Place, with the local style of timber sash window and door canopy.

A later example of the distinction between the treatments of elevations can be seen in King William Street/Wesley Street where some of the side elevations are built in the structurally inferior rat-trap brick bond see photograph 3.



Photograph 3

This gable-end wall in South Street is built of a local brick of varied colours, which adds an interest to the street scene. The bricks are laid at 90 degrees to normal brickwork, which is structurally inferior but uses fewer bricks. It is important that walls such as these are not painted or rendered.

A slightly later terrace in Prospect Place, Nos. 21-27 is in a more conscious gothic style¹ with distinctive tall stone chimney uppers. The original windows are here are of the particular design in this locality of the split-pane with fine vertical and horizontal glazing bars.

With the exception of Prospect Place, the majority of the terraces are built with the street frontage right up to the footpath, heightening the sense of enclosure of the already narrow streets. Prospect Place is slightly more spacious but many front gardens, where of sufficient size, have been paved to allow for car parking. The gardens of Nos. 21-27 are retained, behind rubble-stone walls and are slightly raised above the pavement level; and here some planting softens the street scene.

¹ Design relating to medieval architecture, with a vertical emphasis and pointed arches often used for Victorian public buildings

The area is mainly urban in character and there are few trees with the exception of South Street, where mature trees in front of the former chapel are notable. Here too, trees planted at the rear boundaries of Prospect Place properties can be seen. Narrow alleys and back streets are a feature of the block bounded by Prospect, Union Street and North Street.

In addition to the terraces, there are a number of individual buildings which contribute to the character of the area: The Prince of Wales and The Castle (which has some remaining ranges of ancillary buildings to the rear); Providence Chapel in South Street (1845), now converted to a dwelling, and a chapel, (formerly Primitive Methodist Church) in Prospect Place; Olive House (No.11 Prospect Place). A 19th century villa set in a large garden - although unique in this conservation area, it is a type found frequently elsewhere in the suburban development of the Old Town.



Photograph 4
Olive House, a detached house set in a large garden.

King William Street School (1871, enlarged in 1890) is a tall and imposing school building, set within its playground and is typical of its period; a facade of the Wiltshire Royal Artillery Drill Hall remains although the site now occupied by Kingsmead Nursing Home.

A bus depot occupies the site of a former engineering works that produced agricultural implements. Remnants of the original works building can be seen in stone gables visible from King William Street. Also notable is the tall stone rubble wall, which surrounds the site and to a large extent screens it from the remainder of the area.

3.3 Vistas and Views

The Conservation Area is characterised by confinement; however there is a view towards a fine group of trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) in the distance when entering North Street from the west. South Street is currently of open appearance as it faces the bus depot and the houses here can be seen from King William Street.

Photograph 5
North Street has some
of the earliest houses
c1830 built of stone.



3.4 Summary of the Special Interest of Prospect Place.

The special interest that justifies designation of Prospect Place as a conservation area:

- The early nineteenth century street layout.
- The mix of varied stone and brick terraced houses.
- The varied local building materials and building styles.

4. Community Involvement

A public meeting was held at a Community Hall (Moose Hall, Tuesday 4th March 2008) at the centre of the four 'Old Town' conservation areas and was attended by over sixty members of the public. The majority were from the residential areas of Town Gardens and Prospect Place Conservation Areas.

Residents were given an explanation of the purpose of the conservation area appraisals review and the special meaning and status of conservation areas, after which a number of planning and environmental issues were discussed in open forum as well there being an opportunity to affix specific comments to a large scale map of the area. Those concerns relating to other Council Services were noted and forwarded; where applicable they have been included in the management plan.

On street posters advertised the meeting, which was also highlighted in individual consultation letters sent to all properties within the conservation area.

5. Negative Features and Opportunities for Enhancement

Issues particularly relating to Prospect Place Conservation Area, which was raised by members of the public attending the meeting included;

- Harm caused to the appearance of the area by the installation of uncharacteristic, modern windows and satellite dishes
- Possible further loss of front gardens in Prospect Place
- Increased pressure on roadside parking resulting from flats and other residential development
- Adverse impact from noise and pollution generated by the bus depot
- Where these issues relate to planning policy they have been included in the management plan.

6. Management Plan

The management plan detail how the conservation area could be enhanced or improved with the support of the local authority, residents and other agencies. It should be seen as a working document, that: -

- Encourages future planning applications to respect and promote what is special about the conservation area;
- Seeks to ameliorate or (is possible) remove negative elements;
- Encourage a degree of 'ownership' of the area by residents (and where applicable Parish Councils);
- Promote closer cooperation between all relevant parties including utilities, local authority departments and the local community.

In line with advice² it is proposed that this management strategy together with the conservation area appraisal be reviewed and updated regularly (5 years is recommended).

In order to achieve effective improvement to the character and appearance of the conservation area, consideration should be given to the formulation of a working group involving internal and external partners to inform and respond to enhancement opportunities identified within the management plan. Feedback from such a group would be invaluable to the progression of such opportunities and be an active means of engaging public participation and community involvement.

² Guidance on the management of conservation areas - English Heritage and PAS (consultation draft 2006)

Issues / opportunities	Possible Actions	Agency	Time Scale
Development:			
Development proposals need to reflect the local character of the area.	All applications to be considered according to local and national policies and guidance.	SBC Planning Development Control / Conservation	O
Residential properties:			
Loss of garden walls to allow front garden parking, loss of local features and details including traditional sash windows, chimney pots and ridge tiles painting of brickwork and alike.	Investigate possible implementation of Article 4 (2) Direction to control specific minor developments normally considered to be permitted development.	SBC Planning Development Control / Enforcement / Legal	S/M
Unauthorised satellite dishes.	Identification and enforcement action.	SBC Planning Development Control / Enforcement / Conservation	S/O
Density of new development and resulting additional cars parking on-street	Implementation of Council's parking standards.	SBC Planning Development Control / Highways	O
Traffic / highways:			
Impact of residents parking and traffic safety issues in residential streets - 20 mph speed limit	Investigate options for improvement in safety. Consideration of speed restriction.	SBC Planning / Highways / Street Scene	O
General maintenance and use of appropriate materials in the Conservation Area.	Discussion of materials and design.	Parks / Highways / Street Scene	S/O

Key

S = Short-term (0-12 months), M = Medium-term (12-24 months), L = Long-term (24-26 months), O = On-going.

Bibliography

- Canham, R and Phillips, B (1976) *'The Archaeology of Old Swindon Hill'* Swindon Archaeological Society Report No.1.
- Chandler, Digby and Marshman (1989) *'Off the Map of History'* The Development of North-East Wiltshire to 1600.
- Crittall, Rogers and Shrimpton (1983) *'A History of Swindon to 1965'* Reprinted from The Victoria County history of Wiltshire Volume IX Wiltshire Library & Museum Service
- Pevsner, N (1975) *'The Buildings of England'* – Wiltshire Penguin Publishing
- Wiltshire County Council (February 2000) *'The Archaeology of Wiltshire's Towns – Swindon'* Extensive Urban Survey (EUS)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- DoE (1994) Planning Policy Guidance 15 *'Planning and the Historic Environment'*
- DoE (1990) Planning Policy Guidance 16 *'Archaeology and Planning'*
- English Heritage/PAS (2005) *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals.*
- English Heritage/PAS (2005) *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas.*

Swindon Borough Council

(All documents are available on the Council's website <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/>)

- Swindon Borough Local Plan (2011)
- Buildings of Significant Local Interest - Supplementary Planning Guidance (December 2004)
- Good Design – House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (December 2004)
- Swindon Design Guide SBC (December 2006)
- Shop Front Guide SBC (December 2006)
- Backland and Infill Development SBC Supplementary Planning Document (June 2007)








Listed Building/Conservation Areas

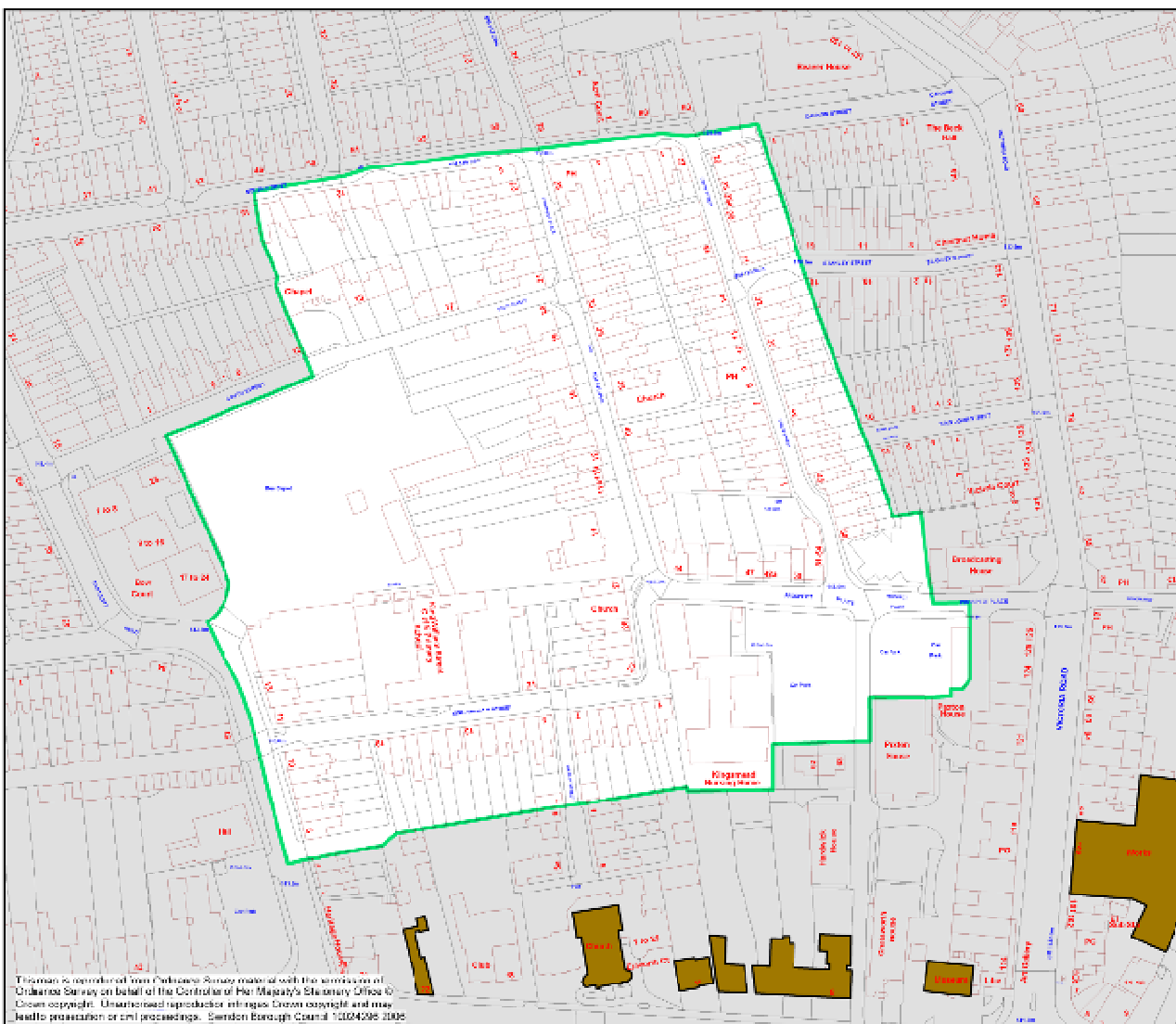
The Statutory list and current appraisals are available on our Website, in addition they are available to view at Planning Office (Premier House and Central Library) <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/environment/planning/environment-planning-conservation.htm>

Prospect Place Conservation Area

Key to map

Given the complexity of the area, the omission of any feature from this map should not be interpreted as evidence that it is not of interest or value.

-  Boundary of conservation area
-  Listed building
-  Key building of interest
-  Significant tree or trees
-  Area of water
-  Important green space
-  Wooded area
-  Significant wall or boundary
-  Area with distinct identity
-  Important view



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