

Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Development

# Draft Bear Flat and Oldfield Park Character Appraisal Bath Conservation Area

April 2020



**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 Bear Flat and Oldfield Park Character Area of Bath Conservation Area,

The character area occupies a prominent position in the City of Bath, lying as it does on the north-facing slopes to the south of the River Avon. Parts of the area are visible from the City Centre and the south-facing slopes above it, including the Royal Crescent. Views into and out of the area from/to the rest of the City are part of the character of the area.

The area abuts the higher ground of Beechen Cliff and Alexandra Park to the east and the railway and Lower Bristol Road to the north. To the south and west it is surrounded by further residential areas, with the Linear Park forming part of the southern boundary.

The northern part of the historic route of Holloway is in the area. Hayesfield School is within the area while Beechen Cliff School is immediately east. There is one major open space at Bloomfield Green connecting to the Linear Park (and a set of allotments adjacent). Thereafter, the land use is almost entirely residential, with shops and offices at the local centre of Bear Flat and some hotels and guest houses on Wells Road and Wellsway. There is one significant commercial block on Wells Road, but no industry. There are three places of worship: the Methodist Church on Shakespeare Avenue (with its hall fronting Bruton Avenue), St. Bartholomew's Church (set in a large garden) on King Edward Road and The Magdalen Chapel on Holloway.

The topography is typically Cotswold with level or gently sloping land suddenly giving way to a scarp. Hence Bear Flat, which is level relatively briefly between the scarp to the north (noticeably steep in Holloway) and the start of a long ascent to the south, leading up to Odd Down. There is a slope westward from Alexandra Park down to Lower Oldfield Park.

Apart from the survival of a small group of medieval buildings on Holloway, the area comprises Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings (and a few from the 20<sup>th</sup> century). As an area, its character derives partly from this heterogeneity. The way that listed buildings occur almost randomly underlines this.

There is heavy traffic on the radial route south from the city centre, Wells Road and Wellsway (A367). Bloomfield Road, Oldfield Road, Junction Road, Upper Oldfield Park and Lower Oldfield Park are well used local roads but otherwise the area has fairly quiet residential streets. There is widespread on-street parking throughout the area.

## **Bear Flat and Oldfield Park 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, and its preservation and enhancement should be key criteria for all new 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 cultural 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 played a 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 practised 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*

Bear Flat lies across the Roman route southward from Bath (see Historical Influences in Section 3).

### *2. Contribution to the hot springs - none*

### *3. Contribution to 18th century architecture*

There are some C18 buildings. No buildings in the area are listed grade II\* or grade I, though arguably St Mary's Buildings is of particular significance. Some of the buildings in the area are grade II listed.

### *4. Contribution to 18th century town planning*

Five groupings of Georgian buildings can be said to follow the principles of 18<sup>th</sup> century town planning. From north to south they are:

- Oak Street, Lower Bristol Road (partially outside the area)
- St Mary's Buildings, Wells Road
- Prospect Place, Beechen Cliff Road
- Elm Place, Bloomfield Road
- Devonshire Buildings.

The largest and grandest of these, Devonshire Buildings, presumably influenced Edwardian town planning, with a terrace reciprocating it at a lower scale to the north, followed in parallel by the sequence of Poets Corner avenues forming a grid layout.

#### *5. Contribution to the green setting*

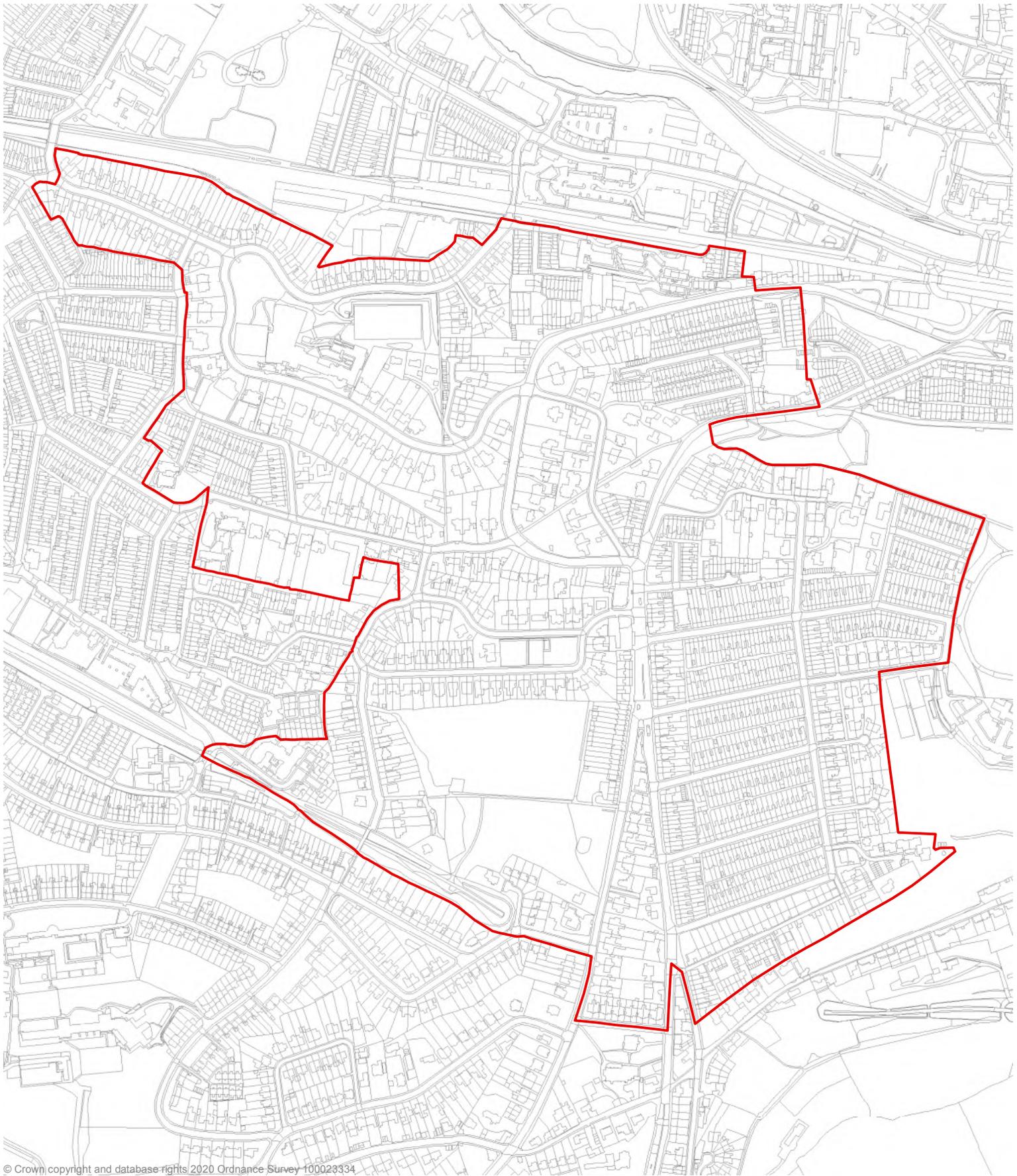
Although Beechen Cliff itself is outside the area, the cliff-top houses on Beechen Cliff Road are seen with the wooded cliff in views south from the City Centre and the northern slopes of Lansdown. These are harmonious in the setting, being 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Bath-stone houses with mature gardens between the houses and the cliff edge.

Generally, there are sufficient trees in the area to make at least a contribution to the City's green setting.

#### *6. Contribution to the social setting*

Many visitors to Georgian Bath would have walked up Holloway and then along the cliff top path (off Beechen Cliff Road) that leads to the summit (now Alexandra Park). These included Jane Austen (The walk to Beechen Cliff in *Northanger Abbey*).





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Bear Flat and Oldfield Park Character Area Map



## 2. Summary of key characteristics

- Victorian and Edwardian edge-of-centre suburb, with some earlier buildings
- Strong visual and functional relationship with the City Centre immediately north
- Residential area, with two secondary schools, one in the area and one on its edge
- Important local centre at Bear Flat (although residents of the north west of the area look more to Moorland Road)
- Traditional buildings and Bath stone predominate
- Very few buildings post 1918
- Open space at Bloomfield Green and a short section of the Linear Park (while spaces outside the area are also used by residents notably, Shaftesbury Road Memorial Gardens and Alexandra Park)
- Many fine trees
- A plateau falling steeply to the valley from Bear Flat, more gently from Oldfield Park
- Heavy traffic on Wells Road and Wellsway (A367)



Important assets for Bear Flat and Oldfield Park residents, such as Moorland Road shops and Alexandra Park, fall technically outside the character area and are therefore not discussed in detail in this document.

The character area may be divided into six sub-areas:

- Oldfield Park: West of Wells Road and north of Oldfield Road
- Holloway: East of Wells Road
- Wells Road: Main route north from Bear Flat
- Bloomfield: West of Wellsway and south of Oldfield Road
- Poets Corner: East of Wellsway
- Wellsway: Main route through and south from Bear Flat



### 3. Historic development

#### **Physical influences: geology, land form and drainage systems**

The area is described as 'landslip including highly disturbed camber slopes', the latter relating to the fracturing of hard plateau layers overlying softer layers. The surface geology is therefore complex and masks the underlying geology of Lower Lias clays around Bear Flat, rising through Upper Lias silty sands (Midford Sands) as one progresses up Beechen Cliff, until the Inferior Oolitic limestone layers in evidence at the top of Beechen Cliff.

Topographically, the area rises steadily from the River Avon through some 50m of elevation to Bear Flat. To the east of Bear Flat the top of Beechen Cliff is a further 50m in elevation. Further south, the ground rises up Wellsway to the top of Odd Down. To the west, the land slopes down by some 15m to Lower Oldfield Park.

#### **Drainage Courses**

The area exhibits no major surface drainage courses. The only visible stream is Lyn Brook running along the south east border of Bear Flat. However, there are freshwater springs in the area. The spring under Beechen Cliff was for many years one of the two water sources for the city and the Beechen Cliff Water Works (still partly visible at the bottom of the steep footpath from Holloway) was constructed in 1817 and fed by this spring. Construction of the Somerset and Dorset railway tunnel appears to have reduced the flows of local springs and the Beechen Cliff spring now flows into the local sewer.

#### **Historical Influences**

##### *Early and Medieval Settlements*

An ancient village of Berewick stood south of Bear Flat but disappeared in the late medieval period. Berewick, or Berwick, is a common settlement name, a corruption of the word probably gave Bear Flat its name.

The area was mainly agricultural as can be seen from the history of Barracks Farm (itself taking its name from Berewick) which is mentioned in records as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst the farm buildings were well south of Bear Flat, its farmed area stretched northwards to Bear Flat. Farming of the area lasted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Barracks Farm finally closing in the 1960s. Closer to Bear Flat, the slopes of Beechen Cliff were part of Holloway Farm whose buildings were sited along Wellsway by Kipling Avenue. Bloomfield Farm was sited on the other side of Bloomfield Road, possibly associated with the market gardens and orchards running to the west of Bloomfield Road and surviving in part as the Bloomfield Road recreational field (Bloomfield Green) and allotments.

During the medieval period the area of Oldfield Park comprised moorland that was gradually enclosed for agriculture, known as hayes. The moors and the hayes are reflected in local names today – Moorlands, Moorfields, Hayesfield School, Hayes Place, Hayesfield Park. The generic term Oldfield to describe the area does not seem to have been used until the 1870s when the term appeared in the records of the newly cut Somerset and Dorset railway.

The A367 is the main southerly route out of Bath and originally formed part of the great Roman Fosse Way that linked Lincoln to Exeter. The original route climbed up Holloway from Southgate and the old St Lawrence Bridge (or the Old Bridge, replaced in 1964 by Churchill Bridge), ran through the Bear Flat area, and then along Old Wells Road (what is now Bloomfield Road). The route was in use from Roman times through to the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it formed a part of the toll road, or turnpike, to the south west. An inn has stood on the site of the current Bear Hotel, probably since medieval times, to service the travellers along this route. The first recorded mention of The Bear Inn is in 1786 although the inn appears on earlier maps.



The earliest surviving medieval site is that of Magdalen Chapel and the associated leper hospital, halfway down Holloway. These were originally a house and private chapel of a local landowner Walter Hussey and were built to be close to the protection of the City walls and to the Beechen Cliff springs. He made these a gift to Bath Abbey sometime between 1088 and 1100, probably when he became Sheriff of Wiltshire. It was not until the early 13<sup>th</sup> century that the house was established as a leper hospital, safely away from the population of Bath. It appears to have been one of the earliest such hospitals in the country and its reputation was such that St Mary Magdalen became the most common dedication for leper hospitals (55 leper houses were dedicated to her). The buildings have changed completely from the originals, with rebuilding and modifications taking place in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Oldfield Road appears on Thorpe's 1742 map as a route labelled 'To The Fields', leading from the top of Holloway to the fields of what is now Oldfield Park. The map also shows two buildings on this road, in the vicinity of what is now the junction of Bloomfield Avenue and Oldfield Road, one of which is the curiously named 'Mr Mullin's Summer House'. It is possible that the existing 'The Old Cottages' is one of these buildings.

### *Georgian and Regency Development*

The earliest surviving Georgian building in the area is probably Paradise House on Holloway, built in 1725 and originally part of a longer terrace running down Holloway away from the leper hospital. The rest of the terrace was demolished in the early 1970s to make way for new housing, and the rough edging to the front wall that marks the limit of the demolition can still be seen.

Years of neglect rendered Holloway unfit for use. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a new turnpike was deemed necessary and so, in the 1770s, the Bath Turnpike Trust commissioned the building of Wells Road from the city to Bear Flat to bypass Holloway. Three decades later the Wellsway was built to bypass Bloomfield Road.

The first significant phase of the development of the area coincided with the more general building of Georgian Bath, perhaps stimulated by the newly constructed turnpike. The terrace of Devonshire Buildings and the much shorter Devonshire Place, situated at the lower end of Entry Hill, were built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, as was that of Elm Place and Bloomfield Terrace at the bottom of Bloomfield Road, Hayes Place at the top of Holloway and the large houses of Prospect Place stretching up the cliff from Hayes Place.

Closer to the City, on the south side of Wells Road, St Mary's Buildings were constructed around 1810. This terrace runs up a steep hill perpendicular to the direction of Wells Road and shows an architectural innovation in its cornicing and string courses to avoid an abrupt vertical transition between houses. Further up the hill lies the terrace of 72 to 84 Wells Road, known as South Hayes on the

Cotterell map of 1852-53. It was built around the same time as St Mary's Buildings and listed because of its fine detail. The nearby South Hayes House, also listed, is shown as South Hayes Cottage on the Cotterell map and is thought to be an earlier construction, although it was refurbished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Victorian Development*

During the Victorian period the area of Bath south of the river gradually acquired a population of professional and business classes, many of whom were fleeing the crowded and heavily polluted city centre. This led to a second phase of building, including large houses along Wells Road and up Beechen Cliff Road, the construction of Bloomfield Avenue and the development of Upper and Lower Oldfield Park. Notable buildings include the current Cedar Care Home on Oldfield Road, built c.1840 as two villas and seen as a particularly fine example of the houses of the period (now listed). The original building (1878) at Hayesfield School was one of the earliest houses built on Upper Oldfield Park (unlisted, but a candidate for local listing at least). The seeds of Bear Flat as a shopping and retail area were sown in the early Victorian period in Hayes Place. The first shop recorded in the local Street Directories was in 1848, that of James Help, a grocer at number 2 who went on to host the local post office. Number 1 was briefly a baker's shop in the mid-1870s before becoming J Provis fly proprietor (a business selling or hiring out small horse drawn carriages) that lasted until 1906. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Francis Tugnet, coal merchant and fly proprietor (another one!), was operating from the site that is now Majestic Wine. The Bear Brewery opened sometime in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to supply beer to the Bear Inn next door, as well as a pub in Walcot Street. It continued to operate until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and finally closed in 1902.

In the late Victorian period, the growing number of housing estates in Oldfield Park led the Rev Samuel Rogers of Bathwick to set up a church for the area in 1889. This was a corrugated iron chapel, built at his own expense, and located in the space between Shaftesbury Road and Lower Oldfield Park but accessed by Junction Road. Called the Tin Tabernacle, it housed 200 congregation, a choir of 15 and a hand-pumped organ. This was subsequently bought by St Mark's to become St Bartholomew's, the precursor of the current St Bart's on King Edward Road.

One of the stranger buildings of Bear Flat also has religious connections. The Roundhouse, also known as the Temple, stands in Greenway Court at the top of Chaucer Road and adjoins Beechen Cliff School playing fields, from where it can be clearly seen. The building has two storeys and is elliptical in cross-section. Its date of construction is not known but is almost certainly before 1870 and was probably built as a gazebo or pavilion for viewing Lyncombe Vale from its upper floor. More interestingly, the associated house was owned by Abraham Abrahams between 1869 and 1874. Mr Abrahams had strong connections with the Corn Street Synagogue, and it would appear that he used the lower storey of the Temple for baking unleavened bread and used the upper floor as a meeting place for members of the Bath Hebrew Congregation. It is also likely that the building served as a synagogue in later years following the closure of Corn Street. The history of the Roundhouse has been researched ('Devonshire Place "Temple" and the grounds in which it stands', 2004, by John Toplis, on the Bear Flat History Group website).

Another piece of social history had its roots in Bear Flat's Devonshire House (now a B&B) adjacent to the Devonshire Arms. In 1866, the Somerset Industrial Home for Boys (or the Somerset Boys' Home) was established with the aim of 'reclaiming abandoned boys and rescuing those whose unhappy circumstances inevitably lead them

to crime and profligacy'. It was set up largely through the efforts of a Mr Osborn, chaplain to the Bath gaol and was established in Devonshire House. Whilst there was considerable local opposition to the home, it remained there for 15 years. By 1877, the building was found to be unsafe and so was moved, eventually to an old military barracks on Brougham Hayes. The building still stands and forms a part of Hayesfield Girls School Lower School.

The great era of Victorian railway construction included the Somerset and Dorset Railway, running from Green Park Station south to Bournemouth. The railway passes just south of Bear Flat via the Devonshire Tunnel, built in 1874 and running below the Devonshire Arms, though there is very little evidence of this from road level. After the closure of the line in 1966 the track between Green Park and the Devonshire Tunnel became the recreational Linear Park. The tunnels have now been re-opened as a cycle and walking path, allowing level access all the way through to Midford and beyond.



Britain's celebration of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee is marked on Bear Flat by a small, now disused, drinking fountain to be found at the Gore, on the junction of Wellsway and Bloomfield Road. Despite its Grade II listing, it has had the indignity of facing onto underground toilets (now filled in), being backed by a large green metal box, a Wessex Water valve station, and partially obscured at the front by a BT Openreach utility box. Its stonework is also deteriorating and must be a prime candidate for restorative attention.

#### *Edwardian and Inter-War Development*

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a substantial phase of building centred mainly on the land of Holloway Farm, with the construction of 'Poets Corner' (Shakespeare, Kipling, Milton and the other poet Avenues) between Beechen Cliff Road and Devonshire Buildings. Elsewhere around Bear Flat some larger houses were demolished to make way for new housing, including Beechen Cliff Villa situated opposite Prospect Place on Beechen Cliff Road and, further down the hill, the large Holloway House and its grounds made way for the Magdalen Road and Park Avenue housing. This greatly expanded population led to the building of Beechen Cliff Methodist Church which opened in 1906. Before it was completed, open air services were held, leading to the name 'Cliff Dwellers Church'.

This expanded population also brought an increase in retail activity. Circa 1910, the Bear Flat shops had expanded to include a post office, two chemists, a newsagent, an antique dealer, two bakers, two butchers, two bootmakers, two grocers, a greengrocer, a confectioner, a drapers, two dairies, a hairdressers, a fishmonger and a 'motorman', these in addition to the previously mentioned coal merchants, fly proprietors, Bear Inn and the more recent Devonshire Brewery.

In the same year as the opening of Alexandra Park, the Bath Electric Tramways company started its tram service around Bath. One of the routes ran south from Walcott Street, up Wells Road, onto Bear Flat, up Wellsway and then east to Combe Down.

In Oldfield Park in 1922, a school was built within the area defined by Upper and Lower Oldfield Park. This was the Bath City Secondary School for Girls, to become known as the City of Bath Girls' School by 1939 with an enrolment of some 500 girls. The school incorporated a large Victorian villa known as Oldfield Park that had previously been the home of the Duck family (of Duck, Son and Pinker) and the frontage of which can still be seen today. The school was subsequently enlarged after WW2 and has ultimately become Hayesfield Girls' School upper school.

Also, in Oldfield Park, the old Tin Tabernacle chapel was increasingly unable to cope with the growing population and plans were agreed for building a new church. This did not finally occur until 1936 when the foundation stone for the current St Bart's was laid.

### *Second World War*

The next phase of the area's development was ushered in by the Nazi air raids on Bath during April 1942. Commonly referred to as the Baedeker raids, these attacks caused considerable damage to the areas around Oldfield Park, Holloway and Bear Flat. The old Bear Inn and Brewery were so badly damaged that they had to be demolished and rebuilt. Houses across Poets Corner were hit, Holloway and Beechen Cliff Road were severely damaged, as were buildings in Hayes Place (shrapnel pock marks around the side door of the chemist are still visible) and houses in Bloomfield Avenue. Several houses in the middle of Devonshire Buildings were also destroyed. Magdalen Chapel on Holloway received a direct hit, Oldfield Park's Tin Tabernacle was completely destroyed, and the almost new St Bart's church was badly damaged by a direct hit.

### *Post War Development*

Post war, the historic buildings of the Bear Inn and Brewery were demolished and rebuilt as the new Bear Pub (now Bear Hotel) and shops. The buildings opposite Hayes Place were also very badly damaged and rebuilt 'in the style of' the originals, but a brief inspection shows how modern, less expensive building techniques contrast with the original building that stands centrally to the block.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw great changes to Bath with the large-scale demolishing of many older buildings to make way for modern housing. Bear Flat and Oldfield Park largely escaped this phase of redevelopment, despite plans for a major redevelopment of Bear Flat as proposed by Abercrombie's post-war plans. Examples of modern-period developments include offices built at the top of Wells Road just around the corner from the Bear, replacing older shops and a tyre garage and the redevelopment of the industrial yards on the back road of Devonshire Buildings into apartments and a modern mews. Modern housing development has also taken place, notably along Junction Road where, for example, an Edwardian villa has been replaced by a modern apartment block; on Bruton Avenue, where a group of dilapidated garages and lock-ups have been redeveloped; and also new houses to the east of Cedar Way.

## 4. Cultural influences

### Open space

The primary focus for leisure and recreation within the character area is Bloomfield Green, an extensive area of public open space that is popular with dog walkers and has a diverse range of flora and fauna including a wildlife meadow. The Green has seen investment through improved facilities including the installation of goal posts, enhanced children's play equipment for ages 4 to 16, an outdoor table tennis table, benches, bins and information boards. Such improvements have afforded the space a Green Flag award over successive years. The Friends of Bloomfield Green organise a range of outdoor community events during the year.

Immediately to the north are the extensive Bloomfield Allotments which has a range of plots and is also host to a number of community activities including an annual outdoor theatre and events within a community orchard in the centre of the site. The allotments have three points access with a small car park to the south west which does necessitate vehicles using the tarmac path running along the northern edge of the Green via a secure gate.

A small area of green at the junction of Wellsway and Elm Place, locally known as The Gore hosts a disused water fountain that celebrates the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. A closed subterranean public toilet with ornate railings above ground was removed in the 2010s and grassed over, but the site is generally dominated by a range of public utility boxes including a Wessex Water valve station directly behind the fountain, telephone exchange boxes, and a large mobile phone mast.



## **Sport**

Bloomfield Green provides direct access to the Two Tunnels Greenway and Linear Park, a shared walking and cycling route, increasingly popular with commuters, where a number of running events also take place throughout the year.

Private tennis courts and a pavilion are located in Bloomfield Avenue and offer an open aspect despite being fenced off whilst Hayesfield Girls School has extensive sporting facilities within its grounds.

## **Tourism and leisure**

Shakespeare Avenue is the primary means of access to Alexandra Park which is just outside the character area with pedestrian routes to Beechen Cliff and its two principal viewpoints accessed from Beechen Cliff Road and Byron Road. The close proximity to the city centre and Alexandra Park and the pleasant traffic free walk through Beechen Cliff Woods and Magdalen Gardens to the cliff path does attract tourists and visitors to this part of the character area. Similarly, the historic setting of the picturesque Holloway with its raised walkway part of the Roman Fosse Way and once a pilgrimage route between the abbeys of Bath and Glastonbury is another attraction which draws visitors to the south of the City.

## **Community activities and the arts**

The churches of St. Bartholomew and Beechen Cliff both provide community spaces. The hall in Bruton Avenue hosts a monthly community market, a toddler group and a tea party whilst providing valuable social space to rent for events, classes and youth activities and a thriving pre-school playgroup. Bear Flat Artists is a successful co-operative supporting annual Open Studios exhibiting in resident's houses and venues across the area as well as a Christmas art fair.

Hayesfield School often hosts community events, including Sunday worship by the group called Father's House. The School has its own auditorium, the Roper Theatre.

## 5. Archaeology

There is very little evidence of significant ancient history in the area.

An ancient stone wall and fragments of Roman and medieval pottery have been found further up Wellsway towards Odd Down and it is thought that this might be a part of the ancient village of Berewick that stood south of Bear Flat (somewhere south of Hatfield Road / Greenway Lane and north of the playing fields at Odd Down).

## 6. Landmarks and views

See map, Appendix 1.

### Landmarks and views

The most significant views from within the character area are the full and intermittent views of the City from the path along Beechen Cliff, connecting the steps leading from Magdalen Gardens to Alexandra Park. The path is also accessible from Byron Road and Beechen Cliff Road: near the latter is a viewpoint sign of some historical interest as a number of City Centre landmarks shown have since disappeared or changed. The path and uphill approaches from Shakespeare Avenue particularly at the bend after its junction with Byron Road afford highly desirable views of Alexandra Park at the summit of Lyncombe Hill.

Key views from Beechen Cliff include the Lansdown and Cavendish Crescents, Beckford's Tower and the Bath Approach Golf Course which can also be viewed from the south on Wellsway at the entrance to the character area and to a lesser extent from the southern end of Chaucer Road to the east and Maple Grove in the west. Wide views towards the southern and western suburbs of the World Heritage Site are also afforded from Bloomfield Green and the allotments which together provide a significant open aspect within the character area. Fine views of Bathwick, framed by the chapel and woods can be had as one progresses down Holloway.



Westerly views down the Poets Corner avenues and their respective rear alleys include The Tumps, and the upper slopes of Bloomfield including Bloomfield Crescent, the High Barrow Hill (aka the Roundhill) especially from the higher parts of Kipling and Milton Avenues and at the entrance to Beechen Cliff School. Long distance views of Dundry Hill to the west and the Cotswold Edge at Kelston including its Roundhill to the north west can be enjoyed from the eastern higher ends of Shakespeare Avenue and Shelley Road.



The southern end of Wells Road at the junction with Oldfield Road allows views to lower parts of the city, Lansdown and The Royal Crescent. There is also an impressive view of major Bath crescents at the entry to Hayden Close and from the Cedar Walk. Bath Abbey and the Royal Crescent and Royal Victoria Park can be observed from Holloway at the entrance to Magdalen Avenue. The abbey can also be viewed at the western end of Upper Oldfield Park, where the spire of St. Johns Church can also be clearly observed. Bathwick Hill is prominent from Upper Oldfield Park and Holloway.

The character area comprises largely Victorian Villas within Upper and Lower Oldfield Parks, Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield Road and Maple Grove. The Edwardian Poets Corner forms a unified grid of large terraced properties on the western slopes of Lyncombe Hill. This grid is quite distinguishable when viewed from outside the character area especially from the south west along the upper reaches of Englishcombe Lane. Beechen Cliff and the higher placed properties on Shelley Road can be quite clearly seen from the City Centre and on Bath's northern slopes.

The Georgian rows of Devonshire Buildings to the south, Beechen Cliff Road, with mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century small scale mansions to the northeast and Elm Place at the junction of Bloomfield Road and the Wellsway provide distinctive landmarks that represent the earlier development of the area prior to its rapid growth at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The immediate post war redevelopment of the Bear Hotel and its distinctive fibre glass bear known locally as "Snowy" over its entrance arguably acts as an emblem for the centre of the district.

Further historical landmarks can be seen in numbers of small clusters across the character area. These include the raised Grade II listed pavement, railings and high stone walls on the northern side of Holloway, the Magdalen Chapel and adjoining Magdalen House, the disused well head, the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century former leper hospital and Paradise House with evidence that it once formed part of a much longer terrace. Additionally the buildings of South Hayes and the north side of Wells Road and the surviving building of the former Oldfield Park Boys' School, St. Mary's Buildings, the southern terraces of Oak Street and surviving examples of the labyrinthine alleyways and steps including those north of Magdalen Avenue, form a further cluster of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century landmarks and historical focal points. The large villas on the south side of Oldfield Road further contribute to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Beechen Cliff Methodist Church on Shakespeare Avenue and its bell tower represent a more localised landmark particularly as viewed along the well-used alleyway behind properties in Wellsway that connect the poet avenues. Arguably the recent Charters apartment block in Upper Oldfield Park provides a more contemporary landmark resonating the late Victorian villa style of its near neighbours and complements the modern extension to Hayesfield school.

## 7. Land uses and their influence

The character area is dissected by the A367 Wells Road and Wellsway which is dualled in part at Bear Flat. This is an extremely busy thoroughfare serving as the primary southern access to the City for heavy goods vehicles and numerous bus services including the Odd Down Park and Ride. It was a main tram route until the network was closed in 1939. Bus stops are located at the northern end of the Wellsway and at the Gore in Bloomfield Road. This does act as a barrier between Poets Corner, Hayesfield Park and Holloway from Bloomfield and Oldfield Park necessitating crossing at designated points and quite distinctly separates the retail and commercial businesses on the west and eastern sides of the local centre of Bear Flat. The B3111 Oldfield Road and Junction Road is a second classified road through the area linking the A367 to the A36.

Although predominantly composed of numerous residential neighbourhoods the commercial focus and hub for most of the character area is at Bear Flat where there is an extensive range of retail uses, food and drink establishments and other commercial services, with an increasing dominance of Class A2 estate agencies. Although there are two convenience stores at the corner of Bruton Avenue and to the south opposite Devonshire Buildings, the retail provision has in recent years generally moved away from every day offers to more specialised retail uses and lifestyle services. As is being reflected in all high streets and retail centres, empty units are becoming more prevalent. The commercial focus of many residents in the Oldfield Park part of the character area is Moorland Road, which lies just outside the character area.

Owing to the proximity of the character area to the City Centre, there are a significant number of hotels and guesthouses located predominantly along the Wells Road, Wellsway and in Upper Oldfield Park.

The character area is home to the upper school of Hayesfield Girls' School between Lower and Upper Oldfield Park. The new main campus of the renowned Norland College is located opposite. Thornbank Gardens to the far north of the area is a hall of residence for University of Bath students. Beechen Cliff Boys' School and mixed Sixth Form is located just to the east of the area but sees a significant footfall and traffic movements through Poets Corner in term time. Oldfield Park also has a number of medical practices. Oldfield Surgery is technically on Upper Oldfield Park though primary access is off Junction Road. (Junction Road Surgery is on the side of Junction Road not in the character area). There are two dental practices on Upper Oldfield Park.

There are three places of worship within the character area, the ancient Magdalen Chapel in Holloway, St. Bartholomew's Church in King Edward Road which was rebuilt following its destruction during the Bath Blitz and Beechen Cliff Methodist Church in Shakespeare Avenue both of which provide community hall space.

Many larger houses have been sub-divided into flats. The incidence of smaller houses in multi-occupation is low in Bear Flat but Oldfield Park has pockets of higher concentration of student housing.

## 8. Buildings, architectural quality and townscape

### Building age

While the character area may claim that its building heritage dates back to late Medieval times with the foundation of the former lepers' sanctuary and St Mary Magdalen chapel on Holloway in 1496, its development as a suburb of Bath did not begin to take place until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are then four key stages of development.

The first, taking advantage of the newly built Wells Road turnpike commissioned in the 1770s, is that of the late Georgian terraces, such as those of Devonshire Buildings, St Mary's Buildings and the smaller scale terraces of Oak Street and Elm Way.

The second stage is that of the single villa, making its initial appearance in Regency times along Beechen Cliff Road, but then growing in popularity with the development of much larger properties on Oldfield Road and Upper Oldfield Park in the 1840's and 1850's.

The third stage, saw the later development of Victorian terraced and semi-detached dwellings, continuing up to 1900.

The fourth and most extensive stage of development comprised that of the Edwardian terrace, as realised in the layout of the 'Poets Corner' avenues.

### Building form

The above four main building types are well represented in the character area. They are all residential, and together, approximately comprise some 95% of the area's current built form.



#### *The Georgian terrace*

Unlike comparable Georgian development in the centre of Bath, the speculatively developed Georgian terraces close to Bear Flat can be numbered on the fingers of one hand. Even with the new turnpike road and elevated views across the city, Bear Flat's distance from the centre limited its appeal to fashionable Georgian society. Such development as did take place was relatively scattered and varied in scale, from the elegant Devonshire Buildings with their generous front and back gardens and open country views, to the humble Oak Street terraces, now set below the main line railway embankment. However, the form of these terraced dwellings followed a common pattern. Where feasible, household functions in larger houses were vertically tiered to fit within a classical facade, starting with the kitchen and dining at ground or basement level, and terminating with the children's and servants' bedrooms at the very top.



#### *The domestic villa*

Although, at the end of the 18th century, Bath's resort status declined, its population continued to grow, and with it the demand, among those who could afford it, for a more comfortable, family-oriented life style, within easy commuting distance of the city, on plot locations as might initially be found along Beechen Cliff Road. Moving on from these well-mannered Regency dwellings, individual villa design emerged on much larger plots to be found in Oldfield Road, looking to the picturesque and Italianate. Adherence to the form of the classical terrace was no longer necessary. Rooms could be more generous

and airy. Parapets were out, slate roofs and gutters were in. Bay windows became fashionable, and on occasion whimsical features such as romantic towers or sheltered verandas were added. Built on such commodious sites as those of Oldfield Road and Upper Oldfield Park, the new proprietors, 'carriage folk', could both escape the noisome airs of the city, and embrace the greenery of the country suburb. The ambitious speculative development of 'Upper and Lower Oldfield Park', included, as its name implies, provision for a park area.



#### *The late Victorian semi-detached and terrace house*

Bath's population continued to increase from 54,000 in 1850 to 65,000 in 1900, and with it, came the pressure to accommodate a growing, but less affluent middle class. Development of large Regency and early Victorian villas on Oldfield Road simply stopped. The further development of Oldfield Park into Lower Oldfield Park was for the construction of much smaller, semi-detached dwellings on much reduced plot sizes. The same was true for the nearby development of Bloomfield Avenue. Double bay frontages gave way to single bay frontages, and back extensions became the norm, with kitchen and scullery at ground level, and bathroom and additional bed space above. Nevertheless, there remained pressure for still narrower plot sizes to accommodate a less well-off middle class, particularly on the western fringes of Oldfield Park, where residents of more modest terrace housing, such as that on Junction Road, focussed on Moorland Road for their local shopping rather than on Bear Flat.



#### *The Edwardian terrace*

The fourth and final building type well represented within the character area is that of the Edwardian terrace, principally located in the 'Poets Corner' area of Bear Flat. This grid of tree lined avenues benefited from both the proximity of Alexandra Park, opened in 1902, and the availability of good public transport into the city. The area attracted smaller size, less affluent middle-class families than those earlier resident in Bloomfield Avenue. Similar to its Victorian predecessors, the typical terrace house was mostly developed on two floors, with comparable back extensions accommodating kitchens, sculleries at ground level and toilets, bathrooms and extra bed space above. Since there was no service access either to the side or under the dwelling, a service lane to the rear provided for the delivery of coal and the disposal of waste. With the possible exception of three-storey dwellings on Shakespeare Avenue, few houses would have accommodated 'live-in maids'.

By 1914, the development of the character area as we perceive it today was practically complete. Residential exceptions in the inter-war years were the construction of some double-fronted bungalows, reminiscent of seaside cottages, at the top of Kipling Avenue, and the construction of a number of inter-war semi-detached houses at the top of Milton and Longfellow Avenues. But for the building of Hayesfield School, there was no other inter-war development of significance. While, following the Second World War, there were a number of war-damage sites to be redeveloped, including the 'Bear' pub, these failed to produce any architecture of note. However, recent site redevelopment has produced an improved standard of building design, as in the extension of Hayesfield School.

## Groups of buildings of historic / townscape value, reflecting the area's suburban development

*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.*

See maps, Annex 1

The late medieval lepers' sanctuary (1495) and St Mary Magdalen chapel, (local ashlar stone), with an early 19th century tower, (1823) on nos 90-92 Holloway, together the adjacent 'Paradise House' form a picturesque and important historic grouping. These buildings, located on the medieval route south out of Bath, are accessed off a raised 18th century flagged pavement with wrought iron railings, extending for more than half the length of Holloway. On the opposite side of Holloway, a long stone wall abuts the historic St Mary Magdalen gardens, and incorporates a probable 18th-century horse water trough, originally fed by local springs.

The character area contains a variety of late Georgian and Regency terraces:



- The earliest, Devonshire Buildings, although not uniform in detail and individual dates of construction, does (together with the adjacent nos 1 and 2 Devonshire Place) form a cohesive terrace of dwellings, each double fronted, built over three storeys, double depth in plan with central valleys, slate roofs and parapet-fronted facades. Where double fronted, kitchen and dining arrangements could be accommodated to one side of the central hall and staircase. They are unusual for their generous front gardens, and, to the rear of a communal service lane, equally extensive back gardens; some dwellings, notably nos 11 and 17, were designed, notwithstanding the service lane, to front onto the back garden, away from the main road. Most of the back gardens are now redeveloped with apartments. At the time of their construction, these terraced dwellings would have been well out in the country and a substantial coach ride out from the centre of Bath.



- 1-9 St Mary's Buildings (1820): While somewhat obscured from view on a steep slope rising above Wells Road, they nevertheless are important for their quality of design and overall uniformity of appearance. Attributed to John Pinch, they are three storeys in height, double depth in plan, built in Bath stone. Slate roofs with central valleys are screened by parapet facades. Dwellings are three storey, single fronted, with one 8/8 pane sash window within arched opening at ground, two 6/6 panes sash windows at first floor level and two 8/8 pane sash windows at second floor level. Plat bands, triglyph frieze, cornice and parapet sweep up to the right of each terrace dwelling. Dwelling no 5 has an ornamental iron balustrade at first floor level.



- 2-28 Bloomfield Road: But for end properties nos 26 and 28, the terrace presents a balanced whole, with three storey bookend blocks to either side, comprising nos 2 and 4 at one end, and nos 20, 22 and 24 at the other end, and a two-storey middle section, nos 6 - 18. The three storey end blocks are rusticated up to first floor cill level, with pilasters rising up to a cornice parapet. All units are single fronted, faced in limestone ashlar, with double roof and central valley. They each have stone paved forecourts and (generally) lean-to glazing to basements below. While the passage of time has led to some variations in forecourts and facade treatment, the form and scale of the terrace does nevertheless help provide a helpful, firm 'edge' to an extensive road area where Bloomfield Road joins Wellsway.



- 33 - 38 Oak Street (1820): They are of historic interest as a speculative development for a comparatively modest middle class. The numbered dwellings lie at the most southerly end of what was a more extensive street terminating on the Lower Bristol Road, now bisected by the main line railway. Dwelling units are only two storeys, originally faced in limestone ashlar. Their frontages simply comprise front door and one plain sash window at ground level and two plain sash windows at first floor level, with no more decoration than a cill band, and moulded cornice at parapet level.

Grouped Regency dwellings, mostly listed, located at Prospect Place and adjacent Beechen Cliff Road: Starting at the west end of this road, the late 18th century listed Lindsey and Clarendon house is followed by terraced nos 1, 2 and 3 Prospect Place, and then separately by 4 Prospect Place and Holly Lawn. Turning the corner to overlook St Mary Magdalen gardens, (omitting the later gabled, non-listed Newbury and St Kilda dwellings), the listed Beech Lodge, Blakelys and Tresco Cottage dwellings, end with the late 19th century Stanley House. With the possible exception of Lindsey and Clarendon, all these dwellings turn their back on Beechen Cliff Road, to enjoy the views across the city below. While maintaining parapets and well-mannered classical proportions, those facing out across St Mary Magdalen gardens have broader, simpler two storey frontages with broader sash windows. They appear not to wish to make a statement, but quietly enjoy their relatively unique cliff top location.



Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century villas located on southern side of Oldfield Road: these comprise five extant listed dwellings built on large plots in the 1840's, numbering 27, 28, 29, 31 and 35. The first two of these, formerly known as Ferns and Grosvenor, now converted into a nursing home, are three-storeys high with basements. Of elegant Italianate design, they feature gabled slate roofs, deep eaves, iron and stone balustrades, arched windows, a tent-hood veranda to rear and turret to left hand side. The other three are two storeys, and smaller in scale. They nevertheless are double fronted, and variously feature bay fronts, two octagonal, with moulded parapets and period balustrades. They are all well set back from the road, with generous carriage drives. Although not listed, the adjacent 'park layout' of Upper Oldfield Park is an interesting example of a more ambitious form of speculative development, which not only provided for large plots served by a generous curving avenue, but included, for the benefit of residents, its own park area.

Late, post 1850, semi-detached Victorian estate development: Bloomfield Avenue provides a prime example of Victorian estate development, facilitating the construction of pairs of houses built on narrow plots, (in most cases) just wide enough to fit a single-bay frontage, with service access to one side. While developed to cater for a less affluent middle class, the layout included, for the benefit of residents, a communal 'green' recreation area, similar in concept to Upper Oldfield Park. Post-war building and off-street parking within front gardens have reduced some of the cohesive character of the estate.

While development of terrace housing was a common form at this time, the Poets Corner grid of Edwardian terraces is of historic townscape significance for its quality, relative uniformity and extent, numbering five principal 'avenues', namely Shakespeare, Kipling, Milton, Longfellow and Chaucer. With the benefit of Conservation Area control, the terraces critically retain their front gardens, free of off-street parking, and uniform frontages.

Although Wellsway has little building of quality, Bear Flat is nevertheless of historical importance as local focal point, en route

from Bath to Wells, originally providing a level respite for horse drawn traffic on its climb up from central Bath. It is now the focus of a post-War constructed Bear pub, easily identified by its polar bear sculpture poised uncertainly over its entrance, and a number of local shops. While not particularly attractive in townscape terms, these contribute, with the addition of a key pelican crossing, bus stops and numerous bus services, to give the locality a significant social identity.

Looking at the area as a whole, proposals to demolish buildings are extremely rare. Nonetheless, the character of this part of the conservation area can be, and in some places is being, eroded by the cumulative effect of repetitive changes that individually might be thought not to be major. These include painting or other surface treatment on top of Bath stone, changes to fenestration, insertion of dormer windows (front and rear), and oversized or unsympathetic extensions. Where such changes may be deemed appropriate, consideration should nevertheless be given to the degree to which their scale, form and character enhance both the building and the conservation area as a whole. This includes consideration of building materials which are appropriate and relate to the locality. Keeping original fabric is essential to the character and historic integrity of the area. Also, the form and character of the rear of a building may well be of equal importance as that of its frontage.

A particular concern of late has been the risk of changes to strong boundary walls and entrances to accommodate or enlarge vehicular access and off-street parking. The impact on the setting of a building or its curtilage and on the character of the street is more often than not adverse. This applies not only to formal terraces such as Devonshire Buildings but to most streets in the character area. This issue involves not only loss of original fabric but also potentially loss of trees and vegetation that contribute to character.

### **Anchor buildings**

The area does not contain any significant anchor buildings, as say a church, or prominent building at the junction of two roads.

### **Listed buildings of historic/townscape significance**

All are listed grade II. Broadly, the list is from north to south. Note: in some streets/roads, there are further listed buildings that are not listed here as they fall into an adjacent area.

#### *Oak Street:*

- 1, 1A, 2-5
- 33-38

#### *Wells Road:*

- 1-9, St Mary's Buildings
- South Hayes House
- 72-84 (even) with front boundary wall and gateway

#### *Holloway:*

- 86 with piers and railings
- Boundary walls, railings and piers with urns to 88
- Paradise House Hotel
- 90
- Chapel of St Mary Magdalen
- Well-Head with Walls, Steps and Railings

- Walls, Piers and Gate to 92
- Magdalen House
- Raised Pavement, from 8 Hayes Place to entry to Magdalen Road



*Beechen Cliff Road: (from west to east)*

- Piers, gate and quadrant boundary walls to Linsley House and Clarendon House
- Linsley House and Clarendon House
- 1, 2 and 3 Skerrymore
- 4, Prospect Place
- Holly Lawn
- Beech Lodge
- Blakeleys and Tresco Cottage
- Shirley Cottage and Shirley Villa
- Weymouth House and Nelson House
- Alpine Cottage
- Eastern House

*Oldfield Road: (from west to east)*

- Gate piers and boundary walls to St Catherine's Nursing Home
- 27 and 28
- Gate piers and boundary walls to 29
- 29 Hillhaven
- Gate piers and boundary walls to 32
- 31 Mount Rose
- Oldfield Villa and The Cottage
- Rock Hall
- 35, 35A and 35B
- 36 and 37



*Wellsway:*

- 24-32 formerly Lloyds Bank (32) and railings
- 34 and 34A

*Bloomfield Road:*

- 2 and 4 and attached railings
- 6-18 (even) and attached railings
- 20, 22 and 24 and attached railings
- 26 and 28 and attached railings
- 23 and 25
- 27 and 29
- 31 and 33

*Bloomfield Road with Wellsway:*

- Queen Victoria Jubilee Water Fountain

*Devonshire Place:*

- 1, 2 and 3

*Devonshire Buildings:*

- 20 and 21
- 18, 19
- 17 with gate piers and boundary walls
- 14 and 15 with gate piers and boundary walls



- 12a and 13 with boundary walls and gate piers
- 11 with boundary wall and gate piers
- 10
- 8 and 9 with railings and gate piers
- 6 and 7 with boundary wall and gate piers
- 4 and 5 with boundary wall and gate piers
- 2 and 3 with boundary walls and gate piers
- Shaftesbury House, with boundary walls and piers

### Unlisted buildings of merit



#### *Main groups of unlisted buildings of merit*



- Beechen Cliff Road (north side), Newberry, St Kilda and Stanley House
- Bloomfield Avenue, nos 51-53 consecutive, 56-58 consecutive, and nos 61 and 99
- Bloomfield Road (east side), nos 1 to 11 odd, and nos 15 to 21 odd
- Cedar Villas, nos 3 to 6 consecutive
- Hayesfield Park, Hawkesridge, Greystones, Hayesbrow, Granville House, Winsley, Kenilworth, and Grassmere
- Oldfield Road (north side), nos 1 to 4 consecutive, and nos 5 to 16 consecutive
- Oldfield Road (south side), no 30 and nos 42 to 45 consecutive
- Shelley Avenue (north side), nos 1 to 17 consecutive
- Upper Oldfield Park (north side), nos 8 to 18 even and Hayesfield Girls Upper School (aka Oldfield Lodge)
- Upper Oldfield Park (south side), nos 1 to 39 odd, and nos 51 to 61 odd
- Wells Road (east side), nos 119 to 147 odd, and no 149 (linked to Hayesfield Park)
- Wells Road (west side), South Hayes House (adjoining east end of listed terrace), Raglan Villa, nos 58 and 60, and nos 92 to 98 even



#### *Individual unlisted buildings of merit*

- Bloomfield Road (west side), Wentworth House
- Chaucer Road, Esher House
- Lower Oldfield Park, nos 73 and 75
- Shakespeare Avenue, Beechen Cliff Methodist Church
- Wells Road, Chelsea House (no 120)
- Wellsway, nos 54 and 56

#### *Other unlisted artefacts of merit*



- Roundhouse to rear of Greenway Court
- 'Norton St Phillip' shopfront at no 32 Junction Road
- Viewpoint below footpath off Beechen Cliff Road, above Magdalen Gardens, overlooking the City

Further such buildings and structures of local value for the local list are likely to emerge from a thorough survey of the character area, to be undertaken.



### Townscape features of merit

- Listed 18<sup>th</sup> century pavement and railings alongside Holloway
- The ensemble of Magdalen Chapel and the associated listed buildings on Holloway are a townscape feature and warrant a II\* grade for their group value and their architectural and especially historic interest
- Victoria Diamond Jubilee Fountain
- Hayes Place, unlisted buildings but enclosing a space (currently vehicle-dominated) that adds to the sense of place at Bear Flat
- Corner at Devonshire buildings creating the vista from Chaucer Road



### Buildings at risk

- The Roundhouse to the rear of Devonshire Buildings: apparently unused, and not listed
- Victoria Diamond Jubilee Fountain: possibly unstable and clearly not maintained

### Negative buildings and townscape features

- Although the site was formerly occupied by a garage, the present form and single-storey scale of the Majestic premises and former Carphone Warehouse on Wellsway, together detract from the adjacent 18<sup>th</sup> century terrace of Elm Place. The forecourt car park is a noticeable leaking of the containment otherwise a feature of the Bear Flat local centre.
- Tesco higher up Wellsway is at best a mediocre building and its forecourt car park is a negative in the streetscape.
- The premises of Hebron & Medlock, Oldfield Road, do not maintain the character of the north side which has seven listed buildings.
- The unfortunate application of a road improvement line and its subsequent withdrawal have left an uneven building line and a lack of enclosure in the mews behind Devonshire Buildings
- The sprawling design, mostly single-storey, of Oldfield Surgery is out of character, though there are advantages in having medical facilities at ground level.
- Blocks of garages mar a number of streets including Bruton Avenue, Chaucer Road and Upper Oldfield Park.
- As in a number of areas in Bath, the recent growth of utility control boxes located on the back edge of pavements or scattered across open ground, can, as in the case of the listed Victoria Diamond Jubilee fountain, and the adjacent Gore open space, both directly detract from the character of a listed civic feature and mar the amenity of a focal public grassed area.

## 9. Materials and detailing

The majority of buildings in the character area are built of Bath stone, with finely cut and jointed ashlar on principal elevations. However, to the rear, such terraces as Devonshire Buildings, walls were commonly built in rubble stone, sometimes lime rendered. This device was not uncommon on the front facade, as in the case of the earliest Devonshire Buildings dwellings, nos 18, 19, 20 and 21, built between 1800 and 1804.

The vertical sliding sash dominated window design from Georgian times right up to the Edwardian period. Most Georgian sashes contained six panes, sometimes varied to eight to allow for lower cill heights or access to balcony. Sash boxes were tucked out of sight behind outer stonework and internal splayed reveals, which most often contained folding shutters. With introduction of heavier plate glass in the mid-19th century, window sections needed to become thicker and weights heavier. Unfortunately, many home owners of non-listed buildings have replaced original wood sashes with modern plastic ones.

The need, in Georgian and Regency times, to hide double roofs behind classical facades with parapets, produced a variety of secret gutters and central valley drains. The general aim was to drain the rainwater to the rear of the building. All guttering had to be lead-lined, and, since there were no cast iron pipes, open (lead lined) box-section gutters, were often required to traverse the internal roof space.

Provided that it was well proportioned, the classical Georgian facade could be treated quite simply with a minimum of banding or additional decorative features, be it iron flower guards or elegant balcony. The essential simplicity of the classical Georgian facade allowed it to be convincingly applied as much to the modest York Street terrace, as to the up-market Devonshire Buildings.

The move away from the ordered Georgian terrace to the single, romantically-inspired villa had particular implications for building design. Pitched slate roofs could more simply be drained on all four elevations, with the benefit, in Victorian times, of cast-iron gutters and downpipes. Now they could feature generous gables, overhanging eaves and decorative barge boards. Chimney stacks, previously hidden away, could be given due prominence. Heavier plate glass sashes could be proudly displayed in bay windows. Glass and cast iron could be brought together in verandas and conservatories.

The growing demand of an aspiring middle class for living space, brought to an end the earlier development of romantic villas in park-like settings. As in Bloomfield Avenue and Lower Oldfield Park, the development market abruptly switched to single bay frontage dwellings on much smaller, narrower plots. Kitchens and sculleries were pushed to the rear in back extensions, generally at ground level, but occasionally at half basement level. If there were no rear access to a service lane, and no basement, then a side passage for delivery of coal and other goods was essential. The concept of the 'semi-detached' became established.

Fashionable demands for light and fresh air, led to the demand for bay windows, high ceilinged rooms and improved sanitation. In the case of nos 56 Bloomfield Avenue, ground and first floor bays ballooned out to include six sash windows. By 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, all window taxes were removed, and road layouts were commonly provided with fresh water and foul drainage. Railways helped distribute standardised, manufactured building products. By then, dwellings, whether terraced or semi-detached, were commonly single fronted and decorated with gothic, rather than classical features. With 'gothicization' the design of the front of the dwelling was vertically sliced in two, the larger part often comprising bay windowed ground and first floors, typically capped with Tudor themed roof, as in nos 57 and 58 Bloomfield Avenue.

Bath stone continued to play a key role in this period, most particularly in the accurate cutting and dressing required for lintels, cills, mullions and quoins. However, it became fashionable for this precise edging to openings and corners to be complemented by areas of less finely jointed rubble stone.

The model of the single-fronted two-storey house with back extension, which had established itself by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continued in popularity right up to the First World War, and, in the case of the character area, the development of the Edwardian Poets Corner terraces. While somewhat smaller in scale, with smaller plot sizes and tighter cross-wall dimensions, their key difference was in the provision of a service lane to the rear of the property, sufficient in size for dust carts and coal deliveries. Side passage ways were no longer a necessary feature.

Non-residential buildings constitute a tiny minority of the area's built fabric, and comprise a miscellany of uses (e.g. religious as that of Methodist Chapel in Shakespeare Avenue; commercial as that of the Bear pub and adjacent shops with offices or other recent welfare/school/retail buildings on specific sites). They do not constitute or reflect a building type characteristic of the area.



## 10. Streets and movement

### Introduction

The A367 Trunk Road comprising Wells Road and Wellsway runs across the Bear Flat and Oldfield Park character area from north to south. Wells Road runs south-west from Churchill Bridge over the River Avon and junction with the A36, before becoming Wellsway which extends southwards through Bear Flat towards Peasedown St John and Radstock. The A367 is a wide and busy road separating Oldfield Park and the Bloomfield area to the west from Poets Corner and Hayesfield Park/Holloway to its east. Especially in the rush hour, the A367 is heavily used by cars, buses and goods vehicles as well as cycles. In addition to accommodating traffic from the south of Bath to the City Centre, Wellsway leads to Oldfield Road and Upper Oldfield Park in the north-west of the character area, which provide access across the railway line to the Lower Bristol Road and western side of Bath City.



Holloway used to be the most important route south of Bath. It is now a cul-de-sac but remains an important through route for pedestrians and cyclists from Bear Flat wishing to reach the City Centre. The centre can be reached either by way of the underpass beneath the railway lines and A36 at Churchill Bridge, or through Widcombe to Halfpenny Bridge and the railway station.

The road network has historic significance in the Bear Flat and Oldfield Park character area, and contributes significantly to the character and appearance of this part of Bath Conservation Area.

A characteristic of the area is the number and variety of paths from the lanes behind the avenues in Poets Corner to lengthy routes for pedestrians such as Cedar Way. The current audit of paths, ward by ward, shows each.

### Density and degree of enclosure

#### *Oldfield Park*

Oldfield Road, Junction Road and Upper Oldfield Park are mostly adjoined by substantial residential properties, set back from the road with gardens and some mature trees separating them from the road network. Hayesfield Girls' School is set back from Lower Oldfield Park and Upper Oldfield Park, with open space surrounding its main buildings.



The northern boundary of Oldfield Park is close to the railway line between Bath Spa and Bristol. Although private views from the rear of properties along Lower Oldfield Park will include the railway line, it is not visible from public vantage points along the road where the built form gives a sense of enclosure.

This is an area of moderate density with well-used roads which are commonly reduced in width (to take only one-way traffic) by the substantial level of on-street parking.



### *Holloway*

Holloway, within the Bear Flat and Oldfield Park character area, is adjoined on the south side by the green and steeply rising area of Beechen Cliff. The dwellings along Beechen Cliff Road and listed properties on Prospect Place are not readily seen from Holloway because they occupy higher ground and are shielded by trees.

The historic raised pavement with railings, old chapel and high wall on the north side of Holloway provide a sense of enclosure. The junction with Magdalen Avenue provides a brief long-distance view northwards across the city of Bath. Those travelling down Holloway have fine views, especially when framed by the church, of Bathwick and the green space above it. Indeed, the upper part of Holloway ranks not only as a place of great character, beauty and historic interest in terms of the character area but in terms of Bath as a whole.

At its southern end, Holloway meets Beechen Cliff Road and Hayes Place which is fronted by some terraced housing and a number of retail outlets with a cafe and takeaway shop. The wide road provides scope for significant on-street parking adjacent to Bear Flat Local Centre.

### *Wells Road*

The stretch of Wells Road within the character area climbs relatively steeply from the Avon Valley floor westwards. It is flanked on the south side initially by terraced Victorian/Edwardian properties with front gardens which rise above the road and give a sense of enclosure. On the north side, there are some substantial detached buildings on lower ground than the road, with spaces between them which afford long distance views towards the River and north side of Bath. Wells Road is relatively wide with on-road parking spaces initially on the south side and then on the north side. Along the top part of Wells Road and on Wellsway to Bear Flat's Local Centre, development is set back from the road and consists mainly of substantial detached or semi-detached properties of varying ages and style at a moderately low density.

### *Bloomfield*

Bloomfield Avenue, Maple Grove and the northern part of Hensley Road are mainly residential roads, with generally spacious / low density development alongside. Bloomfield Green, a substantial area of open space, borders the west side of Bloomfield Road. Detached and semi-detached dwellings (including some listed properties) adjoin the east side of Bloomfield Road. They have sizeable rear gardens with old stone walls and mature trees which back onto Wellsway.



### *Poets Corner*

This area contains a number of parallel roads on the east side of Wellsway rising towards Alexandra Park, as well as Chaucer Road which extends from north to south between Beechen Cliff Road and Devonshire Buildings. Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses predominate in this area of comparatively high density. Front gardens and street trees, as well as the local topography, contribute to the suburban character of the area and provide long views towards Alexandra Park in the east and towards Oldfield Park and Bloomfield in the west.



### *Wellsway*

Bear Flat Local Centre, with its Co-op store, the Bear Hotel and other shops and services, has a significant presence in the street scene close to the sharp bend in the road on Wellsway. The Local Centre south of the bend occupies a relatively level and open area of ground. Between the Bear Hotel and the Gore, Wellsway is designed as a dual carriageway with a paved central area, and a bus lane on the western side. The post-war buildings occupied by the Majestic Wine outlet and former Carphone Warehouse, being mostly single-storey and set back from the road, contribute to a sense of spaciousness. The most attractive part of this open area is the Gore with its historic fountain and adjoining green triangle.

Beyond the Gore, the road southwards splits with Wellsway continuing to the south-east and Bloomfield Road to the south-west. South of this junction, the land rises and there are good views along both roads of a generally greener, more open environment. St Luke's parish church (just outside the character area) is also visible in these views. On the east side of Wellsway, from Bruton Avenue to Devonshire Buildings at the edge of the character area, the main road is flanked by predominantly terraced or closely spaced semi-detached houses built in the Victorian or Edwardian eras. With short front gardens, old stone walls and narrow pavements, these give a sense of enclosure to Wellsway.

Development on the west side of the main road is more diverse and high walls give a sense of enclosure to much of this side of Wellsway. The listed terrace of Elm Place faces the triangular green space at the Gore. On the southern edge of the Bear Flat and Oldfield Park area, a small Tesco store abuts Wellsway.

### **Street pattern and use**

#### *Oldfield Park*

Oldfield Road, Junction Road, Upper Oldfield Park and Lower Oldfield Park are subject to a significant amount of through traffic movements between the Lower Bristol Road (A36) and Wellsway. Bus services operate along Oldfield Road and Lower Oldfield Park, with the latter including bendy buses and double-decker buses to Bath University. Hayesfield Girls' School occupies the central part of this area, along with Norland Nanny and multiple doctor and dental surgeries operating on Upper Oldfield Park and Junction Road. These generate significant traffic movements that create competition with local residents for the limited number of on-street parking spaces, especially on Junction Road which does not have a resident parking permit regime in place.

#### *Holloway*

As Holloway is a cul-de-sac, its use by vehicles is limited, although it is the means of vehicular access to Magdalen Avenue, and there is significant on-street parking at the top end of the road near to Hayes Place. Hayes Place, with the Co-op, cafes and other retail outlets attracts delivery and customer vehicles which park at the top of Holloway and end of Beechen Cliff Road. Hayesfield Park between Wells Road and Holloway serves a number of predominantly residential properties, but also provides a rat-run for traffic seeking to avoid congestion along Wellsway (usually in vain).

Holloway affords a direct route to the City Centre for pedestrians away from the busy Wells Road. Footpaths through Beechen Cliff and Carlton Gardens, leading to Lyncombe Hill and Widcombe, are also accessible from Holloway. Holloway, despite the steep gradient, is also regularly used by cyclists.



### *Wells Road*

Wells Road carries high levels of traffic throughout the day and particularly in the rush hour. Buses and heavy goods' vehicles, as well as cars and bicycles, use this major road into the city centre.

### *Bloomfield*

Bloomfield Avenue has been a rat run for through traffic to reach Oldfield Park and the Lower Bristol Road and west side of Bath from Wellsway (the direct route being via Oldfield Road) though such use has diminished since the introduction of a residents' parking zone. On-street parking on Bloomfield Avenue has reduced for the same reason.

Bloomfield Green has an entrance for pedestrians and cyclists on Bloomfield Road and the paths across the Green give access to the Two Tunnels, including the Linear Park towards the River Avon, as well as the extensive allotments. The open and green character of this area gives pedestrians and cyclists good long-distance views of the south and west of Bath.

Access for pedestrians and cyclists through this area is generally good, giving links to Hayesfield School, the medical centre (and to Moorland Road Local Centre beyond the western edge of the character area). From Oldfield Road, there is a relatively steep but direct footpath north to Cedar Villas and Lower Oldfield Park, which connects Bear Flat to the Lower Bristol Road in the vicinity of the retail centre at Green Park (and a path comes off it towards Junction Road).



### *Poets Corner*

Poets Corner is self-contained in the sense that there is no through road, but traffic is significantly increased by travel to and from Beechen Cliff School. To a lesser extent, visitors to Alexandra Park increase the traffic flows. On-street parking, which has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Victorian/Edwardian built environment, has been reduced following implementation of the Residents' Parking Zone in 2019; however, the majority of dwellings are terraced and do not have off-street parking space.

The Avenues provide good pedestrian access to Alexandra Park and the woodlands of Beechen Cliff. Pedestrian access is also afforded along a number of public rights of way behind the Avenues, for example alongside the Methodist Church between Bruton Avenue and Shakespeare Avenue, and then continuing southwards parallel to Wellsway. These provide quiet places to walk or cycle, away from the noise and pollution associated with road traffic on Wellsway.

### *Wellsway*

As with Wells Road, Wellsway carries high levels of traffic throughout the day and particularly in the rush hour. Buses and heavy goods' vehicles, as well as cars and bicycles, use this major road into the City Centre.



## Public realm and street furniture

Bloomfield Green is the principal area of public open space in the character area. Its openness, greenness (trees and grassland) and extensive views south and west contribute positively to the area. There is an extensive public footpath network through Bear Flat and Oldfield Park, away from roads and traffic, which also enhances the area. This includes the Linear Park south of Bloomfield Green, the lanes through Poets Corner and beside Beechen Cliff, and paths to the north of Oldfield Road.



There are bus stops along Wells Road and Wellsway, as well as Bloomfield Road, Oldfield Road and Lower Oldfield Road. Waste bins, post boxes and utilities' cabins, as well as the telecommunications' mast at the Gore, add to the street furniture.

Bear Flat Local Centre contains many other items of street furniture. Bus shelters with illuminated signs are located at The Gore, outside the Bear Hotel and across Wellsway on either side of the junction with Shakespeare Avenue. Cycle storage facilities are in evidence outside the Hotel and the pharmacy beside Hayes Place. To cater for the significant pedestrian footfall in the Local Centre, pedestrian crossing facilities are available most noticeably outside the Bear Hotel but also across Wellsway at the Gore beside the road junction with Kipling Avenue. Wellsway through the Local Centre has tall and prominent street lights. 20mph speed limits operate in most streets with signs to announce this.

The businesses in the Local Centre also contribute to street furniture with chairs and tables outside the Bear Hotel for much of the year as well as at Da Vinci's delicatessen. The polar bear above the Hotel is a well-known local landmark. Significant levels of parking take place in the Local Centre, in Hayes Place, at the front of the Majestic wine warehouse, and close to the Gore on either side of Bloomfield Road; also, on the east side of Wellsway south of Kipling Avenue.

## Vitality and tranquillity

The presence of major roads through Bear Flat, notably along Wells Road and Wellsway, disturbs the tranquillity but can add to vitality, notably in the Local Centre and at Hayes Place. Other detrimental effects from major road traffic are community severance (partly mitigated by pedestrian crossing facilities), noise and poor air quality. Around the Local Centre, large delivery vehicles and business-related parking is indicative of vitality but can be detrimental to visual amenity. The presence of various "rat run" routes also diminishes the tranquillity of the area.

The Bear Hotel and the concentration of shops on Hayes Place and Wellsway with their visual interest and consequent activity contribute to the vitality of the area.

An increase in aircraft movements seems likely to follow the expansion of Bristol Airport with a detrimental impact on this character area as well as the rest of Bath.

## 11. Trees, open space, parks and gardens

See map, Annex 1



### Trees

The following trees/ groups of trees are subject to TPOs across Bear Flat and Oldfield Park:

- Off Hensley Road, adjacent to the entrance to the 2 Tunnels;
- Bloomfield Avenue where it extends north towards Oldfield Road;
- Upper Oldfield Park;
- Hayesfield Park;
- Wells Road (single tree on the north side);
- Greenway Court and edge of Beechen Cliff School Grounds.

Other trees subject to TPOs which are close to the boundary of this character area, and important to its setting, are along St Luke's Road and around St Luke's Church, around Bloomfield House and at the corner of Bloomfield Park and Bloomfield Road.



The eastern border of Bear Flat is flanked by extensive woodland across Beechen Cliff and there are many mature trees in Alexandra Park. Beechen Cliff's trees, located on steeply sloping ground, contribute to attractive, green views from Holloway, Wells Road and Wellsway, and provide a marked contrast for travellers along these roads to the views in other directions of the City Centre and built-up areas of Bath. There are long distance views from Bear Flat and the Bloomfield area to the south where high ground beyond Englishcombe Lane is mostly undeveloped and well wooded.

### Private gardens

Throughout the area, trees and planting in private gardens soften the impact of built development. The more spacious Georgian and Victorian buildings in the Oldfield Park, Bloomfield and Hayesfield Park areas are well endowed with trees and shrubs which contribute to a spacious and green suburban character. At the fringes of Oldfield Park, as it approaches Moorlands, the size and concentration of trees diminishes in comparison to other parts of the character area as the property lot sizes also shrink.

Wellsway and the Poets Corner avenues, with more closely spaced terraced housing, include smaller gardens but these are nevertheless nearly all planted with trees, hedges and green shrubs as well as garden plants. Trees planted along the pavements ('street trees'), and hedges along the footways behind the houses, enhance the appearance of the street scene.

### Public open spaces

Bloomfield Green, which has an active Friends Group of Supporters, is an extensive area of well-maintained open space, accessed from and visible from Bloomfield Road. The space is well-used by walkers, including dog-walkers, as well as cyclists going to the Two Tunnels and towards Western Bath. Access to the Linear Park via Bloomfield is an advantage to train commuters using it as a route to Oldfield Park Station, cyclists heading to the Bath to Bristol cycle path and



shoppers seeking a pleasant route to Moorland Road shops. The Linear Park thus offers attractive ways to avoid congestion and air pollution.

The open space includes recreational facilities for children and hosts community events in the Summer, most notably the annual Gathering on the Green.

Bloomfield Allotment Gardens are located immediately north of the Open Space and are well-used by local people. They provide an extensive open area, visible from the rear of properties along Elm Place, Bloomfield Avenue and Maple Grove.

The Gore at the junction of Bloomfield Road and Wellsway is a triangular area of green space, which marks the entrance to Bear Flat and has historic significance. Its maintenance as a green area is essential, with the removal of the unsightly utilities' cabins a highly desirable objective.

Whilst not public open spaces, there are two significant areas of open space which are visible from public highways and contribute positively to the appearance of the character area. These are:

- Bloomfield Avenue wraps around a cluster of grass tennis courts with an old wooden building, which provides a distinctive and attractive core to the street scene. The green space is particularly visible from the north side of Bloomfield Avenue, and views of the courts are complemented by the trees and gardens of residential properties in the street.
- The open area around Hayesfield School which contributes to a sense of spaciousness in this part of Oldfield Park.



## 12. Night-time character

Whilst the character area is predominantly residential, the local centre of Bear Flat and the Wellsway corridor are the primary focus of any night time activity, with emphasis on the Bear Hotel and Devonshire public house just outside the boundary to the south and a selection of other restaurants on the west side at the corner of Wellsway and the Wells Road. The Roper Theatre at Hayesfield School is well used in the evenings. The close proximity of the City Centre and the fact the A367 is a key artery route into the central area of Bath means that there is a steady flow of traffic along Wellsway and Wells Road on most evenings. There are frequent bus services and can be significant pedestrian activity particularly along Holloway. The two retail convenience stores generally see regular footfall during the evening. For some areas, such as Holloway/Wellsway and Oldfield Park, there can be occasional episodes of night time anti-social behaviour from those returning home after nights out.



### 13. Issues affecting the Character Area

#### What are the assets of the character area?

- Strong character from traditional buildings of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Within the character area there are sub-areas displaying significant degrees of homogeneity, through common scale, density, repetition of design detailing, materials and spacing between buildings.
- Strong boundary walls enclosing properties are widespread and particularly valuable.
- Historically important Holloway with its fine buildings and features. A scatter of terraces, groups and individual listed buildings, together with many other fine, unlisted buildings.
- Strong and frequent visual links to and from the City and beyond. Views from the character area northwards to the City Centre, and across to Lansdown and the hills beyond and westwards across suburban Bath and its countryside setting.
- A sustainable neighbourhood with local shops, largely focussed on Bear Flat, and good bus services. Good accessibility via car, bus, cycle and foot to City Centre services and facilities and its bus and train stations.
- Bear Flat centre is identified in the Local Plan as a Local Centre. The adopted 2017 Place Making Plan also identifies Bear Flat as a Local Centre (policy CP12)
- An abundance and variety of trees on both public and private land. Most houses retain mature, well stocked gardens with a range of trees and other planting which contributes significantly to the attractive appearance and character of the area. Many of the residential streets are flanked with street trees.
- The area has an attractive green setting, being bounded by Beechen Cliff woodlands, Alexandra Park, Beechen Cliff School playing fields and the Linear Park.
- Significant public open space at Bloomfield Green, its nearby allotments, the Gore, land around Hayesfield School, together with the privately-owned Bloomfield Avenue tennis courts.
- Many traffic free pedestrian routes, e.g. the cliff-top path, the lanes in Poets Corner, the path from Oldfield Road towards the Lower Bristol Road, the path from Holloway to Wells Road.



### What are the weaknesses of the character area?

- Heavy traffic movements along Wells Road and Wellsway, and also on secondary roads such as Bloomfield Avenue, Oldfield Road and Upper Oldfield Park causing community severance, poor air quality, traffic noise and visual intrusion. School traffic, especially to Beechen Cliff School, using otherwise quiet residential streets.
- Widespread on-street parking marring views.
- On occasion new development has been mediocre and failed to enhance the character of the conservation area.
- Indiscriminate placing of utility equipment, with the Gore area in particular being all too convenient to utility companies seeking space for unsightly telecoms mast and several cabinets.
- The prevailing style, scale design and detailing of the architecture means that it is all too vulnerable to unsympathetic alterations, improvements, redevelopment.

### What opportunities exist to improve the area?



- To raise the standard for new development to enhance the conservation area.
- To reduce traffic travelling along the main roads into and out of the centre of Bath by measures such as reduction in the amount of parking provision within the City Centre, improved public transport, better facilities for walkers and cyclists and enhancing Park and Ride provision.
- To reduce the amount of rat running through residential streets in the area by way of sensitive traffic management schemes.
- To reduce the scale of private car travel to the local schools by the production, implementation and enforcement of School Travel Plans Other sources of significant car trips such as medical practices could also have travel plans.
- To reduce traffic volumes and incidence of air pollution by developing and implementing coherent plans for both air quality and overall traffic management for Bath city-wide.
- To improve facilities for and the environment of cyclists and pedestrians, especially crossings for Bloomfield Road and Wells Road (which has only one crossing point between Bear Flat and Churchill Bridge subway)
- To replace instances e.g. railings where the insensitive response to the management of road traffic and pedestrian safety from an earlier era persist.
- To better maintain and enhance the quality of the public realm, such as signage, kerbs and pavements. (The listed 18<sup>th</sup> century pavement and railings alongside the Holloway provides an object lesson of how thoughtful design can produce a pleasing resolution of a public safety problem)

- To renew street trees where appropriate and seek to increase their number as a contribution not only to visual appeal but to clean air and carbon capture.
- To improve the maintenance of street trees in some places, notably along Wellsway.
- To enhance the role of the Bear Flat shopping centre in line with its Development Plan status.
- To enhance the Gore area and Hayesfield Place to provide community focuses and meeting places.
- By community action by the BFA to identify problems with the public realm, such as streets that need improvement through minor changes and better cleaning and maintenance.
- To seek the regrading of St Mary's Buildings as a grade II\* listed building and to upgrade significant buildings in the area to achieve either listed building status or, if not, greater recognition by local listing.

### **What factors may be seen as threats?**

- Failure to implement air pollution and traffic management plans for the City.
- Additional "rat run" traffic in Oldfield Park streets.
- Changes in surrounding areas which would increase traffic travelling through the area.
- Pressure arising from residents' parking zones to encourage the construction of more private garages and off-street parking spaces, leading to the demolition of front garden walls and replacement of front gardens with hardstandings, and so damaging the character and appearance of the area (particularly in parts such as Poets Corner where front gardens are so far intact).
- Unsuitable redevelopment of existing sites such as the rear gardens of Victorian villas out of scale and/or destructive of trees.
- Painting or other surface treatment on top of Bath stone, seen for instance in Devonshire Buildings and Oak Street.
- Additions to existing houses which would reduce the separation between buildings, and so diminish the visual gaps and longer distance views.
- Replacement of traditional materials by unsympathetic modern ones, e.g. timber sash by uPVC, reconstituted stone.



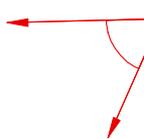


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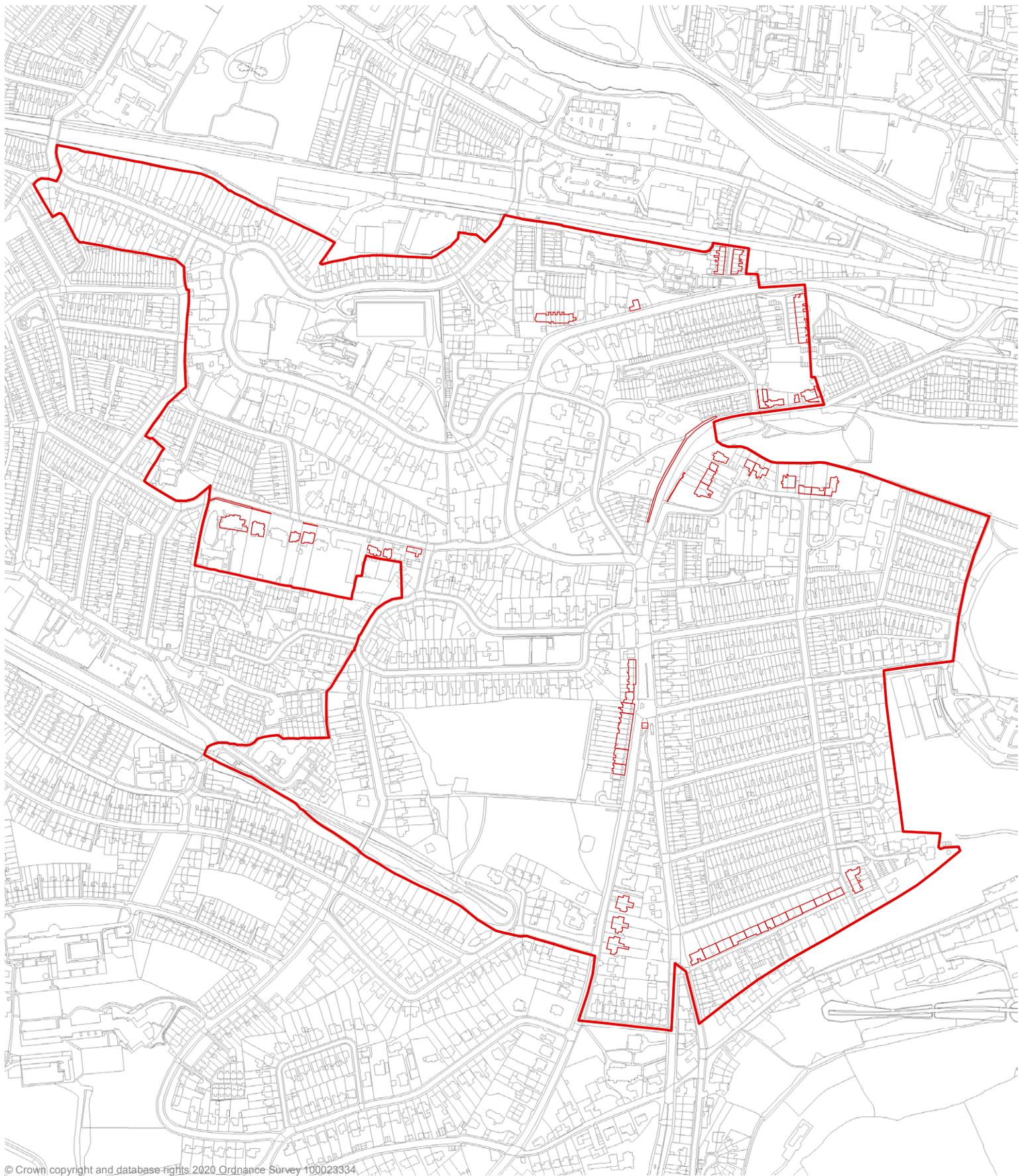
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 : Landmarks

 : View

 : Panoramic view

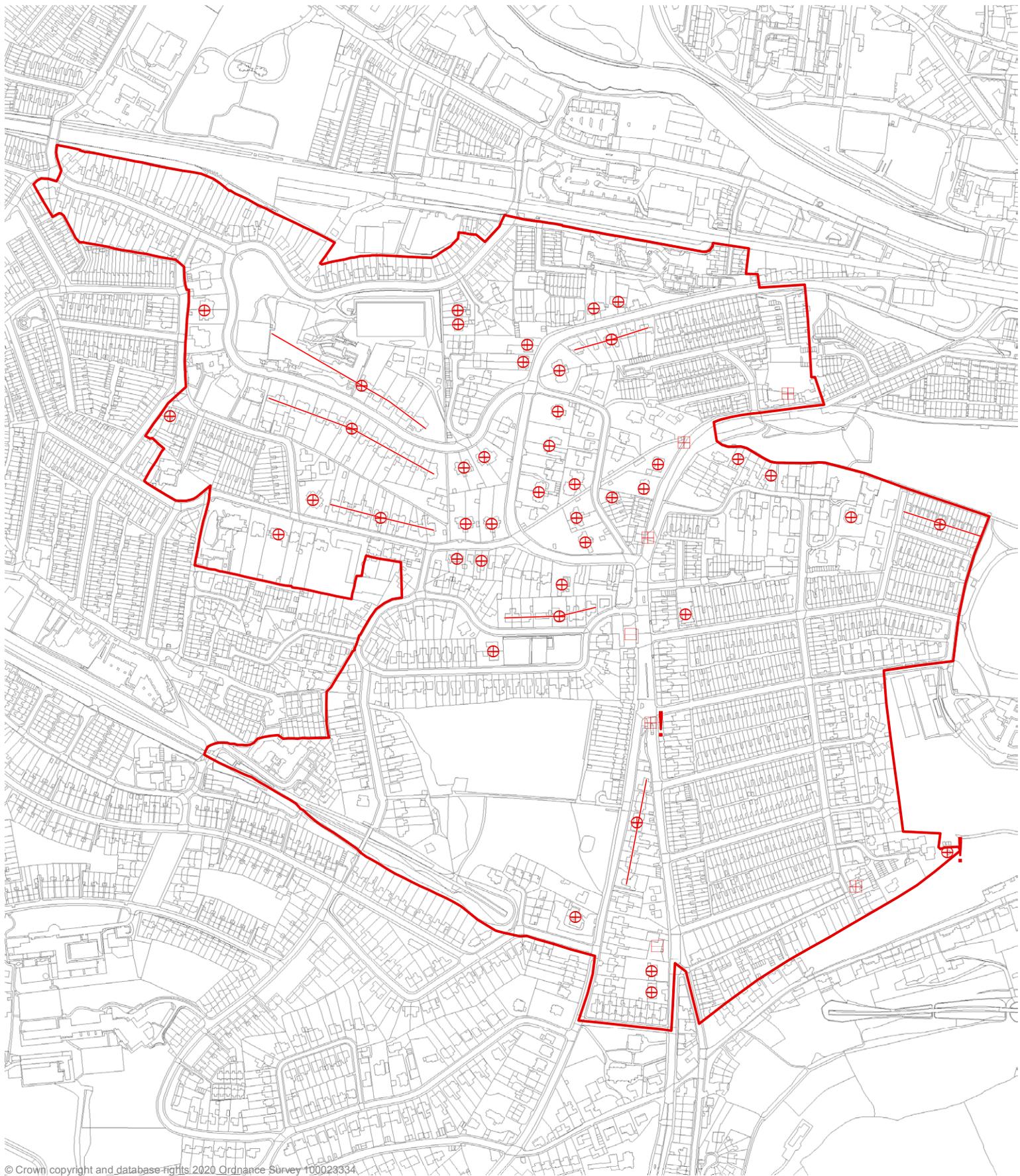
**Landmarks and views**



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Key:  
 : Grade II

Listed buildings

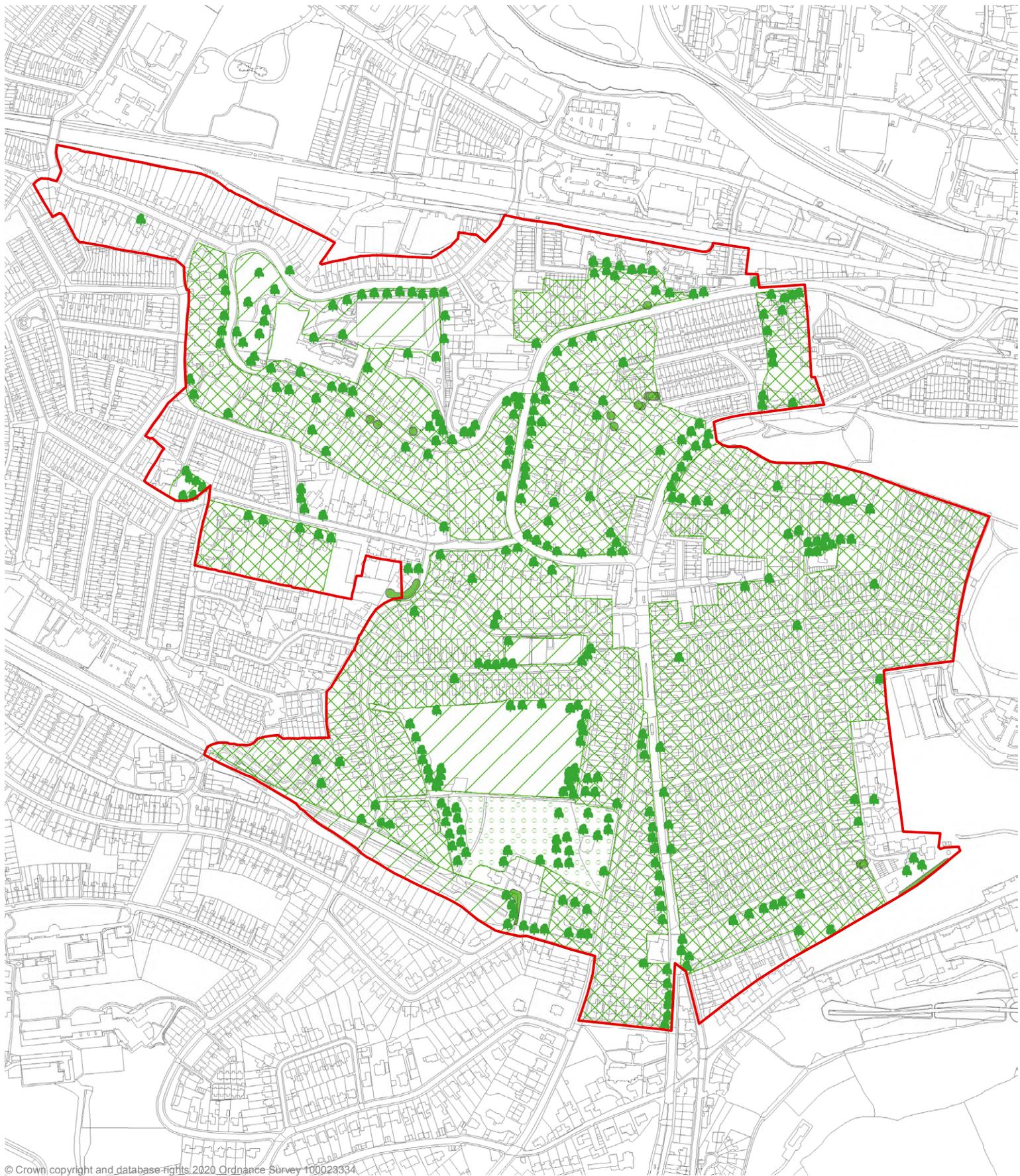


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**Key:**

- |   |                              |   |                    |
|---|------------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | : Unlisted building of merit |  | : Building at risk |
|  | : Positive townscape feature |  | : group/included   |
|  | : Negative townscape feature |   |                    |

**Townscape features**



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**Key:**

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

 : Tree Preservation Order

**Trees, open space,  
parks and gardens**

## Annexe 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 draft Placemaking Plan.

## Annexe 3 - References

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