

Adopted April 2008

- CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT -

CONSERVATION AREA NO. 18
STROUD TOWN CENTRE



Much of the Stroud area is characterised by the Cotswold building style and the use of stone.

The growth and evolution of the town has historically been dependent on the development in wool weaving and textile manufacture.

By the 19th century, this classic Cotswold market town had begun to be transformed by a series of economic booms. Confident, larger scaled development sprung up, notable for its use of brick.

Today, the character of Stroud's Town Centre, like its suburbs, is one of juxtaposition and strong contrast between these two elements of its history and built heritage.

This Conservation Area Statement includes the review of the following conservation areas:

- ◆ No.17 Stroud Shambles
- ◆ No.18 Stroud Central
- ◆ No.28 Stroud Station



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
www.stroud.gov.uk

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PART I: INTRODUCTION



Above: The Shambles comes to life at market time

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

The legal definition of a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (herein after called 'the Act'), as being:

"An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Conservation Areas are primarily concerned with the built environment. They are not appropriate as a means of protecting landscape features, except where they form an integral part of the historic built environment.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Act requires Planning Authorities to review their Conservation Areas from time to time. This is the main function of this document. Within Stroud District, there are 42 Conservation Areas, some of which were first designated some 30 years ago; the approach to designation has inevitably changed greatly over this time.

- ◆ Firstly, Planning Authorities are now required, in carrying out their planning functions, to *“pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area”* (Section 72 of the Act).
- ◆ Secondly, Planning Authorities should publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas (Section 71 of the Act).

In this review, we aim to identify what makes up the “special interest” of the town centre area and to analyse and define its “character and appearance”. This will provide a firm basis for planning decisions within the Conservation Area, based on Development Plan policies.

It also provides the groundwork for the preparation of policies and proposals intended for the preservation or enhancement of the area. These policies may be aimed at specific sites within the Conservation Area, or more general guidance relevant to the whole Conservation Area, such as the use of appropriate materials.

THE STROUD TOWN CENTRE STUDY AREA

Stroud Central Conservation Area (No. 18) was first designated in September 1982 and was extended in March 1991.

In this review, we will be looking at the existing Stroud Central Conservation Area and the land immediately adjacent to it, to see if it is appropriate to amend the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

The Study Area for this review therefore extends beyond the boundaries of the Stroud Central Conservation Area, including three other Conservation Areas already existing within the town centre, namely:

- ◆ **The Shambles Conservation Area** (No. 17), designated February 1978
- ◆ **Stroud Station Conservation Area** (No. 28), designated September 1987
- ◆ **The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area** (no. 29), designated September 1987

The study area and the existing Conservation Area boundaries are shown on **map 1**.

PART II: ANALYSIS



Above: The distinctive stepped nature of Gloucester Street

THE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER

The aim of this section of the Conservation Area Statement is to define what makes up the special interest or 'character' of the study area, in order that this may be preserved and enhanced. Although the character of an area may be very obvious in visual terms, it is about much more than just appearance. History, geography, use and appearance are usually intricately and inextricably linked in the evolution of any settlement, and in the creation of its character.

- ◆ The origins of a settlement and what has happened to it in the past are often still evident in its current state. Its history can tell us more than simply the date of its buildings: The changing economic fortunes of an area, important historical events and individual patrons or developers may have played a role in shaping tastes and styles, as well as influencing the extent of expansion.
- ◆ Current or former uses often have implications for the shapes, sizes and types of buildings that are created, and their massing and relationships to each other. Uses can also create distinctive sounds or smells, adding 'life' to the built form.
- ◆ The origins and evolution of a settlement may frequently be dependent on its setting and location: these may have suggested a particular industrial, defensive or cultural role, for example. Furthermore, the location almost always dictates the types of materials and building traditions that prevail.
- ◆ The visual appearance of an area is often the cumulative effect of many influences. The appearance is frequently the aspect that most people relate to in terms of defining what is of special interest and worth preserving or enhancing. The appearance may be made up of locally typical buildings, or structures of great architectural importance.

HISTORY OF STROUD

ORIGINS OF THE SETTLEMENT

Although Stroud parish was originally part of Bisley, its identity as a distinct unit had begun to emerge by the 13th century.

The manor houses of Paganhill, Over Lypiatt and Nether Lypiatt formed the most ancient dwelling places within what was to become the Stroud parish, but the parish would take its name from a tiny area called '*la Strode*', which was first recorded in 1221.

The settlement however, seems to have originated a little further up the hill, the earliest houses being built on the better-drained slope at the end of the ridge which lies between the two streams. The origins of the settlement are rooted in Gloucestershire's medieval wool trade, the occupations of spinning and weaving being an ever-evolving tradition, which continued to influence Stroud's development into the 20th century.

The early expansion of the settlement, centred around what is now known as the High Street, on the route between Bisley and Paganhill. The church was built by 1279 and was sited north of High Street. It was not until 1304, however, that it was assigned parochial rights by the rectors of Bisley. The parochial rights made the tiny church the ecclesiastical centre of the parish. The West Tower of the church, dating from the 14th century, still forms part of St Laurence's today.

EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STROUD

Sixteenth Century

The development of the town from the 16th century was fairly rapid, centring on a trading space, around an area between the 13th century church and what we now know as the High Street. Around 1590, a Market House was built here by John Throckmorton, lord of Over Lypiatt Manor. Now known as the Town Hall, much of it survives, with some 19th century additions and alterations. The building was originally freestanding in the centre of the

the market area, which was known in the 17th century as 'the Pitching', but later became 'The Shambles'. Trading and other activities also took place at The Cross.

Seventeenth Century

By the early 17th century, the town had both a market and fair, and by 1654 the principal inn of the town, the George, had opened on the south side of the High Street.

The development of Stroud owes much to the cloth industry, which can be traced back to at least the 14th century in the Stroud Valley. Gloucestershire had a thriving wool trade, and the Cotswolds had been used for sheep farming since ancient times, the quality of wool produced in the region was renowned. It was this industrial and mercantile basis, rather than a strictly agrarian one, which was to play the major role in the town's expansion and changing fortunes. By the early 17th century, textile production was the dominant industry within the area. Stroud town became known as the centre of this industry, supporting the cloth-production of the surrounding valleys, and being described in the mid 18th century as "a sort of capital of the clothing villages".

The late 1600s were a particular period of growth within Stroud, however there are few buildings of this antiquity surviving on the High Street.

There are examples of the mid- to late-17th century mostly within the streets up the hill beyond The Cross, evidence of the eastward expansion which occurred over the 17th and 18th centuries.

It is mainly on Lower Street, Middle Street and Whitehall that surviving houses of the 17th or early 18th century can be seen today. The area was developed as a weaving suburb between c.1680 and 1720, and its heritage as such can be detected in the built form of the cottages.

Eighteenth Century

The focus of the town was very much toward the north and east of the High Street during the 1700s.

In June 1742, The Shambles was the site of a sermon preached by John Wesley. A plaque on the Church Institute today commemorates how Wesley made use of a butcher's block to stand on as he preached his first Stroud sermon. He returned frequently to the town during the mid 18th century, where a strong Methodist following had developed. The first example of a hexagonal chapel (an architectural form which became favoured by Wesley) was built on Acre Street in 1763.

Much of the 18th century development in what is now the 'town centre' has been demolished or is concealed behind later facades and additions. Some building was carried out on King Street, which was named in honour of the visit of George III in 1788.



Above:
Plaque commemorating John Wesley's first Stroud sermon, which took place in the Shambles, 1742

There were few large houses in the town centre during the 18th century. Most of the wealth of Stroud was associated with textile manufacture and the wealthy clothiers generally lived close to their mills. The later 1790s however, saw some substantial houses included within development (since gone) on King Street and its western extension, Rowcroft, nearer to the industrial 'basin' of the town. Among these was Rowcroft House, which was rebuilt in the 1930s as the Lloyds Bank building. In the upper part of the town, Whitehall is where the most important town houses were constructed.

The development pattern within Stroud and its environs is characteristically an industrial one, with transport routes, mills and manufacturing

bases along the valley bottoms. Existing watercourses provided a means of powering the mills, and the extension of the canal system into Stroud in the late 18th century further stimulated mill building. The Stroudwater Canal (1775-79), which stretched from the Severn to Stroud at Wallbridge, was linked to the navigable Thames at Lechlade in 1789 by the Thames and Severn Canal. It was hailed as a major national artery for commerce, although the high hopes held for its impact on the town failed to materialise fully.

The cloth manufacturing industry reached its peak towards the turn of the century and during the first third of the 19th century.

Nineteenth Century

Over the course of the 19th century, the town doubled in size. Early expansion was mainly to the south west of the original nucleus, stimulated by the building in 1800 of the new link from the Bath road at Lightpill to Rowcroft, and of the London Road in 1815.

The period 1800-1840 was a period of growth and expansion. New streets such as George Street (1826) were broad and elegantly modelled, in the Georgian and neo-classical mould. Between London Road and the High Street, several new streets had begun to be built by the 1830s, among them Bedford Street, Union Street and John Street.

The new roads and transport links reduced the isolation of the provincial town and improved trade.

The Subscription Rooms (1833-4) provided a prominent aesthetic and social focus for the new part of the town. Previously, in 1831, Richard Parker, the owner of the Royal George, had opened an assembly room adjoining his Inn at King Street Parade. This was named the Victoria Rooms and was one of the first establishments in the country to be dedicated to Victoria, at that time princess and heiress to the throne.

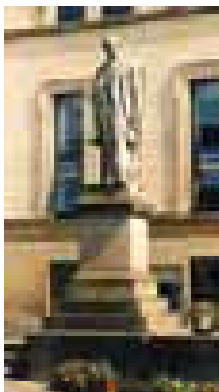
The course of the 19th century changed the face of Stroud. Reform of industrial practices throughout the century saw the disappearance of cottage industry and the concentration of weaving and textile production into a few

large mills. The advent of steam power led the Stroud mills into fierce competition with manufacturing centres in the North of England and on the Continent, and the 19th century was a period of continual boom and bust.

The next phase in the fortunes of Stroud came with the arrival of the Swindon and Gloucester Great Western Railway line in 1845. The station was located south of Russell Street, reasserting the new southwestern emphasis of the town centre. The line, though, effectively created a boundary to further southward expansion and sliced through Rowcroft and Bath Place, the latter becoming cut off from the rest of the town centre. The railway provided Stroud with an infrastructure for industrial growth. However, the later 1840s and 1850s were not a period of great expansion for the town. Inevitably, the ailing canal system was severely hit by the railway's arrival, and from the mid 19th century did little real business, although it continued to supply coal to the steam powered mills in the region.

The rapid growth and refinement of early 19th century Stroud was slowed, but from 1860 to the turn of the century, a post-recession boom brought civic and municipal improvements. The Victorian influence on the town is still felt today. A number of public buildings were introduced, including the imposing and ornate Art School on Lansdown (1890-9). Ever improving transport links (the Midland Railway arrived in 1866) brought an influx of new industry.

Industrial expansion often ran in tandem with social improvements during the high Victorian period. A leading industrialist and politician, George Holloway (his statue is situated on Rowcroft, outside Stroud House), pioneered the manufacture of ready-made clothing



Right: Buildings on the High Street, saved from demolition in 1980

Left: Statute of George Holloway, industrialist, philanthropist and politician

and introduced a number of social reforms to Stroud at about the same time that the civic movement was gathering pace across the country. In 1855, the Holloway family firm's clothing factory inspired the naming of Threadneedle Street, on which their factory stood. Messrs. Holloway Brothers' manufactory used several of the newly invented patent sewing machines.

Twentieth Century and present:

In the early 20th century, Stroud was still a thriving manufacturing town, with a number of large employers with substantial premises in and around the town centre.

Overall, the 20th century's contribution to the townscape has not been overwhelmingly positive. Large-scale redevelopment has often created large and insensitively sited new buildings, including Merrywalks shopping centre and the Police Station. Increased car use has resulted in large car parks and road widening schemes, involving much demolition and disruption to the historic pattern of Stroud. Cornhill, the link road constructed in the 1980s, ripped through the Cross, resulting in a loss of the continuity between High Street and Nelson Street and severing the link between the old medieval nucleus and Stroud's first 'suburb' to the east.

While 19th century redevelopment swept away many of the town's early buildings, the 20th century's impact has been even greater, with little of positive townscape value created in return.



STROUD IN ITS SETTING

The landscape and geology of the Stroud area has impacted on the character of the settlement in a number of ways, from the types of building materials most easily sourced, to the types of industries, which have developed. In visual terms, the surrounding landscape influences the first impressions gained on approach to the town, and the local topography forms a significant component of views and vistas into and out of the settlement.

An abundance of natural watercourses made the Stroud Valleys ideal as the base for manufacturing and industry, as the flowing water provided power for the mills. A good clean water supply was also necessary for washing the wool used in cloth production.

Industrial development naturally occurred along the valley bottoms, notably the Frome Valley, where mills could also be close to transport links.

Today, Stroud is at the centre of an extensive network of road and rail links and waterways. Many of the earliest roads that served the settlement ran along the tops of the hills, and their extreme steepness and muddiness was a deterrent to much traffic. This certainly inhibited transport and trade links and rather isolated the early settlement. However, the 18th and particularly the 19th century saw transport improvements, including the construction of a number of major new turnpike roads, which ran along the valley bottoms, many of which replaced existing hilltop routes.



The High Street stepping down the hill from 'the Cross'. The distinctive form of Doverow Hill is a local landmark, often glimpsed from within the town. The Cotswold escarpment descends westwards to the Severn Vale.

GEOLOGY

Between about 185 and 140 million years ago, during the Jurassic period, a vast limestone belt was created, stretching between Lincolnshire and the Dorset coast. The Cotswolds, a region of ambiguous boundaries, is usually held to constitute the highest part of this belt, a plateau that rises from the east in Oxfordshire and descends in a dramatic escarpment to the west, within sight of Stroud.

During the Jurassic period, a shallow sea covered the area, in which a sequence of sediments settled into alternating layers or 'strata' of clay, sand and limestone. Although the beds of sediment were each laid down on a virtually horizontal level, subsequent processes have resulted in shifts in the terrain, so that, in places, strata of quite diverse ages and substance have ended up next to each other. The whole Cotswold plateau has been tilted, so that the west has risen up, while the east has sunk. Weathering and climatic changes have also played their part in shaping the landscape.

In the past, the whole Cotswold formation was known as the Oolite, due to the prevalence of this form of limestone throughout the region. Limestone, and in particular oolitic limestone, is extremely permeable, and where it meets beds of impervious clay, water is driven out in the form of springs. Hence the Cotswolds are riddled with streams and brooks as well as rivers. These have been highly active in the formation of the topography, carving deep and complex valleys into the 'Oolite' plateau, a process that continues and means that the landscape is ever changing.

Due to its porous nature, oolitic limestone is 'soft' when it is newly extracted and may be easily worked. The mass of oolite is in two basic layers, separated by a narrow bed of Fullers Earth: the older, deeper layers being known as the 'Inferior Oolite' and the upper layers as 'Great Oolite'.

The tilt of the Cotswolds means that the lower layers, the 'Inferior Oolite', are exposed along the western escarpment, where they are more easily accessible than in the eastern Cotswolds. The hills encircling Stroud were particularly rich in good quality Lower Inferior Oolite

stones, known by masons as 'Freestones', due to the ease with which they can be cut and dressed. Among these is Lower Freestone, of which the fine Painswick Stone is a variety, and Lower Limestone, the eldest of the strata, of which there is a large outcrop at Frocester Hill. Upper Freestone is of poorer quality, mostly used for burning, to create lime mortars and plasters. At Stroud, though, it was sufficiently good to be used for many of the town's 'rock-faced' rusticated buildings.

TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

The town of Stroud is famously located at the centre of what is known as the 'Five Valleys'. These comprise the valleys of the Painswick Stream to the north, the Slad Brook to the northeast, the river Frome, entering Stroud from the southeast and exiting to the west, and the Nailsworth Valley to the south.

To its north, south and east, the town is surrounded by a complex pattern of hills, valleys and coombes.

The range of hills to the south of Stroud, stretching westward from those topped by Rodborough Common and Selsley Common, is terminated by the distinctive form of Frocester Hill on the Cotswold escarpment. From the escarpment, the Cotswold landscape descends to the flat plain of the Severn Vale.

The peaks between the deep valleys formed by the Frome, Slad Brook and Painswick Stream are riddled with many further valleys. Many are carved out by the abundance of tributary streams and brooks, as at Puckshole, where the Ruscombe Brook slices southwards between the hill-top villages of Whiteshill and Randwick to the north of Stroud.

The topography of deep valleys, hills and winding roads creates endlessly surprising views. The traveller's sense of direction is often challenged, and distant landmarks are revealed through vistas in unexpected places. The views also create a warped sense of scale at times: from hilltop to hilltop, far away villages appear relatively close, with expanses of countryside or town concealed in valley bottoms or just over the crest of a hill.

The town is not entirely encircled by hills, however. To the west of Stroud, the Frome

Valley broadens, opening out onto the Severn Vale. The western limits of the Frome Valley are marked by Doverow Hill on the north side and by Frocester Hill on the south. The two hills are distinctive landmarks and frame the westward vista towards the Severn. At its 'mouth', the valley base is almost 3km wide (over a mile and a half).

APPROACH ROUTES AND VIEWS

A significant urban mass is visible on many approaches to the town. Yet much of that which may be visually perceived as 'Stroud', is in fact formed by outlying villages and settlements, which have become absorbed into the Stroud sprawl. Notably, Rodborough, which sits prominently on a hillside to the southwest, lies beyond the Parish boundary. Visually, Rodborough contributes significantly to the urban mass, yet it is in no sense part of Stroud town or parish.

Being on comparatively low ground in relation to the surrounding hills, the town centre is not clearly visible from many points on approach to Stroud. In its earliest times, the settlement would largely have been concealed within the undulating landscape. On many of the town's approach routes, the developed areas of Stroud Hill, Uplands and Rodborough are among the first discernable signals to the existence of a settlement.

On a number of approaches however, the road arrives in the heart of town, having given few visual clues to the proximity of any significant settlement at all. This is true of the Painswick Road (A46), constructed in 1818. Until just north of the parish boundary, the town and all high ground to the south are concealed by trees near to the road and by the valley. Within the boundary, the road runs low along the valley bottom, and from this vantage point there is no hint of the approaching settlement at all. The tall trees bordering the road at Stratford Park conceal any potential view of built up areas to the south and west; it is only towards the termination of Beeches Green that an urban vista opens out.

A similar effect is experienced along the Slad Road from the northeast. In places, the steepness of the valleys around Stroud has meant that parts of the town have avoided development and narrow fingers of green land project into the town. Along the Slad Valley, undeveloped fields reach quite close to the heart of the town. Despite the extensive development of Uplands (to the right) and the built up area above Summer Street (visible across the valley to the left), the effect is to continue the sense of the Slad Road's dramatic rural landscape, almost to the point of arrival in the centre of town. Rodborough Fields, to the southeast have similarly remained green and undeveloped.



Union Street, with Rodborough fields in the distance. The countryside extends visually into the town – green horizons are visible from within the very centre of Stroud.

There are a number of features which form strong visual points of reference on many of the approaches to Stroud, some of which are also conspicuous landmarks viewed from within the town itself.

Among the distinctive and most frequently visible natural forms are Doverow Hill and the Escarpment at Frocester and Sandford's Knoll. These, together with the scrubby land of Rodborough Common are glimpsed in views from the heart of the town. Approaching from the east and north, the River Severn is also sometimes distantly visible beyond the town.

The unique tower of Selsley Church is among the most conspicuous built features of Stroud's setting, visible from within the town and many places on approach to it.

The spire of St Laurence's Church, despite being on relatively low ground, is also prominent, especially from within the town centre. All Saints Church in Uplands is frequently identifiable, even from afar, its disproportionately large size in relation to surrounding buildings sometimes warping any sense of scale or distance.



Right: St. Laurence's spire

Other highly conspicuous and less sympathetic landmark buildings include the tower block flats on Summer Street and the Law Courts and Police Station building, both of which occupy extremely prominent sites on Stroud Hill. The Law Courts building is particularly dominant, conspicuously visible in views from almost every approach route into the town. (See left)

Top: The Police Station

Middle: Law Courts

Bottom: Connexions building, 45 the High Street

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment of the Conservation Area can be very simply divided into two main elements, namely: -

- ◆ The buildings themselves
- ◆ The spaces adjacent to and surrounding the buildings.

The next part of this document uses these two basic headings to examine what makes up the “special architectural and historic interest” of the area.

1. THE BUILDINGS

Whilst some buildings may be individually important in a Conservation Area, it is the relationship of buildings one to another, their layout in relation to the streets and footpaths, and their density, which so often define the character of the area.

The architectural style and materials of the buildings will be important factors in determining what makes the Area “special”.

Current and former uses often impact on the forms and styling of individual buildings, their relationships to others nearby and the levels of activity or motion in the area, all of which comprise significant components of the Area’s character as a whole.



2. THE SPACES

The land around buildings falls into a variety of types including roads, streets, footpaths, gardens, parks, fields, watercourses – the list is almost infinite. Widths and alignments differ, some contain green features such as trees and grass, some are public and some are private spaces.



SUB AREAS IN STROUD TOWN CENTRE

Within a Conservation Area, it is sometimes possible to identify parts of the Area, which differ in character. Key factors in defining where one part of the Conservation Area differs from another include the density of buildings, and their relationship to one another and to the highways. Where clear differences do exist, these are identified as 'sub-areas' and the Conservation Area is examined using those sub-areas.

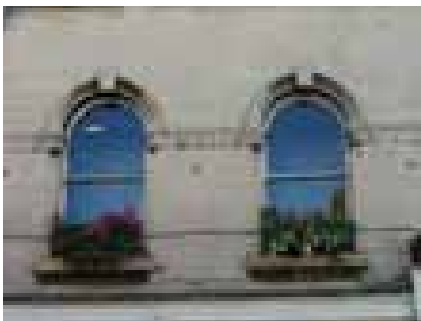
Four areas have been identified as being 'sub-areas' within the Town Centre Study Area. [See Map 2]

To a large extent, these sub-divisions reflect the historical evolution of the town centre. Changing tastes, styles and technical capabilities influenced the plan forms and building sizes, creating pockets of not only differing architectural styling, but also of varied scale, sense of enclosure and distinctive character.



Sub Area 1: The Old Town

A large proportion of the Study Area, taking in most of Stroud's 'historic core', including High Street and The Shambles. The sub-area also extends east across Cornhill, into Nelson Street.



Sub Area 2: The New Town

This covers almost half the Study Area, incorporating streets to the south and west, including: King Street, Rowcroft, George Street, Russell Street, London Road and parts of Bedford Street and Kendrick Street



Sub Area 3: The Brick Quarter

A small area to the north, comprising Gloucester Street and Lansdown



Sub Area 4: St Laurence's Church

To the north of The Shambles, this sub-area comprises the Church grounds, Bank Gardens and the car park.

SUB AREA 1: THE OLD TOWN

The Buildings

Although this sub area incorporates parts, which are not strictly of Old Town origins, the whole sub area shares very similar characteristics of space, scale, and use of styles.

Due to its long history and its variety, the character of this sub area is the most complex of the four to define.

This area includes the main historic core of the conservation area, including both sides of the High Street, by which it continues straight up Nelson Street, passing over the Cross, whereby the road loops down Swan Lane to Threadneedle Street, Union Street and John Street. [See map 3]

The sub area is characteristic of a built up town, with high-density commercial buildings on either side of the road. The form of the Old Town is far from regular, the result of organic expansion rather than planned extensions to the settlement.

Narrow street frontages, which extend far back into the plots behind, are characteristics of the Old Town hence; most buildings are several times deeper than they are wide, often having had various extensions added over the years. The buildings in this sub area almost without exception, front directly onto the streets or lanes forming an almost continuous, unbroken frontage.



Above: Looking up the High Street

Right: Swan Lane bending towards the Swan Inn

There is a strong vertical emphasis throughout the area, resulting not from the narrowness of many of the buildings, but also from the general lack of a coherent roof height, meaning that there is a strong horizontal continuity. Mostly, buildings are of two to three storeys in height, many incorporating an additional attic storey.

The High Street is the main artery through the sub-area, and the upper part consists of the earliest part of the Stroud settlement. The High Street consists of long narrow building plots, which extend back from either side of the street, and sub streets and lanes, which branch off.

Although the area is today overwhelmingly in retail use, many of the buildings were originally built as private houses and have subsequently been adapted for use as shops. The 19th century in particular saw extensive redevelopment, with new shop fronts, and sometimes entirely new facades, imposed onto earlier structures.

Thus the sub area has a rich and varied heritage. Its piece-meal development is readily discernable in the huge variety of building styles, ages, sizes and materials, which are found throughout the Old Town sub area.



Key Buildings and Focal Points

The Town Hall, dating from the early 1590s, is a key building in the Study Area due to its scale, siting and architectural value, as well as its age. Occupying most of the eastern side of the Shambles, the building overlooks the market area and is visually imposing, partly due to its height and partly due to its comparatively ornate, textural and varied styling, against the foil of the two-storey ashlar buildings opposite.

The partially medieval building at 46-47 High Street has a prominent corner location, visible from Cornhill, High Street and Swan Lane. All are interesting viewpoints, giving different perspectives on the intriguing visual evidence of the building's historical evolution. It is today a key 'gateway' building, marking the entry point to the town centre from Cornhill and also the start of the main shopping street.



*Left:
Number 46-
47, High
Street*

Sadly, its neighbours do not match its landmark qualities; the modern Connexions building is boxy and characterless, contrary to the prevailing narrow and vertical emphasis of the sub area; while the vacant plot on the corner of Nelson Street serves only to highlight today's lack of continuity between the High Street and Nelson Street.

The former Co-op building, dating from 1931 however, does make a good termination to the view up High Street, the attractive clock on its western elevation being clearly visible. The building's distinctive Art Deco styling is typical of the Co-op's pre-war architectural image.



*Left: The clock
on the Co-op
building*

Also at a 'gateway' to the sub area, at the foot of High Street, Bank House is among the most imposing classical edifices within the sub area. Its conspicuousness results partly from its corner location and the fact that it is set back from the line of buildings above it, allowing a good clear view of the front elevation. Bank House was built at the beginning of the 18th century, at the time it was unusual in being constructed from brick, although it is now rendered and the brick entirely concealed. The front elevation features six bays of large sash windows and numerous details that are typical of many classically styled buildings in the sub area, including moulded stone architraves and keystones to the windows, a stone cornice and parapet and pronounced quoins. Bank House must have been one of the earliest brick buildings in Stroud. As an extremely prestigious residence, it set the tone of subsequent buildings in terms of not only its classical styling, but also its use of material, which was new to Stroud and very different from the mellow Cotswold limestone.

The Spaces

Open spaces takes four main forms within Stroud Town Centre:

- Streets and Roads
- Pedestrianised streets and lanes
- Open public gathering spaces
- Private gardens and yards to the rear of street-fronting buildings

Virtually all the public spaces within the Old Town are pedestrianised, giving the area a distinctive and intimate character. The narrowness of many of the lanes and side streets contribute to an all over human scaled emphasis, few spaces being any broader than the height of the buildings lining them. The spaces are well enclosed forming a continuous frontage along most streets.

Motor traffic flows through only a tiny proportion of the historic streets. One major road has however, dramatically given priority to motor traffic over people and buildings. Cornhill, constructed in the early 1980s, has severed the historic continuity between the High Street and Nelson Street, as well as the focal point of the settlement, the Cross.

The Cross is a reasonable sized public open space, another is the Shambles, which is a frequently bustling and attractive area, essentially the area is a broad pedestrianised street which connects the High Street with St. Laurence's Church. Unlike the Cross, the Shambles has retained its historic role as a trading and public gathering space, with market stalls regularly set up. Over time, most of the plots to the rear of the street-fronting buildings have been built upon, creating a dense urban fabric with very few private gardens remaining. Most private land is now concealed from view, engulfed by surrounding buildings and boundary walls. Surviving garden areas are slightly more prevalent among plots to the north of the High Street, and though built up, here they are rather more extensive than elsewhere in the conservation area, signifying their early origins.

One enclosed yard, branching off the High Street is open to the public and has become a thriving space. The charm of Withey's Yard relies partly on its enclosure, creating a very intimate space, being somewhat isolated from

the busy flow of shoppers in the streets outside.

There is very little green space in the Old Town, although the green hills and trees beyond the sub area and town centre are frequently visible from within. The numbers of trees visible on the street are minimal. Of these, the most notable is the tree located immediately in front of the Baptist Chapel on John Street, which creates a pleasant leafy frame for the eastward vista into the sub area.



Above: Withey's Yard
Below: Hanging signs add a sense of enclosure to Church Street



The Buildings

This sub area forms a T-shape, which stretches from Rowcroft and King Street, into the loop of George and Russell Street; this merges into London Road with Kendrick Street and Bedford Place as off shoots. [See map 4a & 4b]

Although the piecemeal variation of the Old Town does exist in the New Town, it is of a different nature. The streets here date from much later than many of those in the Old Town, being predominantly of late 18th and 19th century origins. The majority of the buildings having been begun in the 19th century, as rather than having to clear land or wait for it to become available, as had always been the case in the Old Town, the 19th century developers were presented with a blank canvas on which they were able to start creating a style that reflected a vision for the town, hence the character and scale of the buildings here are different.

Large developments, in this sub area have occupied blank building plots, creating a single coherently designed façade which unifies the individual units behind, the resulting impression is that the New Town contains a greater proportion of large buildings, although many of the units themselves are not in fact significantly larger than those of the Old Town.

Buildings are not however, exclusively of this form, for example on the north side of George Street, the narrow vertical emphasis seen in the Old Town is evident especially among the older developments.

Like the Old Town, retail and commercial premises as well as several banks and offices occupy the majority of the buildings within the area. Many of the streets were developed as expansions to the commercial heart of the town and were built up with grand ranks of 19th century commercial buildings, the high aspirations of the boomtown developers being projected in their buildings.

Key Buildings and Focal Points

Although the general trend within sub area 2 is for grand scaled, large buildings, these take a variety of forms.

Kendrick Street exemplifies the New Town's 19th century tendency to large-scale ranks of purpose built commercial buildings. Just two single developments occupy the entire eastern side of the street, each housing a substantial number of retail and office spaces.

The rank at numbers 22-36, dating from the later 19th century is of characteristically high Victorian styling, making use of red brick with elaborately carved stone dressings.



Left: A classical terrace on London Road



Right: Stroud House, 1894-6 (to the right) and buildings on King Street and Russell Street

It is evident that these were purpose built as commercial buildings, with shop fronts integrated into the overall design. The individual units within the ranks are delineated by ordered pilasters at the first and second storeys, which were originally aligned with the timber pilasters of the ground floor shop fronts. Walker's Bakery, occupying number 22 on the corner with Threadneedle Street, has retained a great deal of its original shop front, including the dentilled cornice, carved panelled pilasters and quirky capitols featuring faces.

The Kendrick Street rank forms one side of a square off George Street, which comprises one of the best quality groupings of buildings in Stroud Town Centre. The creamy coloured ashlar stone echoes that of two other major buildings, which occupy the northern and eastern sides of this space, the early 19th century Congregational Chapel, and the Subscription Rooms. While the 'set piece' impact of neo-classical architecture is to a large extent lost on buildings within the Old Town, here their full splendour can be fully appreciated.

Lloyds Bank, a 1930s building on the site of the Old Rowcroft House, has a large plan form, but being only a single storey, it has no great imposing height. In contrast the Stroud House is an extremely imposing, grand Victorian civic statement. Built in 1894-6 to a design by William Clissold, the building towers over its neighbours.

The Imperial Hotel (c.1870) on Station Road is an attractive building and a distinctive focal point of one of the major gateways to the town centre. This too, is a large scaled building, although it is somewhat dwarfed in height by the nearby Stroud House. The building is thought to be by Benjamin Bucknall, probably the most important architect of the 19th century in the area.

Terraces, which visually amalgamate a number of smaller buildings, contribute to the impression that this sub area contains a high proportion of large buildings. The building on the corner of King Street and Russell Street is one such building. Probably originally built as houses in the mid 19th century, today the building are perceived as one complete unit. The Rowcroft terrace, while appearing today to be coherent unified design, was in fact developed speculatively in a piecemeal manner from 1901. These refined, classically styled buildings were extremely desirable prior to the arrival of the railway, which necessitated the demolition of the two westernmost houses.

The elegant and understated character of the Rowcroft houses is similar to that of terraces on London Road, at the eastern extreme of the study area, even if they are slightly less sophisticated. Many of the houses on the south side of London Road use stucco to emulate ashlar stonework, although some are faced in ashlar, which has been painted over.



Below: The Subscription Rooms
Left: Lloyds TSB Bank



The Spaces

On the whole, the New Town is made up of broader, straighter streets than the lanes of the Old Town. Still, the contrast with the Old Town remains evident. On Bedford Street, the side face of the Subscription Rooms, together with the Congregational Chapel on the opposite side of the street, act as a spectacular and towering visual 'gateway' back into the Old Town. Looking northeast, the juxtaposition of large-scale classical grandeur against the domestically scaled 'organic' and vernacular character of the Old Town is clear.

The square at the top of George Street, onto which fronts the Subscription Rooms, together with the Congregational Chapel, is an important formal space, today it is a mix of hard landscaping and planting. A huge hornbeam tree provides welcome greenery; yet obscures much of the Subscription Rooms' impressive classical elevation.

King Street Parade is a modest open space. Works to King Street have dramatically improved the appearance, with high quality ground surfacing in York stone and resin-bonded gravel, designed to complement the predominantly pale colouring of nearby buildings.

To the extreme west of the sub area the density of buildings decreases, several substantial houses being detached and within their own garden grounds, further along London Road, there is an attractive increase in greenery and trees.

The open space on Cornhill consists largely of car parking areas, and much is concealed behind a sweeping modern brick wall. The area does little to complement the character of the study area, a large ash tree towers above the car park does however, form a valuable asset.

In contrast to many roads in sub area 2, the southwest view down Station Road has a lofty feel. Towards its termination (the station being a key gateway into and out of the town centre), and expansive vista opens out, with sky and green horizons visible beyond the station and the distinctive Hill Paul building.



Above: Rowcroft Terrace with its raised pavement and iron rails

Below: George Street looking towards King Street



SUB AREA 3: THE BRICK QUARTER.

The Buildings

The sub area includes George Street and Lansdown, which together form a V-shape. [See map 5]

The Brick Quarter is typical of late 19th century buildings as most of the sub area has a brick basis, and as a result is the most unified in terms of materials and the era from which it dates.

The north side of Lansdown has much in common with the western side of Gloucester Street. Buildings are predominantly three storeys high, and are terraced, although the ranks were not created to a uniform design. Construction was sporadic, although it was all within a short time span, which was mainly concentrated within the five or six years following 1867. As a consequence, there are many basic similarities in form, scale, materials and embellishments between neighbouring buildings, in contrast to the variety achieved through incremental development over a much larger timescale, as seen in the Old Town and the New Town. This, and the fact that much is the work of one architect, William Clissold, means that there is a strong coherence to the area, albeit it is disrupted in places by incremental additions and alterations, particularly to windows and shop fronts.

The predominance of brick is broken however by a small number of stone-faced buildings, all of which are large and have distinctive and individual identities, marking them out against the relative uniformity of the terraced stretches.

The Victorian drive for civic amenities is particularly manifest on Lansdown, a Grammar School having built in 1871, later to be converted to a public library (1887) to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Lansdown Hall (1879), built for the Temperance Society (now the offices of Stroud News and Journal), which housed the Museum and the School of Art and Science, they were all begun within the first twenty-five years of the street's existence.

Like the rest of the town centre sub areas, ground floor shop fronts and retail outlets dominate this area. On Gloucester Street especially, shop fronts and their paraphernalia create a visually busy character, verging on cluttered.

In comparison with the neighbouring High Street and King Street however, these streets have something of a 'backwater' character to them. There are fewer shoppers and activity is provided by vehicular rather than pedestrian traffic.



Left: The School of Science and Art (1890-9) by JP Seddon and WHC Fisher



Right: The north side of Lansdown is largely the work of William Clissold

Key Buildings and Focal Points

1860s and '70s Brick Terraces

Standing at the crossroads of Lansdown, High Street, King Street and Gloucester Street, the visual dominance of brick is striking. Gloucester Street curves down the hill, placing the western side in clear view, while the eastern side, which contains buildings of more varied styles and materials, is largely concealed. The impression from this point is of two coherently designed terraces, stretching off to the north along Gloucester Street and the east along Lansdown.



Lansdown and Gloucester Street are, however, far from entirely uniform. They do though share a number of common characteristics. Buildings are almost universally three storeys high, with two or three bays of four or two paned sash windows, many of which have arched heads. Window reveals often have elaborate stone or brick decoration, many arches being formed with distinctive coloured brick voussoirs in red, buff and black. Details are sometimes picked out in dressed or carved stone, as at the Stroud News and Journal office.

While red brick is clearly the most visible material here, it is also used far more widely than can be seen. Concealed, to varying degrees, behind paint, ashlar-effect stucco and stone cladding, brick is unquestionably the defining characteristic of this sub area. This is most evident from the rear of the terraces, many of which front to the south and east, so that, when viewed from Beeches Green and the bottom of Gloucester Street, ranks of red brick step up the north west slope of the hillside.

Stone Faced Buildings

The predominance of brick here is broken at either end of Gloucester Street by two later public houses. The 1896 Painswick Inn is built of red brick, with principal elevations faced in squared and coursed limestone and ashlar. With its use of stone, with mullioned and transomed windows and large gabled attic dormers the Painswick Inn revives some of the elements of Stroud's vernacular. The Greyhound Inn, of 1904, continues this revival, with an Arts and Crafts twist. Also of brick, faced in ashlar, this pub is complete with mullioned windows with hood mouldings and high gables.



On Lansdown, three further stone buildings break the predominance of brick terraces. Despite the radically different character of the former County Library reading room of 1873, it, like the majority of the brick buildings here of the late 1860s, is also by Clissold.

This building and its neighbour, Lansdown Hall (1879) are both imposing varieties of neo-gothic styling, and also feature high gables and mullioned windows.

The rock-faced rustification of Lansdown Hall mirrors that of the School of Science and Art, one of Stroud's landmark buildings with its abundance of graphic stone carvings. The exuberant styling of this building, with its Baronial corner turret, makes a wonderful gateway to the sub area and the town centre.



Top left: Looking down Gloucester Street
Top right: Ye Old Painswick Inn
Bottom right: Queen Victoria carving on the School of Science and Art

The Spaces

There is very little open space within the Brick Quarter, although the greenery of Bank Gardens impacts upon it. Trees within the garden overhang the high rubble retaining wall on the south side of Lansdown, and attractive views are achieved both into and out of the sub area. Elsewhere, there is minimal permanent greenery.

Gloucester Street and the north side of Lansdown are virtually continuous unbroken terraces, any garden or yard space concealed from the street. The little visible open space that there is takes the form of utilitarian yards, mainly being associated with stabling or loading access to the three public houses.

Gloucester Street has a lack of gardens; buildings occupy virtually the full extent of their plots, with extensions and additions backing straight onto the utilitarian access lane, Bath Street. An access lane to the rear of Lansdown features an attractive red brick boundary wall, with terracotta copings stepping up the slope. The high wall encloses yards and gardens to the rear of Lansdown, while a lower wall, to the north of the lane, has a 'parapet' effect, a sharp drop descending beyond it. Views are achieved from this point down the slope, into the former stable yard of the Old Painswick Inn, and across rooftops to houses on the other side of Slad Road.

South of the Old Painswick Inn, as Gloucester Street curves up the hill out of view, another yard branches off the street. A small rank of buildings along the southern side of this yard almost creates the impression of a short tributary lane. The space is, however, a yard with some outdoor seating for the Queen Victoria public house, located on the outer corner.

The roadsides are well used on the two main streets for car parking. Pavements here are narrow and compared to the space of the High Street, feel cramped for pedestrians.



Above right: View up Stroud Hill. The Painswick Inn breaks the predominance of red brick

Left: Trees in Bank Gardens overhanging Lansdown

SUB AREA 4: ST. LAURENCE'S

The Buildings

This area consists primarily of open space, comprising not only the churchyard and grounds of St. Laurence's, but also Bank Gardens and the northern stretch of Church Street and the car park. [See map 6]

In character, this sub area is distinctively different from the other three. The few buildings here are large and detached.

Within the sub area itself, there are only three buildings, namely St. Laurence's church, a 17th century house called Church Court (formerly known as both 'the house behind the church' and Rodney House) and the modern Vicarage.

Due to the openness of the sub area, though, certain buildings beyond the boundary play an important visual role. These often reflect and echo predominant characteristics of the two buildings within the area.

The prevailing building material here is undoubtedly stone, although red brick makes an attractive contribution in the form of boundary walls in Bank Gardens. Unlike the other sub areas however, there is no close juxtaposition of various materials, although the colours, textures and materials of structures beyond the boundaries are visible.

Key Buildings and Focal Points

St. Laurence's Church was rebuilt in 1866-8 by Wilson and Wilcox, though the earlier steeple and 14th century tower survive. Although on comparatively low ground within the context of Stroud, the Church has an elevated siting in the town centre. The impressive stone broach spire soars above the surrounding buildings, clearly visible over rooftops. It is the focus of a number of vistas, glimpses of it generally appearing to be framed by chance rather than by design.

Church Court, dated 1635, is a substantial house. It has had numerous additions over the years, but all have retained the basic characteristics of the original core, namely the coursed rubble construction, high gables, small mullioned windows with hood mouldings and stone roof. Small oval windows are visible in some gables, suggesting that the attic of the even this substantial house was once used for weaving.

The modern Vicarage is not a building of any real architectural or historic interest. A large, T-shaped building, it occupies a plot to the north of the church. It is well concealed, and makes little contribution to the study area.



Top right: The 14th century tower of St. Laurence's Church, with broach spire, seen from Lansdown Road

Middle: The gables and Cotswold limestone of St. Laurence's and Church Court on Church Street

Bottom: Church Court; the stone above the door bears the date 1632



The Spaces

St. Laurence sub area is a predominantly green open space. It contrasts strikingly with the densely built-up character of the rest of the town centre, although its greenery is frequently glimpsed from the other sub areas.

Due to the openness of the space, the nature of Stroud's topography is much more visually evident here than in many of the enclosed spaces elsewhere. This is clear not only from expansive views across the town and the hilly countryside to the north, but also from way the spaces work with the topography- slopes, banks and terraces heighten awareness of the steepness.

In many respects, St. Laurence's churchyard is archetypically English. Yet among the typical beeches, yews and rose beds are less predictable plants, including a large yucca. A row of trees at the foot of Bank Gardens casts shade onto Lansdown, adding valuable greenery to the street.

To the north of Bank House, stone gate piers frame the view; while another good view of the church is achieved from Lansdown, looking up the steps leading into the Gardens. The space is not entirely green however; to the east the car park breaks with the historically densely built character of Church Street. The car park is strategically sited, although there is no aesthetic merit about the car park.

An attractive feature of Church Street is the iron railings, which front St. Laurence's, and Church Court. The various designs create a sense of unity, cohesion and enclosure in stark contrast to the car park's expanse.



Above: The impressive stone gate piers and iron gates, which lead into Bank Gardens

Below: Bank Gardens, seen from the churchyard with views across Lansdown to green hills beyond the Slad valley



MATERIALS, TEXTURES, COLOURS AND DETAILING

By necessity builders in the past used materials, which were available locally. Stroud was no different, with early Stroud buildings being constructed from stone and timber.

There are several fine examples of buildings dating back to the 17th century in Stroud displaying traditional construction techniques and good architectural detailing. It is also possible to identify within Stroud that with improved transport and more advanced manufacturing techniques, from the 19th century, builders had a wider choice of materials such as Welsh roof slate and red stock bricks. This shift in materials is demonstrated clearly within Stroud.

Although there is an early timber framed building tradition in Stroud, the overwhelmingly predominant construction material is stone. Being close to the Escarpment, Stroud has had access to the local freestone. This oolitic limestone was fine, easily cut and of sufficient quality to create dressed stone blocks and details, as is evident on the pair of 17th century buildings at the top of the High Street. (Numbers 46-47)



Left: Timber framed jetty on the High Street

Early on, however, the light creamy golden limestone appears to have been used mostly in the form of rubble, especially on the rear or side elevations, being often squared or coursed.

From the 18th century there was progressively better access to a broader range of building materials. The locally accessible freestone lent itself well to smooth ashlar construction and intricately dressed detailing.

The re-facing of many early buildings with more fashionable elevations in the later 18th and 19th centuries made great use of stucco render. Stucco render gave the impression of ashlar, the favoured form of stone construction at the time. (For example number 57, High Street). The majority of the rendered buildings are decorated in mellow cream tones, intended to maximise the illusion of ashlar stone, and thus limestone.

Many 18th and 19th century buildings have rear walls and extensions of brick, while the front elevation is faced with stone or render. However, brick became increasingly adapted for use on street facing elevations.

Although brick was used during the 18th century, it was during the 19th century that the material really came into its own. Numerous red brick buildings from this period now punctuate the street scenes.



Right: An interesting use of brick banding, adding further interest and variety to this already quirky 19th century building

Red brick is often combined with dressed stone details, continuing a tradition of dressed and carved stone details used in conjuncture with rubble wall or roughcast render or stucco. London Hotel and a number of London Road neighbours are good examples.

The Stonehouse works also produced black and buff coloured bricks, which are frequently used to good decorative effect, for example 21-23 Russell Street.

Windows can be thought of as the ‘eyes’ of a building. Windows often are an important factor in the character of the building, and subsequently play an important role in the character of the conservation area.

Within Stroud Town Centre it is a common characteristic to see stone windows placed centrally, being aligned beneath the apex of the gable, a good example being number 21 Nelson Street. This was in order to maintain structural stability in the rubble, whereby the windows had to be placed as far from the corners of the building as possible.

The insertion of dressed stone windows into rubble walls had a bearing on the fenestration, or arrangement of windows within an elevation.

The vernacular window, consisting of stone mullioned casements, sometimes with stone transoms and often with stone hood mouldings, appears in many guises throughout the sub area, and is one of the most distinctive features of local 16-17th century buildings. Stone hood mouldings evolved to help divert rainwater away from the windows and doors. Water otherwise streamed off the gutter-less roofs, straight down the wall face. For example the Town Hall, 6, 46-47 and 50 High Street and 21 Nelson Street.



Above: A steeply pitched gable demonstrating key characteristics local to Stroud; stone mullion window, drip mould and small oval window inserted into the apex of the gable

The Church Institute in the Shambles, dating from the early 19th century, combines ‘cross’ transomed windows with classical detailing, including a giant Tuscan pilastrade. The early 20th century Arts and Crafts movement also revived vernacular details, as at the building on the corner of King Street and High Street, with ‘Cross’ windows.

Sliding box sash windows, introduced in the 18th century, were extremely popular, eventually ousting the stone mullion casement, as well as featuring in ‘new’ buildings; sashes were inserted into older buildings replacing the unfashionable stone mullions, for example at number 50 and 46-47 High Street.



Above left and right: Elegantly proportioned 18th century windows

Throughout the Cotswolds in the 17th century, stone roofing slates became increasingly common, replacing thatch on even the lowliest of cottages. These required a steep pitch in order to shed water efficiently. They were laid in a traditional way, diminishing in size from the eaves of the building to the ridge. The infinite variety of size, shape and texture of the individual slates produced roofs with rich visual interest. Dressed stone copings were often added to the gable ends, to protect both the exposed edges of the slates and the stone of the end wall from water penetration. Hence the high gable end was a common Cotswold feature.

This was a characteristic feature, which was uniquely adapted by Stroud valley builders, who seized upon the potential for the use of this attic space. The economy of Stroud was dependent to such an extent on the production

of cloth that many houses throughout the locality, of all scales, were created with attics, which could easily accommodate the large looms needed for the weaving process, as at number 46-47 High Street.

The availability of Welsh slate for roofing improved over the 19th century and became the favoured material for new roofs, as well as replacing former stone roofs. These slates reflect better transport facilities for heavy materials over greater distances. Clay plan tiles also make a contribution to Stroud, for example on the pitched roofs of number 6 and 12 High Street. There are two main profiles: the double Roman and the Pantile.

Modern concrete tiles have made their mark as a replacement roof covering throughout the conservation area.

Stroud has a great variety and texture in its roofscape, colours ranging from the golden browns and mossy colours of the Cotswold roof, to the smooth greys of slate and the rich, varied red and browns of the clay tile.

Decorative details abound throughout the area. Cast and wrought iron is particularly well used, and features in various forms from brackets for hanging signs in the commercial area, to decorative railings and gates on more domestic buildings. Frome House, for instance, in the New Town has an attractive and intricate wrought iron porch. Opposite, as what were once known as Union Buildings, are several surviving original panelled doors. Like the twelve-paned sash windows, the original doors make up an important part of the character of such simply, yet elegantly, styled buildings.



Above: The quirky juxtaposition of nineteenth and 17th century roofs. The use of slate is evident on the right.



Right: Attractive railings, leading into Stroud on Rowcroft, make for a pleasant setting

SHOPFRONTS

What all the sub areas have in common is that they comprise the retail and commercial heart of Stroud town. Although sub area 4 contains no shops itself, there are numerous views out of the church grounds and Bank Gardens to the other sub areas, creating a strong visual link and making the green space a key component of the town centre.

As the commercial centre of the town, the built environment throughout the conservation area is naturally dominated by shop fronts at ground floor level.

Many shop fronts here have been altered and added to and are no longer 'pure' examples of the period in which they were first constructed. However, 18th, 19th and early 20th century shop front elements can often sit happily together, as their designs followed common conventions which generally acknowledged and retained the proportions of the building as a whole. When shop front and upper storeys are in harmony, each can serve to reinforce the impact of the other.



Key elements of traditional shop front design in this study area include:



Modern shop fronts are all too often unsympathetic interventions, failing to make any visual link between the shop at ground level and the building above it. The visual dominance of the ground floor discourages the viewer from looking upwards, and can frequently nullify the impact of an otherwise attractive building, even when that building is of substantial proportions.

There are, however, a few examples of shop fronts, which take an obviously contemporary approach to the design. Often the simplest, most understated design can be striking and flattering to the building.

For further design guidance and helpful information contact Stroud Town Council or visit their website www.stroudtown.gov.uk and download the Shop Front Guide

Where retail units have expanded into neighbouring properties, modern box fascias and large areas of plate glass can ruin the visual coherence of the streetscape. The vertical emphasis of much of the Town Centre is sometimes threatened by amalgamations. Regard should always be paid to the separate identities of individual buildings, and the distinct styling and architecture of each.

THE CHARACTER OF STROUD TOWN CENTRE: A SUMMARY

Although the sub areas have their own unique character traits, they also have a number of strong common elements, which, together, make up the character of the Study Area as a whole. Perhaps perversely, one of the strongest defining and unifying characteristics is the area's very diversity:

Diversity, fusion and juxtaposition:

The Stroud area is closely associated by many people with the Cotswold vernacular and the use of stone. The town's evolution has always been closely dependent on developments in wool weaving and textile manufacture. By the 19th century, the 'Cotswold' predominance was being challenged by the confident, larger scaled developments of the municipal and industrial boomtown, and in particular by the increasing use of brick.

Today, the character of Stroud's Town Centre, like its suburbs, is one of juxtaposition and strong contrast between these two elements of its history and built heritage.

Vernacular:

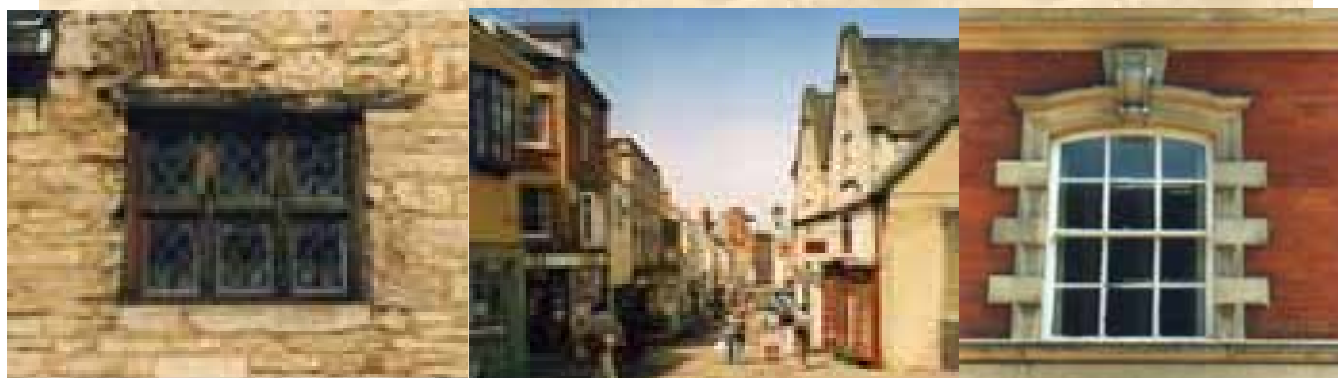
- ◆ Cotswold stone; dressed stone and rubble
- ◆ Stone slates
- ◆ Steeply pitched roofs and street-fronting attic gables
- ◆ Stone mullioned casement windows
- ◆ Hood mouldings

'Polite':

- ◆ Ashlar stone and stucco
- ◆ Red brick with stone or contrasting brick dressings
- ◆ Street-fronting eaves; Welsh slate roofs
- ◆ Sash windows; Classical detailing
- ◆ Large scaled developments; terraces; ranks of purpose-built commercial and retail units

In addition to these distinctions, there is generally an enormous diversity in the architecture of the town centre.

While there are distinctive pockets within which buildings of particular types or eras dominate, often the diversity is displayed through direct juxtaposition. Along the High Street, for example, buildings of a huge range of scales, materials, periods and styles directly abut each other. The piecemeal evolution and long history of the settlement is thus extremely evident, visually.





Plan form and spaces:

Almost unanimously, buildings throughout the Study Area front directly onto the streets, forming a continuous frontage, most of which is made up of shop fronts at the ground floor.

Particularly in the 'Old Town', buildings have very narrow street-facing elevations. There is a strong vertical emphasis, due partly to the narrow plot sizes and partly to the lack of a consistent horizontal plane at roof level. Units in the 'New Town' are also often narrow, but many are visually amalgamated by a coherently designed façade.

Overall, the plan form is far from regular. Much has resulted from 'organic' expansion, with sporadic development along the major routes and further lanes and streets evolving as offshoots and links, often occupying former or vacant building plots. Many streets curve, often working with the sloping topography.

The 19th century expansions, while planned to a greater degree and while being generally broader and straighter than in the 'Old Town', maintain the slightly haphazard and non-geometric character of the whole town centre.

There are few structured open spaces and those that do exist, including the Shambles and the Subscription Rooms Square, are of a fairly intimate and human scale, relating well to the scale of buildings around them.

In contrast, Bank Gardens and the churchyard are expansive. The openness of these green spaces heightens awareness of the town's topography of steep slopes and plateaux. They have a welcome visual impact on the surrounding environment, compensating for the very little greenery on the town centre streets.

Private space is well enclosed and makes minimal impact on the street scene. Most space behind buildings is utilitarian service or storage areas.

At the extremities of the Study Area, buildings of a more domestic appearance occur, some set back from the street, behind small yards or areas, and some detached within gardens. These create a distinctive break in the otherwise virtually continuous built-up frontage.

Small pockets of surprising space are hidden away, as at Withy's Yard and the cottages and gardens of Farr's Lane.

Narrow passageways, often spanned by the upper storeys of a building, provide access to plots or lanes behind the main street frontage.

Many buildings make a feature of their corner setting. Sometimes, curving or chamfering of the corners is necessary, due to the narrowness of many lanes.

Setting, views and landmarks:

The town centre is within a 'bowl' of encircling green hills. The landscape extends visually into the town centre, views of the countryside being seen above rooftops and along sloping streets and lanes, framed by buildings.

Views along many streets and lanes curve or slope out of sight. There are few planned views with contrived terminations - focal points have the impression of being framed by chance rather than by design.

The most prominent focal point here, both visually and historically, is the church. Its site on the slope of Stroud Hill is higher than much of the town centre, yet is on comparatively low ground in relation to the encircling hills. The town centre is concealed within the 'bowl' of landscape, yet the spire of St Laurence's is visible from many vantage points, even from afar, being much taller than any of the town centre's other buildings.

Uses and vitality:

Overwhelmingly in retail and commercial use, much of the Area's street frontage is comprised of shop fronts. A mix of individual and distinctive shop fronts and coherent schemes within a homogenous rank. Evidence of historic changes of use is often visible in the built fabric.

Commercial activities extend onto the streets, features including café tables and chairs, displays of flowers, fruit and vegetables, individual stalls and the regular Shambles market.



PART III: STRATEGY

A REVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The character appraisal has revealed that the boundary of the Central Stroud Conservation Area would benefit by some considerable changes. The Planning Authority proposes to redefine the boundary to incorporate the modifications shown on **map 7**.

Some minor additions and deletions are necessary in terms of realignment of the boundary because of physical changes that have occurred, or because the original boundary was indecisive.

However, some more substantial changes are also considered necessary. The Central Stroud Conservation Area's most defining characteristic is its role and location at the heart of Stroud town. The Study Area was designed to reflect this, incorporating most of what may be termed the 'Town Centre'. This included Stroud Shambles Conservation Area in its entirety, and the parts of Stroud Station Conservation Area and the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) most closely associated with the activities, built form and history of the town centre.

It has been found that an extensive area around the original Central Stroud Conservation Area shares many of its prevailing and defining characteristics.

Merging of Central Stroud and Stroud Shambles Conservation Areas:

1. The Shambles market area is integral to the form and history of the 'Old Town', the historic core of Stroud. Similarly, St. Laurence's Church has historically been the focal point of the town centre and it makes a strong visual contribution to the central area. Together with the churchyard, Bank Gardens is a significant linking component between different areas of the town centre. The gardens are also historically linked to Bank House, at the foot of High Street.

Transfers from Stroud Station Conservation Area and the IHCA

2. Within the study area, the buildings covered by the Stroud Station Conservation Area form an integral part of the commercial heart of Stroud town. Some, such as the Imperial Hotel, which provides accommodation for travellers, certainly have some historical links to the station. However, the majority is more associated, in terms of current uses, styles and massing, to the centre of town rather than to the industrial open spaces of the station and railway area.
3. The terraced buildings to the extreme south east of the study area are similarly felt to conform more closely to the character of the town centre than to the industrial character of the IHCA.

New designations / additions:

4. A minor addition to include the full extent of the plot at 11 Rowcroft.
5. Nelson Street. A natural continuation of High Street, the buildings here are exemplary of the defined character of the Conservation Area.
6. Gloucester Street and Lansdown. A very distinctive pocket of the town centre, exemplifying a particular era of its development and containing many characteristics of the Conservation Area.
7. Cornhill. An area with potential for enhancement, which could impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT- CONSERVATION AREA NO.18- STROUD TOWN CENTRE

A substantial area of new designation now links the former Shambles Conservation Area and the Central Stroud Conservation Area with the incorporated section of the Stroud Station Conservation Area. This new designation comprises:

8. Russell Street and the south side of George Street share many characteristics with the north side of George Street and with the Town Centre as a whole. They are also key areas of the town's historical expansion.
9. On the London road, to the south east of the study area, buildings are included for their conformity to the defined character of the conservation area. There is also similarity with the houses on Rowcroft, already included within a designated Conservation Area. Like Russell Street and George Street, the London Road forms a key part of the historic expansion of

Stroud. Furthermore, there are areas here with potential for enhancement, which would greatly impact upon the Conservation Area.

Deletions:

1. The Vicarage, to the north of the former Shambles Conservation Area is to be removed, as it has no architectural or historic interest in Conservation Area terms and is unlikely to be redeveloped in the foreseeable future. It currently also has minimal visible impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.
2. A minor deletion to the rear of numbers 3 and 4 Rowcroft, to realign the boundary along the property division.

DEFINING ISSUES AND PRESSURES

In order to formulate effective conservation policies, which will preserve and enhance the prevailing character of the Conservation Area, it is important to assess the sorts of pressures to which it is subject. Many of the common trends in development or use can have negative implications for the retention of important aspects of character and architectural integrity.

- ◆ In this Conservation Area, **shop fronts** are, and have historically been, one of the elements of the built environment most under pressure for change and 'modernisation'. The character of this conservation area is very much one of evolution and small changes; it is not a static environment. The need to alter shop fronts to accommodate new occupants or retail practices is ongoing and necessary, yet careful and thoughtful design is essential in maintaining the visual quality of the conservation area. Today, modern retail practices mean that shop fronts are increasingly transient, successive occupants wishing to impose their corporate identities on the property. Modern box fascias and large areas of plate glass can potentially ruin the visual coherence of the streetscape. Where retail units have expanded into neighbouring properties, the treatment of the 'amalgamated' shop front can fail to acknowledge the separate identities of the buildings and the often strongly vertical emphasis.
- ◆ **Vacant upper floors** are a problem for buildings throughout the Conservation Area. Although shops may occupy ground floors, vacant units above can lead to a lack of maintenance and the deteriorating condition of the upper floors. The low resident population also means that there is a loss of nighttime vitality.
- ◆ **Multi- use and multi-occupancy** of the majority of buildings here poses the threat of **incremental changes** at different storeys of the building, which fail to maintain architectural unity and coherence. This is particularly a problem with replacement windows.
- ◆ The **creation of hard standing and private parking**, especially along London Road is leading to the erosion of front enclosed areas and yards, the loss of gardens and their railings or walls. The terraces of London Road are distinctive in the Conservation Area, being set back from the road, behind enclosed private areas. This is an important feature, bridging the division between public and private space.
- ◆ Road works are a particular problem of the Town Centre. **Continual digging-up of ground surfaces** has led to the increasing unevenness of the floor. This is a problem in pedestrianised areas, and particularly on the steeply sloping High Street, where repairs and the replacement of the small concrete block pavers are often patchy. The effect is beginning to seem unkempt and inappropriate as a setting for the historic buildings.
- ◆ **Traffic congestion and on-street parking** are problematic at times in Stroud Town Centre. Problems resulting from the narrowness of lanes in the Old Town have been largely resolved through traffic re-routing and pedestrianisation. However, Nelson Street is particularly a notable among areas, which still suffer sporadically from congestion and also from the narrowness of pavements.

- ◆ Enhancement measures such as pedestrianisation and traffic re-routing have, in places, exacerbated further problems in the Conservation Area. **Street clutter**, including signage relating to traffic and parking, bollards and landscaping, are sometimes poorly planned, excessive and uncoordinated.
- ◆ **Truncation of the High Street-Nelson Street continuum** damages the character of the Old Town, severing historic, visual and physical links. It also inhibits, to an extent, Nelson Street which has become a backwater, detached from the main High Street shopping area.
- ◆ There are instances where **inappropriate modern infill**, often consisting of boxy, poorly designed buildings, damages the prevailing character of vertical and narrow built forms. This is aggravated by a failure to use locally distinctive materials.
- ◆ **Change of use** is a natural part of maintaining the vitality of the Town Centre. However, changing the function of the building often results in structural alterations such as the insertion of shop fronts. Often, change of use has been a catalyst for several of the most common problems in this Conservation Area, including the creation of parking areas and hard standing.

A number of buildings, both listed and unlisted, may be considered currently 'at risk' from vacancy or under use. Many are suffering from deterioration.

- ◆ *17-19 Russell Street. (Allocated in Local Plan for housing)*
- ◆ *15 High Street (former Smith and Lee shop). Listed Grade II*
- ◆ *Former Cinema, London Road*
- ◆ *45 High Street. (Connexions building)*
- ◆ *9 John Street (on the corner with Union Street). Listed Grade II*

PROPOSALS FOR THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

It is the aim of the District Council that the existing character of the Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area be preserved and / or enhanced. Proposals have been prepared which will enable this to be achieved.

Preservation will be achieved by the refusal of permission for the demolition and / or alteration of any building or structure where this work would result in damage to the character or appearance of the area. Enhancement will be achieved by the use of Development Control powers and by design guidance to owners and occupiers in the area.

All proposals for development within or, in some cases, adjacent to the Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area will be assessed against the Development Plan policies set out over the following pages.

These are taken from the adopted **Stroud District Local Plan** (November 2005).

Local Plan Policies for development affecting a Conservation Area

Policy BE4:

Applications involving the demolition of an unlisted building, buildings or other structure or structures, within a Conservation Area, will only be permitted if either:

1. The structure to be demolished makes no positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area; or
2. The condition of the building or structure is such that the cost of repairing and maintaining it outweighs its importance, and the value derived from its continued use; and
3. Detailed proposals have been approved for the re-use of the site, including any replacement building or other structure that retain or make a greater contribution to the character or appearance of the area than the building or structure to be demolished.

Policy BE5:

Development within, or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area, will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

1. The siting of the development respects existing open spaces, patterns of building layout, trees, hedges, walls and fences, and does not harm any positive contribution made to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area by any of these;
2. The scale, design, proportions, detailing and materials used in the proposed development are sympathetic to the characteristic form in the area, and compatible with adjacent buildings and spaces;
3. It does not cause the loss of features of historic or characteristic value; and
4. Important views within, into and out of the area are protected.

Policy BE6:

Proposals to alter or extend an unlisted building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted if the proposal is sympathetic in design, scale, materials, detailing, colour and landscaping to the rest of the building and to the Conservation Area.

Policy BE7:

A change of use of a building in a Conservation Area will be permitted if both the following criteria are met:

1. The new use will not require any changes in the appearance or setting of the building, other than those which will preserve or enhance its contribution to the character or appearance of the area; and
2. Any traffic generation, vehicle parking or noise can be catered for in a way that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

Policy BE13:

Development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or not) or would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains.

Policy BE14:

Development that affects archaeological remains of other than national significance will not be permitted unless the importance of the development outweighs the value of the remains.

Local Plan policies for development affecting a Listed Building

The Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area includes a great number of **listed buildings**, as is often the case in high quality historic environments. The following policies are used to assess development affecting a listed building or its setting, where that development requires planning permission.

When considering applications for **Listed Building Consent**, the Planning Authority refers to government policy guidance in the form of PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, rather than to Local Plan policies.

Policy BE8:

Development involving the total demolition of a listed building will not be permitted unless there are very exceptional circumstances, where all the following criteria are met:

1. The listed building concerned is a Grade II Listed Building;
2. The condition of the building is such that the cost of repairing and maintaining the building outweigh its importance, and the value derived from its continued use;
3. There is no other viable use for the building; and
4. The demolition of the building will not cause harm to the setting of any other listed building, the character of a Conservation Area, or the character of a street scene.

Policy BE9:

Development involving the partial demolition of a listed building, or the demolition of a Curtilage listed building, will only be permitted where the demolition will achieve the preservation of the listed building and its setting.

Policy BE10:

Development involving proposals to extend or alter a listed building, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest that contribute to the reasons for its listing, will not be permitted unless it would preserve the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses.

Policy BE11:

A change of use of all or part of a listed building will be permitted only if it would preserve the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses.

Policy BE12:

A proposal for development that affects the setting of a listed building will only be permitted where it preserves the setting of the affected listed building.

Design and policy guidance relating specifically to the Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area, and resulting from this Review follows:

Policies and design guidance

The designation of the conservation area is not intended to prevent all changes. Change can be a positive force, especially those that would enhance the character of the area. As a general rule, however, it will be expected that works requiring Planning Permission will avoid detracting from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and should, wherever possible, positively preserve or enhance those qualities. Under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this requirement to pay special attention to preservation and enhancement extends to all powers under the Planning Acts, not only those which relate specifically to historic buildings.

The Local Planning Authority will therefore apply the following proposals for preserving or enhancing the character of the Conservation Area when applications for works requiring Planning Permission are considered.

1. **New buildings or the extension of existing buildings** will be required to reflect and respect the existing pattern of development especially in terms of scale, proportion and massing, and in their relationship to the highways.
2. **Materials** should accord with the type and mix traditionally used in the area.
3. Proposals to erect **fences, railings or walls** will only be allowed where they are incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence and where they are sympathetic to the building on the site and its immediate surroundings. The demolition of, or alteration to, walls or fences in or around the historic plots and other private spaces will not normally be permitted. The creation of run-ins for parking and hard standing will not normally be allowed where this involves the loss of enclosure around private front yards or gardens on London Road.
4. **The formation of new openings** for windows and doors shall accord with the scale and style of the building. **Replacement windows and doors** should be constructed in traditional materials, detailing and design. The use of uPVC will be strongly resisted, along with the use of modern stains in contrasting and/or inappropriate colours.
5. **Constructional features** including, for example, rainwater goods, colour and type of external paints, detailing of the pointing, the number and positioning of roof lights, etc., are significant contributors to the character of buildings. Only traditional repairs to, or replacements of, such features should be carried out.
6. The poorly thought out **introduction of services** to buildings (such as satellite dishes, meter boxes and alarm boxes) can be harmful to the character of the buildings. Where these fall under Planning Controls, the locations of

these elements will be carefully controlled.

7. **Signs and signage** play a vital role in contributing to the character of the town. Poorly designed signs in inappropriate materials can detract from the character of the area. Hand painted signs on timber remains one of the most adaptable and effective forms of advertising and this will be encouraged. The introduction of plastic signs is normally considered to be inappropriate.
8. **Lighting units for advertising** need to be designed to ensure that they are not obtrusive and respect the building in terms of both setting and colour. Internally illuminated signs will rarely be acceptable.
9. **Traditional hanging signs** make an important visual contribution to the character of the area, but these also need to be carefully designed and sensitively located on the building.
10. Where improvements or enhancement schemes are proposed for **ground surfaces and hard landscaping**, it should be remembered that the need for roadworks and the installation of services is inevitable and ongoing; hence the area requires simple approaches to surfacing, which may be easily patched. High quality materials, which accord with those traditionally found in the area should be used for both hard landscaping schemes and ground surfacing.
11. **Parking and traffic.** Any opportunity will be taken through the Planning Development Control process to improve existing parking and servicing arrangements. Due regard will be had to any proposals that may affect the character of the Conservation Area through increased traffic generation.
12. **Development, which detracts from or obstructs an important view** through, out of or into a Conservation Area will not normally be permitted.
13. **Adjacent development:** The Local Authority will take special care in the control of development near or adjacent to the Conservation Area, and development, which may affect the setting of a Listed Building. Such development may not directly impinge on the area of building, but may indirectly affect them (for example, by spoiling views or generating through traffic).
14. **Vacant premises over shops:** The Local Authority will support bringing vacant upper floors back into use wherever possible. Residential conversion would help to meet a widespread need for small housing units. There will be a presumption against granting permission for applications for shop conversions, which would eliminate separate accesses to upper floors.



This shop in Kendrick Street has benefited from the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme, which has helped to fund a number of shop front improvements within Stroud's town centre Conservation Area.

PROPOSALS AFFECTING NEUTRAL ZONES

A neutral zone is an individual site, or group of sites, which do not entirely conform to the identifiable character or appearance of the Area, but where there might be some potential for enhancement. Wherever possible, the Local Planning Authority will encourage the replacement or improvement of buildings in these areas, if and when sites become available or applications are made for development.

There are eight sites in the Conservation Area, which are regarded as neutral zones. These sites are identified on **Map 9**.

- ◆ Connexions building, 45 High Street. This site, complete with an extensive car parking area, was created following the demolition of two substantial 18th century buildings at numbers 42 and 45. The boxy, long, low design and the lack of locally distinctive materials or details fail to conform to or complement the defined character of the Conservation Area.
- ◆ Church Street Car Park and the upper stretch of Church Street break with the historically dense character of the older parts of the town. Although strategically sited and well used, the car park has little aesthetic merit or positive character.
- ◆ Clarendon Court is an obtrusive building, which features in several key vistas. Its materials, scale and massing (including a protruding upper section which is askew to the street and the ground floor) is out of character with adjacent buildings, which consist predominantly of terraces of narrow buildings at this point on London Road. Poor quality modern shop fronts aggravate the horizontal emphasis of the building
- ◆ 1 London Road. The modern retail and office buildings on the north side of London Road by John Street have a similarly unsympathetic horizontal emphasis and appear squat and featureless.
- ◆ Car parking areas on the east side of Cornhill. The openness of these areas does not conform to the predominant densely built character of the rest of the conservation area. Like Church Street,

these are neither green spaces nor formal open spaces.

- ◆ 4a High Street (Clarks). Although narrow and generally in scale with its neighbours, this modern building is completely featureless and, crucially lacks any upper storey distinction.
- ◆ Pine shop on King Street. This building has lost all of its original architectural detailing and character. It is a stark contrast to the often highly detailed and decorative character of many of the neighbouring buildings on King Street. This is a prime candidate for enhancement.

LISTED BUILDINGS

At present, there are 62 buildings (not including monuments) within the Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area, which have been listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport as being buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest [see map 8]. Some list entries cover a number of buildings within a single entry (for example in the case of terraces), so the number of distinct units or properties actually covered by listing is certainly significantly more than the number cited here.

Once a building has been listed, consent from the Local Planning Authority is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension, which would affect its character. Any changes to these buildings should also be considered in relation to the effect they would have on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The entire building is listed and controls apply to all works, both internal and external and whether or not a particular feature is specifically mentioned in the list description. Consent is also required where routine repairs would involve alterations and consent may be required for the painting or repainting of the exterior or interior of a listed building.

Additionally, the curtilage of a listed building is also considered to be part of the listed building. 'Curtilage' is normally considered to be the land, buildings and structures which go with and are subordinate to, the principal building and which would normally be conveyed as a single holding, or which may have an historical association. For example, the curtilage of a town house would normally include any later workshops or washhouses and the perimeter wall or fence of the garden. Any proposals to alter curtilage features would be subject to prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.

TREES

Trees contribute significantly to the character and quality of the townscape, most notably those around the church and Bank Gardens, but also the few isolated trees elsewhere.

Prior to carrying out any works to a tree, which grows in a Conservation Area, except in certain circumstances, 6 weeks written notice of the proposed works must be given to the Local Planning Authority. This is to enable the Local Planning Authority to protect the tree with a Tree Preservation Order if appropriate in the circumstances. This restriction does not apply to trees, which have a trunk diameter of less than 7.5cms measured at 1.3m above ground level.

THE PROTECTION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS

There are a number of unlisted buildings and structures in the Conservation Area, which are important contributors to its character and appearance.

Conservation area controls: Demolitions

Works for the demolition of an unlisted building that has a volume of over 115 cubic metres needs Conservation Area Consent. Demolition is defined as the total or substantial destruction of the building concerned. Many works, which involve the destruction of only part of the building, will not be classed as demolition and will not require consent.

The total or substantial demolition of any wall or other means of enclosure, which is more than one metre high where fronting a highway, and is more than two metres high in any other situation, will require Conservation Area Consent.

In accordance with Local Plan Policy, applications involving the demolition of an unlisted building or structure within the Conservation Area will only be permitted if either:

- ◆ The structure to be demolished makes no positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area; or
- ◆ The condition of the building or structure is such that the cost of repairing and maintaining it outweighs its importance and the value derived from its continued use; and
- ◆ Detailed proposals have been approved for the re-use of the site, including any replacement building or other structure that retains or makes a greater contribution to the character or appearance of the area than the building or structure to be demolished.

Permitted development

The Town and Country Planning General Development Order (GDO 1988) requires planning applications for certain types of development in conservation areas which are elsewhere classified as 'permitted development'. "These include various types of cladding; the insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes; the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway; and the installation of radio masts, antennae or radio equipment housing with a volume in excess of two cubic metres (unless the development is carried out in an emergency). The size of the house and industrial extensions that may be carried out without specific planning permission is also more restricted". [PPG15, 4.21]

The vast majority of buildings in this Conservation Area consist of shops, many of which have flats over. For these types of property, there are no 'Permitted Development Rights'; hence planning permission will be required to carry out even minor alterations and works, including the replacement of windows.

Article 4 Directions

Although the Permitted Development Rights of houses (and buildings other than shops and flats) are restricted within a Conservation Area, as outlined above, the additional controls brought about by designation of the Conservation Area cannot sufficiently prevent many changes to these buildings. If unchecked, a successive number of such changes could damage the character of the Conservation Area.

For this reason, the Local Authority proposes to establish an Article 4 (2) Direction. Article 4 Directions allow the Local Planning Authority to apply controls to works of alteration to dwelling houses, which were previously allowed through Permitted Development Rights. As a consequence of an Article 4 Direction, certain works to certain specified properties require an application for Planning Permission.

In the case of an Article 4 (2) direction, the controls only apply in circumstances where the proposed works are on elevations which front a highway or public open space.

The buildings detailed below are those to be covered by the Direction. These are unlisted buildings, in use as dwelling houses, and as such they currently have greater permitted development rights than other buildings in the Conservation Area.

- ◆ London Road: Numbers 8,9,10 & 11.
Camden House
Lappa Kia

The buildings are identified on **map 8**, 'Listed Buildings and Article 4 Buildings within the Town Centre Conservation Area'.

Works requiring Planning Permission as a result of the removal of certain Permitted Development Rights by the Article 4 Direction are outlined in the table overleaf.

	Development within the curtilage of a dwelling house:
Class A	The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house
Class B	The enlargement of a dwelling house consisting of an addition of alteration to its roof
Class C	Any other alteration to the roof of a dwelling house
Class D	The erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwelling house
Class H	The installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna on a dwelling house or within the curtilage of a dwelling house
	<i>[The above being development comprised within Part 1, Classes A, B, C, D and H referred to in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, and not being development comprised within any other part]</i>
	Minor Operations:
Class A	The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure

Class C	The painting of the exterior of any building or work
	<i>[The above being development comprised within Part 2, Classes A and C, referred to in Schedule 2 to the said Order (1995), and not being development comprised within any other part]</i>

Unoccupied buildings

If it appears to the Secretary of State that the preservation of an unoccupied building in a Conservation Area is important for maintaining the character or appearance of that Area, and if its condition is a cause of concern, a Notice may be served on the owner, to direct that urgent works be undertaken to preserve the building. If the owner then fails to comply with the Notice, the District Council can instigate the work itself, the costs of which can be recovered from the owner.

For further information and advice please contact:

The Conservation Team
 Development Services
 Stroud District Council
 Ebley Mill
 Westward Road, Stroud
 Gloucestershire
 GL5 4UB

www.stroud.gov.uk

Planning Enquiries: 01453 754442

MAPS

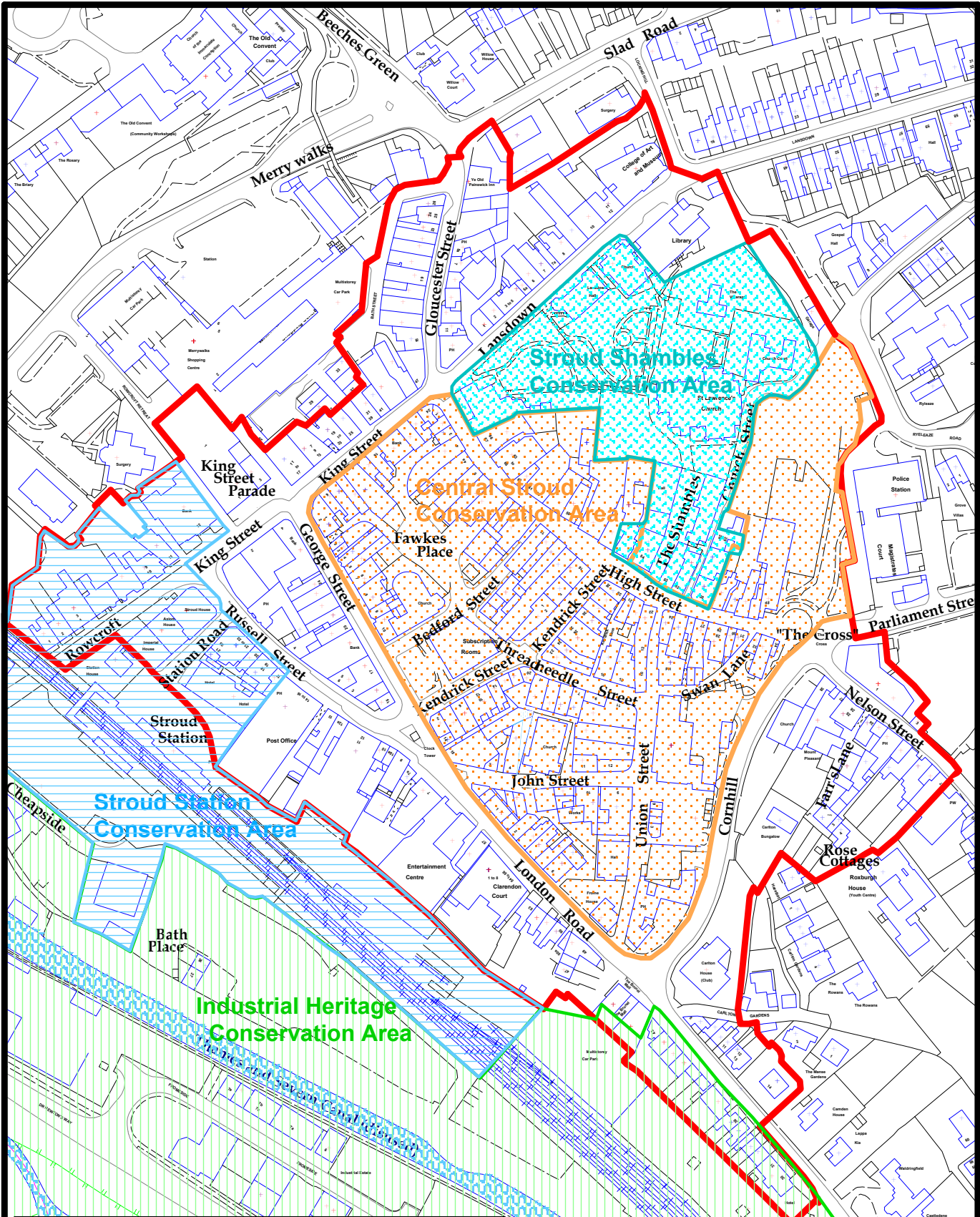
1. **THE STUDY AREA AND EXISTING CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES**
 - ◆ This map shows the Town Centre STUDY AREA, outlined in a solid red line.

2. **SUB AREAS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA**
 - ◆ Map 2 shows all the sub areas within the STUDY AREA, while maps 3-6 show each individual sub area in more detail.
3. **SUB AREA 1**
4. **SUB AREA 2 (a)**
SUB AREA 2 (b)
5. **SUB AREA 3**
6. **SUB AREA 4**

7. **THE PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**
 - ◆ Map 7 shows the new Town Centre CONSERVATION AREA outlined in a solid green line. The map also shows additions, deletions and realignments of existing boundaries

8. **LISTED BUILDINGS AND ARTICLE 4 BUILDINGS WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA**
 - ◆ Map 8 shows the CONSERVATION AREA outlined in a solid green line

9. **NEUTRAL ZONES WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA**
 - ◆ Map 9 shows the CONSERVATION AREA outlined in a solid green line.

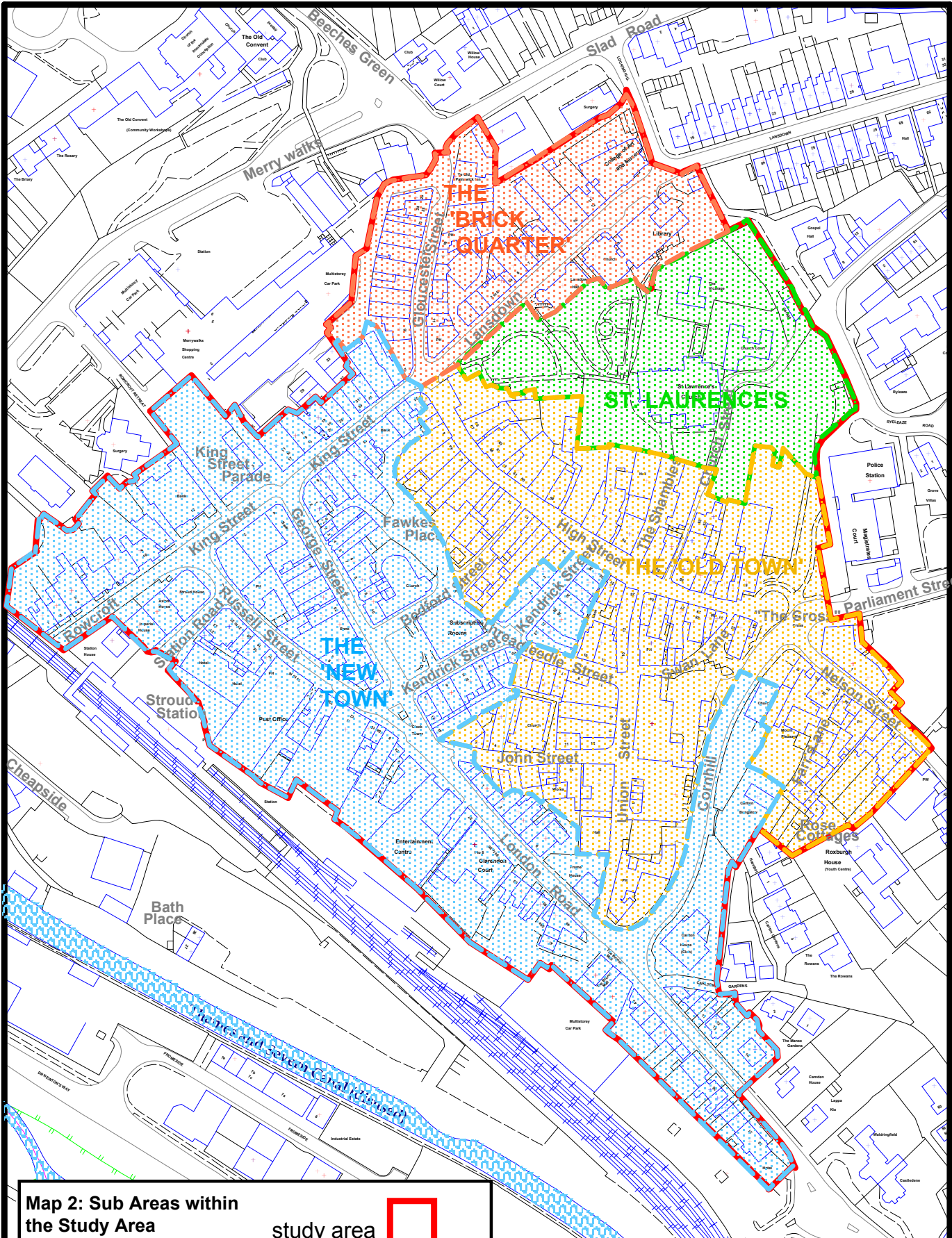


Map 1: Study Area and existing Conservation Area boundaries

Current Central Stroud CA.		Current Stroud Shambles CA.	
Current IHCA.		Current Stroud Station CA.	
		Stroud Town Centre study area	

STROUD TOWN CENTRE STUDY AREA

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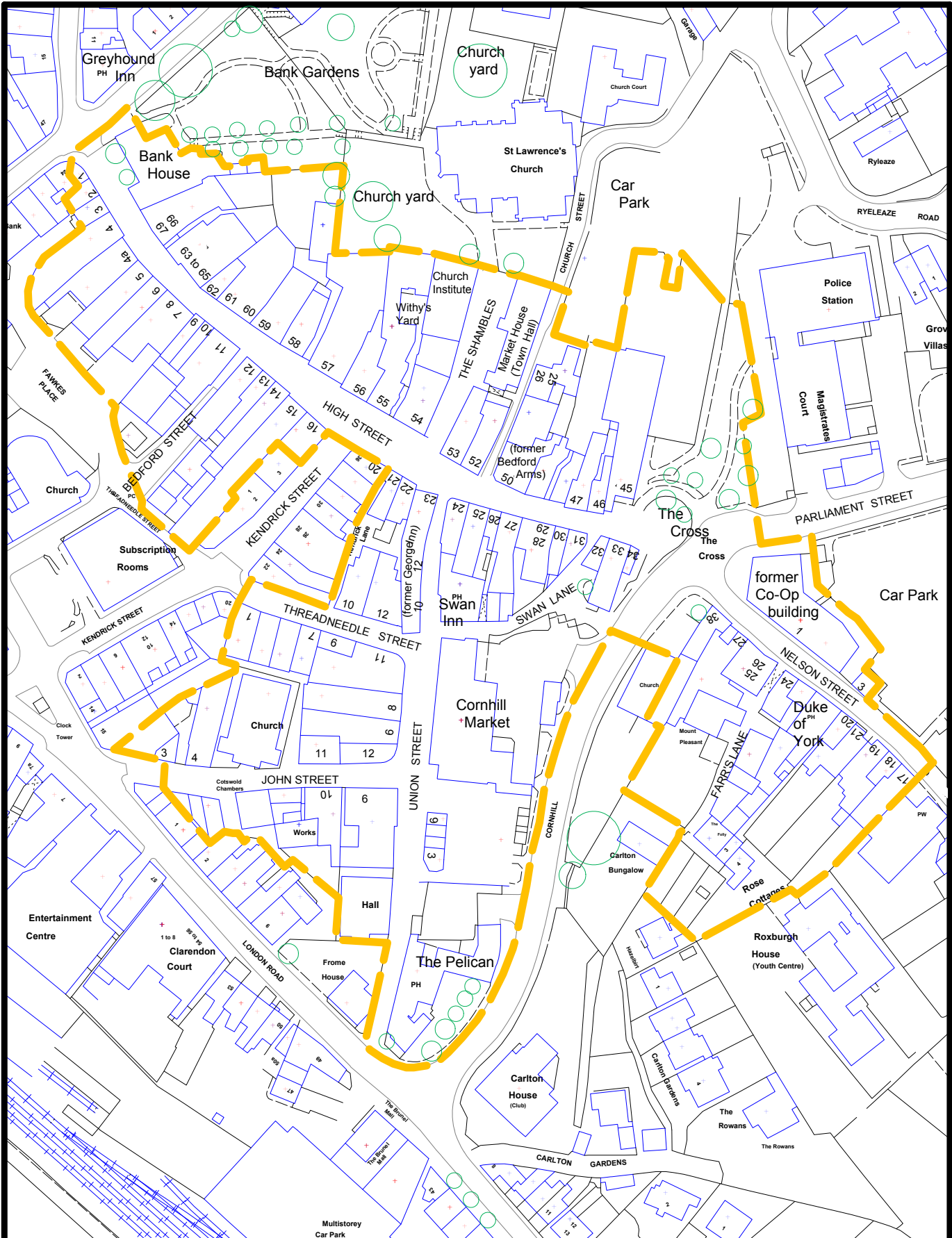
Map 2: Sub Areas within the Study Area

- | | | | |
|------------|--|------------|--|
| sub area 1 | | sub area 3 | |
| sub area 2 | | sub area 4 | |
| | | study area | |

STROUD TOWN CENTRE STUDY AREA

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Map 3: Sub Area 1- The Old Town

Sub area 1 boundary

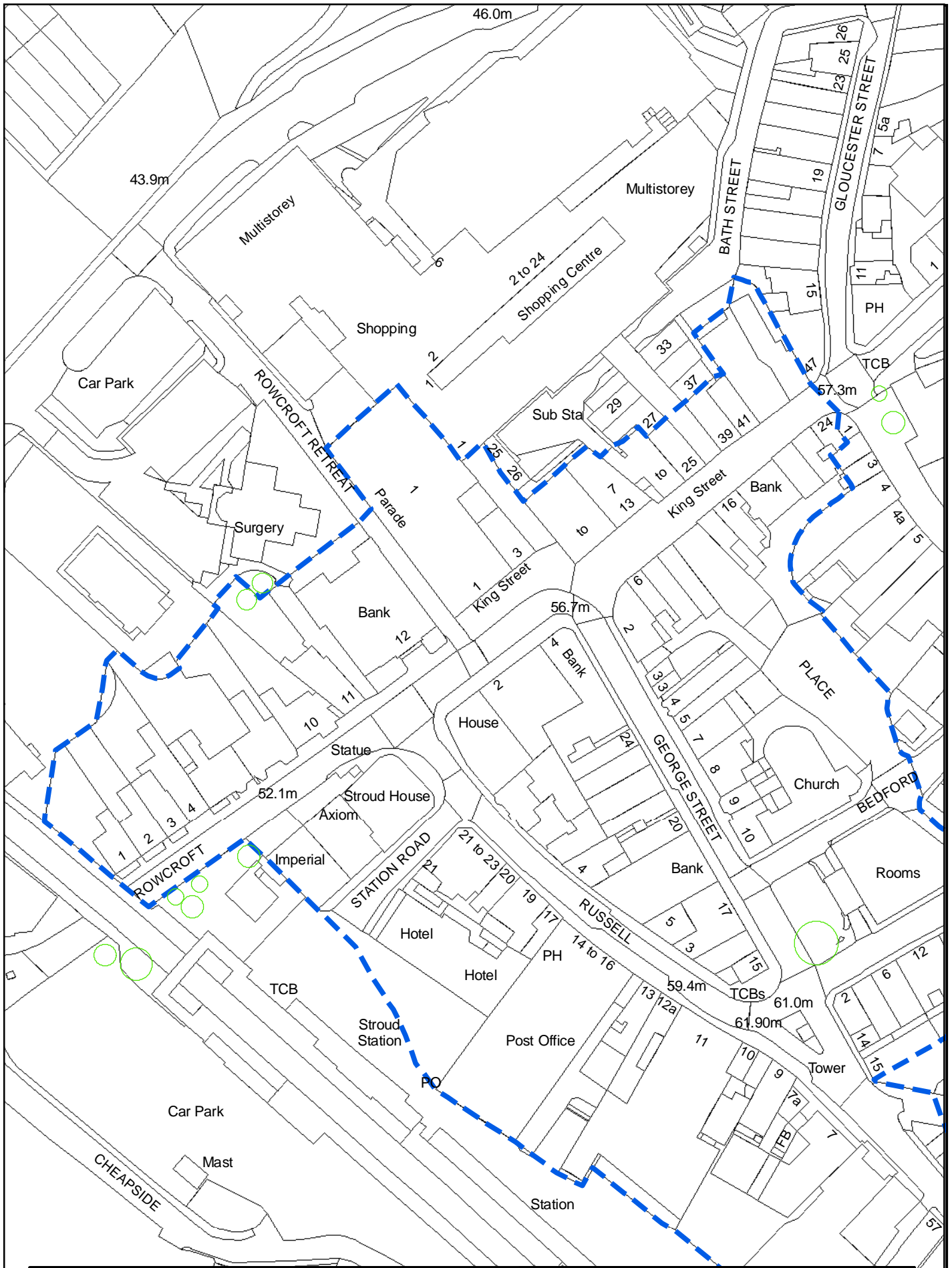


Trees which impact on the sub area



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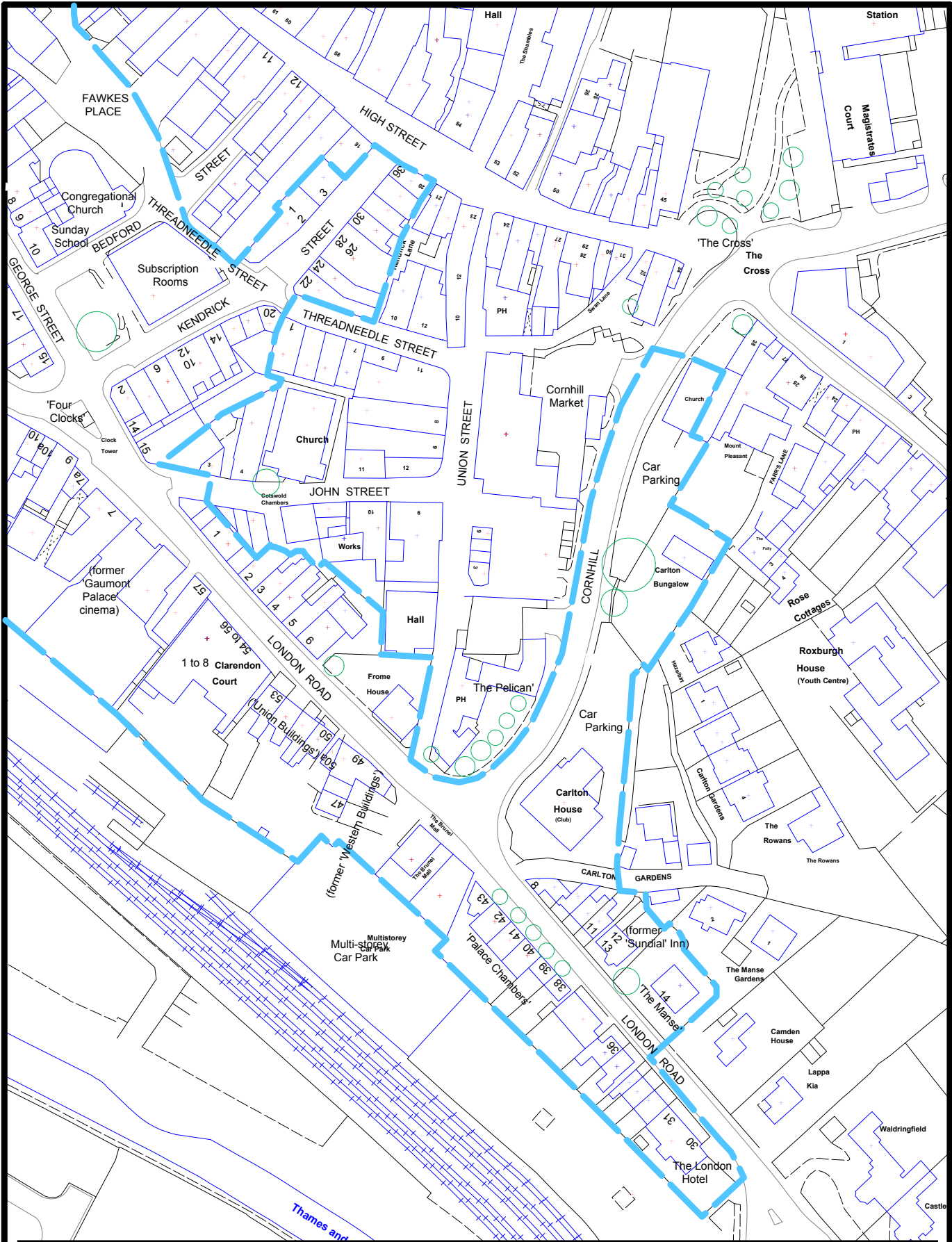


Map 4a: Sub Area 2 - The New Town

-  Sub area 2 boundary
-  Trees with impact on sub area

Stroud Town Centre Study Area

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Map 4b: Sub Area 2 - The New Town

Sub area 2 boundary



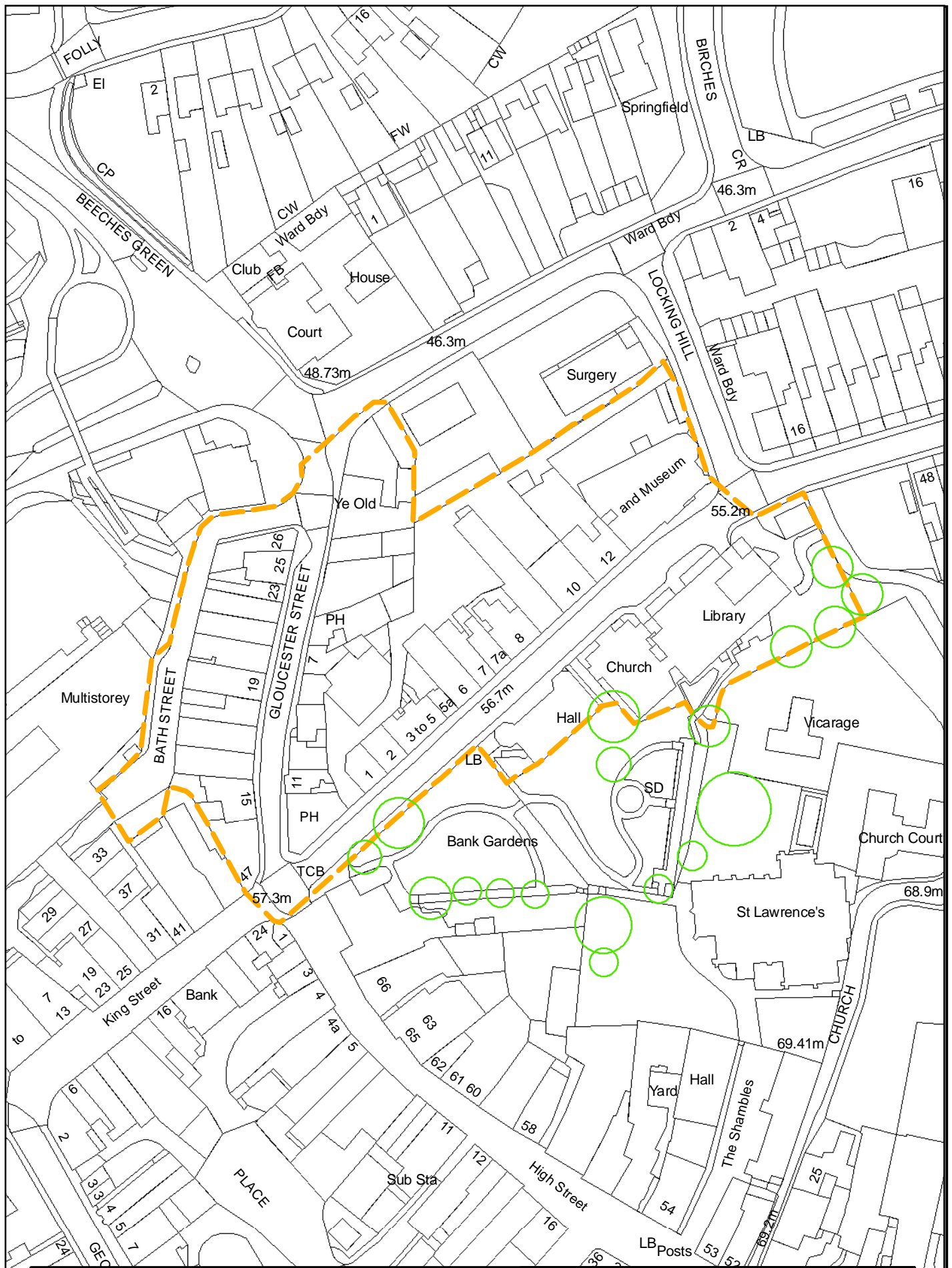
Trees which impact on the sub area



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Map 5: Sub Area 3 - The Brick Quarter



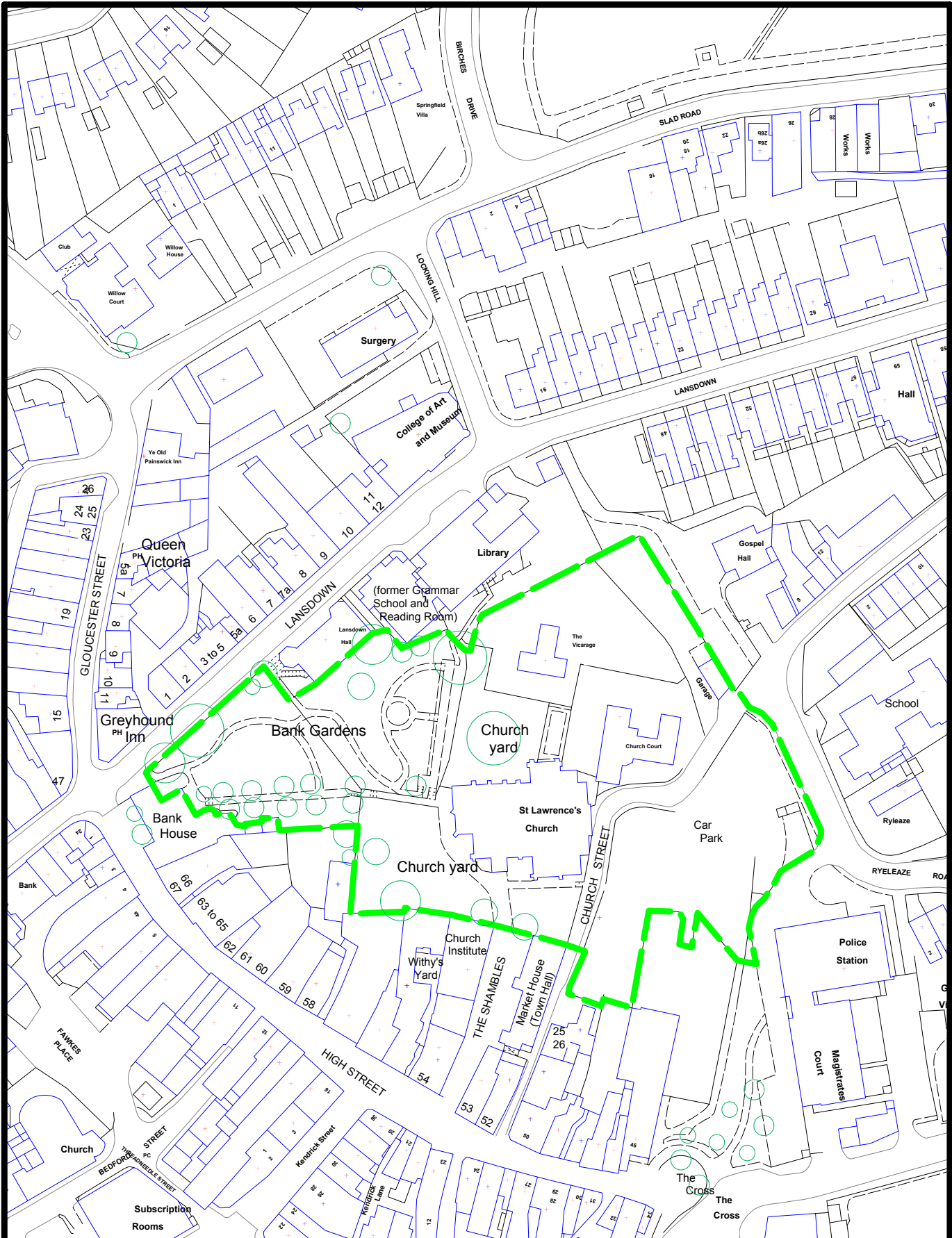
Sub Area 3 boundary



Trees with impact on sub area

Stroud Town Centre Study Area

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Map 6: Sub Area 4 - St Laurence's

Sub Area 4 boundary

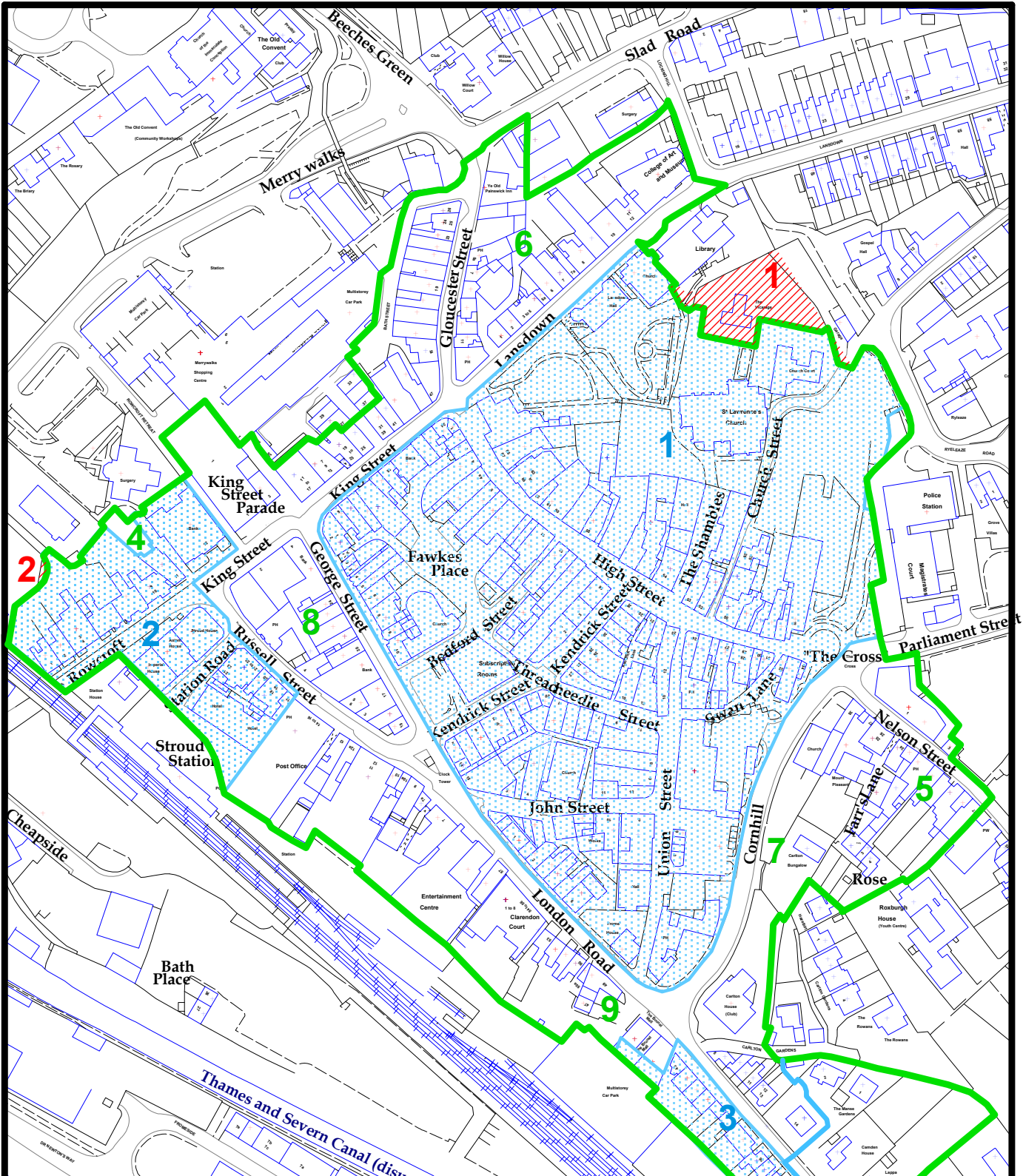


Trees which impact on the Sub Area





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Map 7: The Proposed Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary

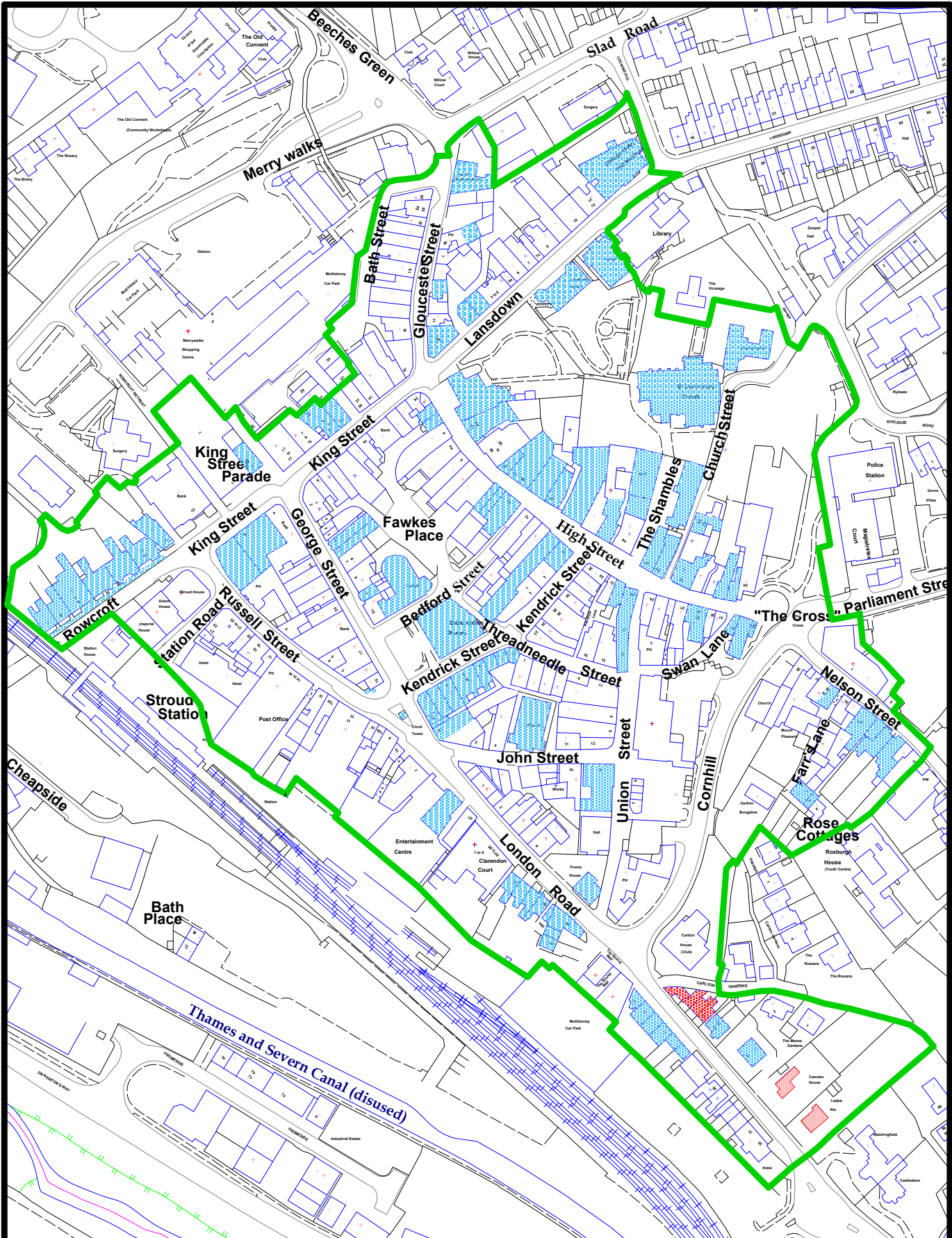
[Numbers refer to paragraphs within the Review of the Conservation Area Boundary, pages 53-54]

- Proposed Stroud Town Centre CA boundary 
- Areas of new designation 

- Areas incorporated from existing Conservation Areas 
- Areas to be deleted from existing Conservation Areas 

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Map 8: Listed Buildings and Article 4 Buildings within the Conservation Area

Listed Buildings



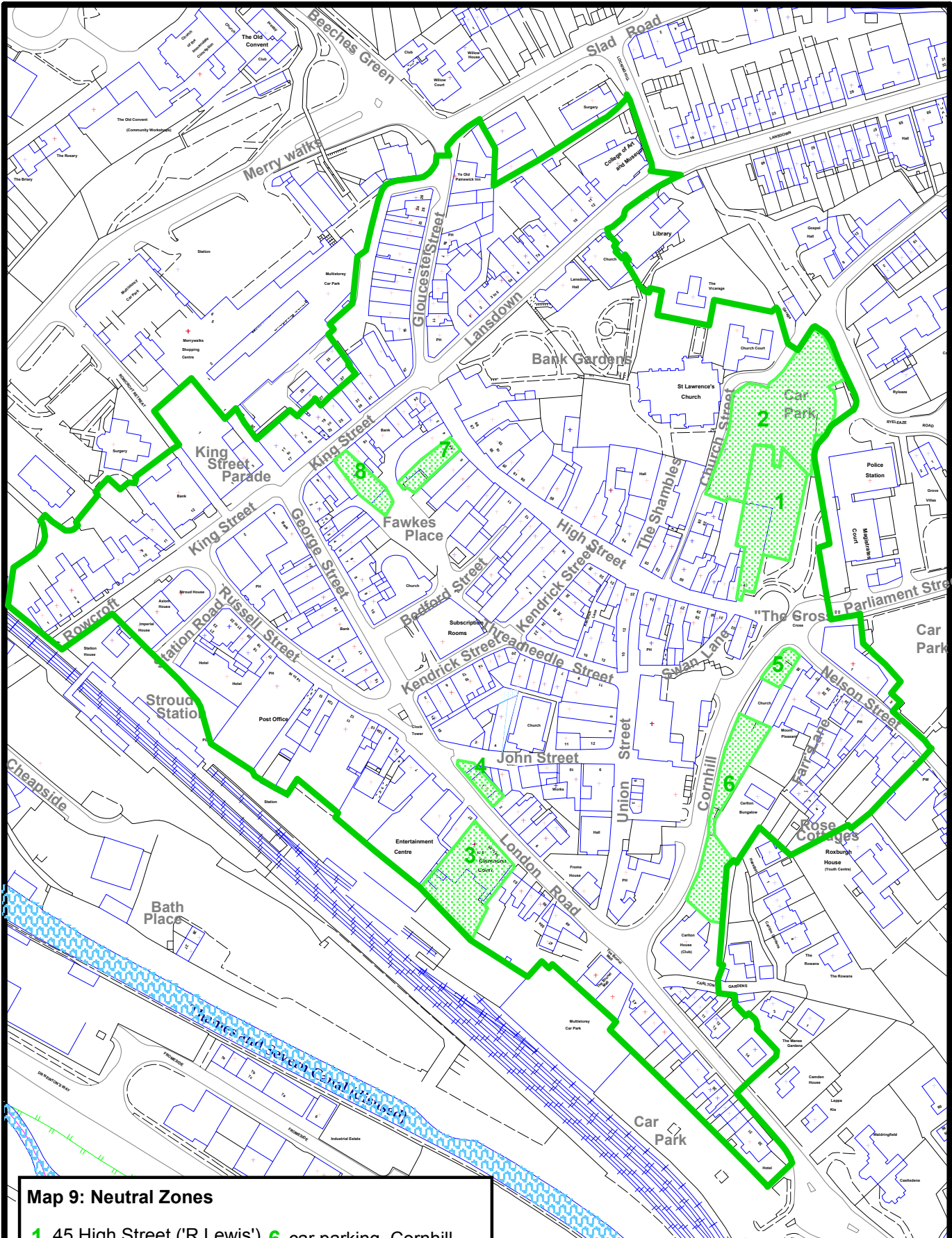
Article 4 Buildings



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Map 9: Neutral Zones

- 1 45 High Street ('R Lewis')
 - 2 Church Street car park
 - 3 Clarendon Court
 - 4 shops at 1 London Road
 - 5 vacant plot, Nelson Street
 - 6 car parking, Cornhill
 - 7 4a High Street ('Clarks')
 - 8 Pine shop, King Street
- neutral zones

**STROUD TOWN CENTRE
CONSERVATION AREA**

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GLOSSARY

Ashlar Stone

Dressed stonework, where blocks are laid in regular courses with carefully squared sides and corners, often with fine joints.

Cornice

A projecting moulding at a wallhead, above windows and doors, or as the top horizontal division of the entablature in classical architecture

Curtilage

An area of ground ancillary to and belonging to a building. The precise edges defining a building's curtilage are largely determined by the physical relationship

Diminishing courses

Where the size of roofing slates increase as they run away from the ridge.

Dormer windows

Windows projecting from the pitch of a roof

Gable

The vertical part of an end wall of a building, contained within the roof slope.

Hipped roof

Roof with four slopes, the shorter of which are referred to as the hipped ends.

Horns

On *sash windows*, a small extension of the vertical stiles past the meeting rails. These appeared from the mid-19th century, to add stability to windows with fewer, finer glazing bars and larger panes of glass. Not a feature of early sash windows.

Hood-mould (also known as 'drip mould')

A projecting stone moulding, designed to divert water off the face of a wall, above doors, windows or archways. A typical local vernacular feature commonly combined with stone *mullions*.

Jetty

Projection of an upper storey in a timber framed building.

Mortar fillets

Triangular length of mortar at the verges of a roof, between the underside of the slates and the top of the wall.

Mullion window

Locally, these are windows with stone surrounds and stone upright 'posts' ("mullions"), which divide the glazed lights. Glass was traditionally directly glazed into the stone framework, with one or two opening lights set within iron sub-frames.

'Polite' architecture

A style of architecture introduced during the 17th century and based upon national and international pattern books. In direct contrast to *vernacular* styles which are built according to local traditions.

Rubble stone

Stone walls, either un-coursed or coursed roughly, with thick joints.

Sash window

Window where the opening lights slide up and down in a cased frame (see '*horns*').

Slates

Stone roofing material. Also referred to as stone tiles in the Cotswolds. Traditionally laid in *diminishing courses*.

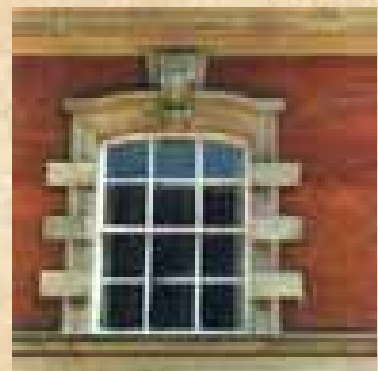
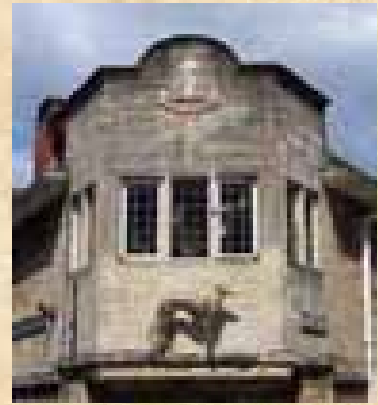
Vernacular

An architectural style 'of its place,' using local materials and local craftsmen, according to local traditions. Usually refers to small houses and cottages of humble origins, but can also extend to large buildings of importance. Often referred to as the opposite of '*polite*' architecture, which is national or internationally influenced.

**For further advice and information,
please contact:**

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Stroud District Council Offices,
Ebley Mill, Westward Road,
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4UB

Telephone: 01453 766321
www.stroud.gov.uk



Where can I get more information?

This document provides a summary of what a conservation area involves. It is not a comprehensive statement of the law, the basis of which is found in the **1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act**.

You can find detailed information on the Government's policy in relation to the historic environment in its **planning policy guidance note, PPG15** (this can be found on the Planning pages of the Government's website: www.communities.gov.uk). PPG15 forms a framework for planning policy nationwide, within which **Stroud District Council's Local Plan** policies are based. The Built Environment chapter of the current version of the District's Local Plan contains policies on development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area (www.stroud.gov.uk).