

# Topography and Settlement

Jan Broadway

## **Boundaries**

Following the 1972 Local Government Act the municipal borough was merged with the urban district of Charlton Kings to form the non-metropolitan district of Cheltenham.<sup>1</sup> In 1991 the boundary of Cheltenham was extended to include the built-up areas of Badgeworth, Swindon, Prestbury, Leckhampton and Up Hatherley. The revised borough covers 4,680 hectares.<sup>2</sup> The borough is primarily urban, but a green belt was established in 1968 to preserve the open land to the west between Cheltenham and Gloucester and prevent the two communities merging.<sup>3</sup> The green belt was extended in 1981 to prevent Cheltenham merging with Bishop's Cleeve to the north.<sup>4</sup> The green belt covered 17% of Cheltenham's area in 1991. To the east of the town 10 sq. km. of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies within Cheltenham borough.<sup>5</sup> In 2007 a government inspector ruled that a business park could be built by a commercial company within the green belt near Arle Court.<sup>6</sup> Despite considerable local opposition<sup>7</sup> plans adopted in 2017 reduced Cheltenham's green belt from 820ha. to 550ha.<sup>8</sup>

## **Population**

In 1947 Cheltenham's population was estimated to be 64,640.<sup>9</sup> The development plan for the area expected the population to reach 71,400 by 1971 by a combination of natural expansion and inward migration.<sup>10</sup> At the 1951 census the population was 62,850<sup>11</sup> and it was estimated to be 68,630 in 1958, when the development plan was reviewed.<sup>12</sup> In 1955 it was estimated that GCHQ had brought 3,400 people to Cheltenham in 1952/3, of whom around 2,000 were living in the borough.<sup>13</sup> While inward migration was lower than

<sup>1</sup> Local Govt. Act 1972 c. 70; O.S. Map 1:25000, SO 82/92 (1982 edn).

<sup>2</sup> GA, PR4.51GS.

<sup>3</sup> GA, B253/35913, 7.

<sup>4</sup> AERC Ltd., *Cheltenham Green Belt Review Final Report* (2007), 25.

<sup>5</sup> GA, PR4.51GS; Cotswold ANOB Factsheet (<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/cotswolds-aonb-1.pdf>).

<sup>6</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 5 May 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 25 Apr. 2017.

<sup>8</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 9 Oct. 2018; CBC Online, *EXAM 146 Inspector's Preliminary Findings On Green Belt Release* (2015).

<sup>9</sup> GA, PF4.82, 6.

<sup>10</sup> GCC/COU/1/1/25, 1 Nov. 1950.

<sup>11</sup> Census, 1951.

<sup>12</sup> GA, PF4.82, 6.

<sup>13</sup> GCC/COU/1/1/26, 25 Mar. 1955.

anticipated by the development plan, the natural increase in the population was greater.<sup>14</sup> By 1961 the population had grown beyond expectation to reach 72,154. In the subsequent decade the rate of increase slowed, with the population reaching 74,356 in 1971. Following the 1972 boundary changes the 1981 census returned a total of 82,972. In 1991, after a further expansion of the borough, the population reached 103, 115, and showed a steady increase to 110,013 in 2001 and 115,732 in 2011<sup>15</sup>.

### **Urban Redevelopment**

In 1944 the council sought the advice of the Georgian Group concerning the town's reconstruction and redevelopment. The group's resulting *Report on Cheltenham* included an appendix of buildings that should be preserved, but also stressed the importance of respecting the town's layout and general character in the course of redevelopment.<sup>16</sup> In 1955 four buildings in Cheltenham received Grade I listing: Thirlestaine House, All Saints church, Montpellier Rotunda and Pittville Pump Room.<sup>17</sup> (The parish church was listed Grade I in 1972.)<sup>18</sup> In 1968 there were 988 buildings within the borough on the statutory list and an additional 614 buildings on the supplementary list.<sup>19</sup> The council considered it impractical to try to preserve every listed building. They decided to concentrate on preserving the most important streets and squares, while allowing the demolition of isolated buildings unless they were of exceptional merit.<sup>20</sup> The results of this policy led to considerable controversy towards the end of the century.<sup>21</sup>

### **Post War**

The influx of industry into the town immediately before and during the war had massively increased the demand for housing, led to relatively uncontrolled conversion of existing buildings to industrial use and increased the problems of traffic congestion, particularly in the vicinity of the High Street.<sup>22</sup> In November 1945 the council agreed to schedule for redevelopment a war-damaged area around the High Street between Swindon Street and Townsend Street on the north and Park Street to Gloucester Road on the south.<sup>23</sup> By 1948 the council were envisaging a wide-scale redevelopment of the St Peter's area in conjunction with the widening of Tewkesbury Road and consequently decided not to erect temporary houses in the area.<sup>24</sup> In 1955 the Tungum Company relocated from its town centre Royal Oak

---

<sup>14</sup> GA, PF4.82, 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Census, 1961 - 2011.

<sup>16</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 10 Sept. 1945.

<sup>17</sup> HE, 1386724, 1386679, 1387363, 1387559.

<sup>18</sup> HE, 1386792.

<sup>19</sup> GA, GCC/COU/1/1/31, 17 Jan. 1968.

<sup>20</sup> GA, PF4.82, 22.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy Mowl, *Cheltenham Betrayed* (1995); Oliver Bradbury, 'Cheltenham Destroyed', *Gloucestershire History* 14 (2000), 2-9.

<sup>22</sup> GA, GCC/COU/1/1/25, 1 Nov. 1950.

<sup>23</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1945.

<sup>24</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 2 Mar. & 10 Nov. 1948.

Works off the lower High Street to the suburban grounds of the White House, Arle.<sup>25</sup> The redevelopment of the Lower High Street began in 1957, once the post-war overcrowding had been solved.<sup>26</sup> The Maud's Elm estate combined the renewal of houses in existing streets and the creation of Bridge Street and Richards Road.<sup>27</sup>

The Pittville Pump Room had been closed to the public for some years before the war and by 1945 was in need of extensive repairs. Although restoration was approved by the council in 1949, it remained controversial and progress was slow.<sup>28</sup> The restoration was eventually completed in 1960, having cost £40,000.<sup>29</sup> In 1947 the county council issued a compulsory purchase order for Thirlestaine House<sup>30</sup>, which it intended to use for offices, but after a public enquiry it was acquired by Cheltenham College.<sup>31</sup> The Montpellier Rotunda, acquired by the council through compulsory purchase in 1940,<sup>32</sup> by 1945 needed considerable structural work.<sup>33</sup> In 1961, following the extension of the municipal offices in Promenade Terrace to include a council chamber, the Rotunda was put up for sale.<sup>34</sup> It was bought by Lloyd's bank, which already occupied part of the building, and was extensively refurbished in 1965.<sup>35</sup> In 2017 the building was taken over by the Ivy restaurant chain.<sup>36</sup>

From 1928 there had been controversy over the possibility of the Royal Crescent garden being converted as a car park and bus station,<sup>37</sup> with a bus station being established there shortly before the war to relieve traffic in Clarence Street.<sup>38</sup> In 1946 the council acquired the former Methodist chapel on St George's Road opposite the Ladies College.<sup>39</sup> A plan was developed for a combined bus station, taxi centre and car park,<sup>40</sup> and the garden and some houses were acquired. Controversy over the site continued with the Rodney Road car park being suggested as an alternative bus station.<sup>41</sup> The new bus terminus with shelters along

---

<sup>25</sup> *Tewkesbury Register, & Agricultural Gazette*, 10 Nov. 1951; *Glos. Echo*, 9 July 1955; *New Scientist*, vol. 8, no. 197 (1960), 521.

<sup>26</sup> GA, PF4.82, 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 111.

<sup>28</sup> *See Local Government, 1945-1974*.

<sup>29</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 27 May 1960; *Illustrated London News*, 11 June 1960.

<sup>30</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 15 May 1947.

<sup>31</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 19 June 1948.

<sup>32</sup> GA, CBR/C2/1/2/37, 71.

<sup>33</sup> GA, CBR/C2/1/2/42, 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14 Feb. & 16 June, 1961.

<sup>35</sup> Verey & Brooks, *Glos. II*, 244.

<sup>36</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 29 Sep. 2017.

<sup>37</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 7 Apr. 1928; *Glos. Echo*, 22 May, 20, 23 & 28 June 1933.

<sup>38</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 3 Aug. 1935.

<sup>39</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 Jan. 1946.

<sup>40</sup> GA, CBR/C2/1/2/43, 154, 340.

<sup>41</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 3 Jan. & 22 Apr. 1950.

Royal Well Road opened in 1955.<sup>42</sup> When the Development Plan was revised in 1958 the integrated plan was abandoned, but the 'functioning well' bus station in Royal Crescent was retained and the site of the Royal Well chapel and adjoining buildings designated for car parking.<sup>43</sup> The chapel was demolished in the 1960s.<sup>44</sup> Although in 1976 the 'visual intrusion' of the bus station with its 'insensitive' bus shelters was recognised as detrimental to the Regency townscape,<sup>45</sup> the shelters were not replaced until 2016.<sup>46</sup> The bus station and the car park remained in 2020.

The development of the town centre was influenced by the emphasis placed on its role as a regional shopping centre. In 1947 plans were put forward for the development of the Regent Street-Cambray area as a 'leisurely business and shopping area', although the shortage of housing meant that the immediate demolition of existing properties was not possible.<sup>47</sup> In the early 1950s the west side of Pittville Street was demolished and the road widened. The rebuilt ground floor shops with storage and accommodation above, increased the amount of available retail space by 23,000 sq. ft.<sup>48</sup> This was followed in the early 1960s by a similar redevelopment of the east side of the lower end of Winchcombe Street.<sup>49</sup> In the High Street retail increasingly dominated over the service sector, as the Lamb Hotel site was taken over by Marks and Spencer in 1955<sup>50</sup> and the Royal Hotel by Woolworth's in 1957.<sup>51</sup> This move gave both retailers larger and more central premises than their previous High Street shops.

During the 1960s with the planning emphasis on the development of central Cheltenham as a regional shopping and administrative centre<sup>52</sup>, modernist architecture replaced a number of Georgian and Victorian buildings within the town. In 1965 Eagle Star purchased 2.5 a. at the eastern end of Montpellier Terrace to build a headquarters building.<sup>53</sup> Most of the eastern side of Montpellier Parade was demolished to make way for the 175 ft tall office block, an elongated hexagon in plan, opened in 1968.<sup>54</sup> This was, and remains in 2020, by far the tallest building in Cheltenham. The only other tall building erected within the town during this period was an office block at the brewery, which was demolished in 2004.<sup>55</sup> The Fleece Hotel and the Victorian Gothic grammar school on the High Street were demolished

---

<sup>42</sup> Peter Gill, *Cheltenham in the 1950s* (Stroud, 1996), 74-8.

<sup>43</sup> GA, PF4.82, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Oliver Bradbury, *Cheltenham's Lost Heritage* (Stroud, 2004), 80.

<sup>45</sup> GA, PR4.75, 28.

<sup>46</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 30 Mar. 2016.

<sup>47</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 4 Jan. & 4 Mar. 1947.

<sup>48</sup> GA, PF4.82, 14; Gill, *Cheltenham in the 1950s*, 66-9.

<sup>49</sup> GA, PF4.82, 14; *Birmingham Post*, 16 Jan. 1963; Timothy Mowl, *Cheltenham Betrayed* (Tiverton, 1995), 58.

<sup>50</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 29 Sep. 1955.

<sup>51</sup> GA, PF4.82, 14; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 Feb. 1957.

<sup>52</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 7 Nov. 1963.

<sup>53</sup> Isabel Syed, *Eagle Star: A Guide to its History and Archives* (Cheltenham, 1997), 39.

<sup>54</sup> Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 270.

<sup>55</sup> *Birmingham Post*, 21 Feb. 2004; Mowl, *Cheltenham Betrayed*, 92.

in 1967 to make way for a modern, brutalist retail block.<sup>56</sup> In 1969 the former Market House (1808), demolished following a fire, was replaced by a similar, contemporary building.<sup>57</sup>

St James's railway station was bought by the council to accommodate displaced factories as part of the plan for the town centre development and demolished in 1967.<sup>58</sup> On the Promenade Cavendish House was remodelled in 1966, the row of brick and stucco houses that had been incorporated into the store over time being replaced by a 'long, bland' 300ft frontage.<sup>59</sup> In 1970 the Quadrangle, 'a stolid office block' was erected on the corner of Imperial Square, on the site of the demolished New Club.<sup>60</sup>

### From 1973

The Cheltenham conservation area achieved official status in June 1973.<sup>61</sup> The purpose of the designation by the county council under section 277 of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act was to conserve and enhance the special character of the Regency layout and architecture, and of the numerous trees and gardens.<sup>62</sup> The conservation area covered almost the whole of the original spa town, the main exception being the industrialised area around the Gloucester Road.<sup>63</sup> Of the 1,658 listed buildings in Cheltenham, 98% were within the conservation area, representing 23% of all buildings, and there were a further 420 buildings on the local list.<sup>64</sup> In 1987 the conservation area was extended to include Marle Hill and an area north of the Pittville Pump Room, formerly in Prestbury, and an area to the south-east formerly in Charlton Kings.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the growth of Cheltenham's suburbs in 1971 the 3,746 dwellings in the central area still provided 12% of the borough's total housing stock. In 1975 it was estimated that 30% of these dwellings might be 'unfit' through lacking exclusive use of one or more basic amenities.<sup>66</sup> Lansdown Crescent was identified as an area, where the general townscape quality was poor, due to subdivision and the lack of concern with the backs of terraces.<sup>67</sup> Large scale slum clearance was unacceptable for conservation reasons, so a policy was adopted of limited clearance combined with improving as many extant buildings as possible. A number of three-storey Regency terrace houses were converted into flats by the Cheltenham and District Housing Association, while the partially demolished Iveagh House

---

<sup>56</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 3 Mar. 1967; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 254, 266.

<sup>57</sup> Bradbury, *Cheltenham's Lost Heritage*, 31.

<sup>58</sup> See Local Government, 1945-1974.

<sup>59</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 13 Sep. 1966; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 260.

<sup>60</sup> Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 259.

<sup>61</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 2 June 1973.

<sup>62</sup> GA, PR4.48.

<sup>63</sup> GA, PF4.75, 13, fig. 1.

<sup>64</sup> GA, PF4.75, 13-14.

<sup>65</sup> *Cheltenham Borough Local Plan* (2006), Table 8; CBC, map of Central Conservation area (2009) [[https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1067/central\\_conservation\\_area\\_map](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1067/central_conservation_area_map)].

<sup>66</sup> GA, PF4.69.

<sup>67</sup> GA, PF4.75, 40, fig. 12.

in Lansdown Crescent was rebuilt in 1985.<sup>68</sup> Once the rugby club moved to Pittville, Tom Price Close was developed on their former ground in Albion Street from 1982.<sup>69</sup> Outside the conservation area 85 houses in Crabtree Place and Manser Street in St Paul's were demolished and replaced in 2008 by a wider range of accommodation and some pedestrianised areas as part of the regeneration of the St Paul's area.<sup>70</sup>

Shopping remained a major driver of development within the town. In 1985 the Regent Arcade shopping mall and multi-storey car park opened. Built between Regent Street and Rodney Road and the site encompassed the Plough hotel, giving it a frontage to the High Street and was connected by a bridge to Cavendish House on the Promenade. The large car park and site of the former Regent Garage behind the Plough had been earmarked for such development in successive plans since the war.<sup>71</sup> In 1976 only one site in Montpellier, occupied by a garage, was identified as of poor townscape quality.<sup>72</sup> This was redeveloped as Montpellier Courtyard, a small retail development, opened in 1985.<sup>73</sup> In 1991 the Beechwood Place shopping mall opened on the former Royal Hotel/Woolworth site. This was anchored by a Debenhams store, and incorporated a car park and had a Winter Garden in its atrium.<sup>74</sup> The Beechwood was demolished in 2017 and replaced by a John Lewis store.<sup>75</sup>

The continuing importance of the High Street and Promenade in the circulation of traffic within the town complicated the pedestrianisation of the shopping areas. Pedestrianisation of the eastern end of the High Street was completed in 1977, part of Promenade in 1989, a further sections of High Street (with part of Regent Street) in 1994 and 2003 (with part of Cambray Place).<sup>76</sup> An experiment to limit traffic travelling from Clarence Street to North Street through Boots Corner begun in 2018 was abandoned after 18 months.<sup>77</sup>

Much of the former St James station site remained 'a derelict wasteland', used as a car park for 30 years.<sup>78</sup> In 1976-7 an office block was constructed on the site of the demolished station building. From 1989 further tall office blocks were built to its south on Jessop's Avenue, the name recalling the site's earlier incarnation as a nursery.<sup>79</sup> In 2002 a 8,361 sq. m. Waitrose store opened on the western end of the site, bordering Great Western Road.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> GA, PF4.75, 42; Historic England, 1333171 ; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 275.

<sup>69</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 178.

<sup>70</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 1 Oct. 2008.

<sup>71</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 147; *Glos. Echo*, 21 Nov. 2019.

<sup>72</sup> GA, PF4.75, fig. 12; *Tewkes. Register*, 18 Aug. 1961.

<sup>73</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 115.

<sup>74</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 25 Feb. 2011; Mowl, *Cheltenham Betrayed*, 69.

<sup>75</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 23 Jan. 2017.

<sup>76</sup> *Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review* (2006), 99.

<sup>77</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 2 Jan. 2020.

<sup>78</sup> GA, PF4.79, 93; Mowl, *Cheltenham Betrayed*, 71.

<sup>79</sup> Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 265.

<sup>80</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 13 Sep. 2002; *Cheltenham Borough Local Plan* (2006), 96.

Following the closure of the Whitbread brewery, its High Street 7,000 sq. m. site was developed as a retail and leisure complex.<sup>81</sup> In 2014 work began on the second phase of the Brewery Quarter development. This involved the regeneration of the Lower High Street, including the demolition of the 1960s block on the former grammar school site.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Suburban Expansion***

From 1943 the council was preparing to resume its pre-war housing programme for slum clearance and the abatement of overcrowding.<sup>83</sup> The need for new houses was exacerbated by the results of bombing raids, particularly in the vicinity of Stoneville Street and Brunswick Road where 72 houses had been destroyed and 2,200 damaged.<sup>84</sup> The first of 173 pre-fabricated aluminium bungalow was erected on land at Prior's Farm on the north side of the government site of Oakley in December 1945.<sup>85</sup> Pre-fabricated houses were also erected at Selkirk Gardens, Brighton Road, Hales Close, Courtney Street and Cakebridge Place.<sup>86</sup> The first permanent post-war houses to be erected by the council were on bombed sites in Margrett Road and Kipling Road, where an experimental technique using foamed slag was used.<sup>87</sup> In 1947 it was envisaged that dealing with the shortage of houses would take 12 years.<sup>88</sup>

Land belonging to Lynworth Farm between Whaddon and Prestbury was earmarked for construction from 1943.<sup>89</sup> The extension of Cromwell Road was agreed in 1945 and work on the first 62 houses began in early 1946.<sup>90</sup> The 60a. Lynworth Farm Estate, which straddled the border between Cheltenham and Prestbury was completed in 1948.<sup>91</sup> The Alma Road Estate was developed from 1947 on the former Sandybank farm, between Alma and Hatherley Roads. Some 200 'aluminium permanent bungalows' were planned for roads named on a Lake District theme. The first batch of 100 homes were completed in early 1949.<sup>92</sup> Further prefabricated homes were built on the other side of the railway between Reddings Road and Hatherley Road.<sup>93</sup>

By the summer of 1950 George Wimpey & Co. Ltd. had built 394 houses on the open fields and market gardens to the west of Rowanfield Road.<sup>94</sup> Constituted of Wimpey No Fines

---

<sup>81</sup> *Cheltenham Borough Local Plan* (2006), 96.

<sup>82</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 7 Feb. 2015.

<sup>83</sup> GA, CBR/C2/1/2/40, 124.

<sup>84</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 8 May 1945 & 1 Jan. 1946.

<sup>85</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 12 Dec. 1945.

<sup>86</sup> GA, CBR/C2/1/2/43, 59, 344; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 24, 28, 29, 47, 76.

<sup>87</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 24 Aug. & 18 Sep. 1945.

<sup>88</sup> GA, JF7.59GS.

<sup>89</sup> GA, CBR/C2/3/23, November 1943.

<sup>90</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 48; *Glos. Echo*, 1 Jan. 1946.

<sup>91</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 105.

<sup>92</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 4; GA, GCC/COU/1/1/24, 14 Jul. 1948; CBR/C/3/18, Feb. 1949.

<sup>93</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 183.

concrete houses and low-rise flats<sup>95</sup>, this network of Avenues named for English counties included a new infant school on Alstone Lane adjoining the King George V playing field.<sup>96</sup> The Cleavelands estate, west of the Evesham Road on the borough's northern border, had received planning permission for 42 building plots in 1937, but the majority of the houses were built after the war.<sup>97</sup> To the south of Cleavelands Albemarle Gate between Evesham Road and Tommy Taylors Lane was developed in the 1960s.<sup>98</sup>

Planning for the development of an estate of up to 2,000 houses to the west of the town near St Mark's began in 1942.<sup>99</sup> In 1945 13.5 acres of land was purchased from the Arle House estate<sup>100</sup> and the following year the council agreed to issue a compulsory purchase order for 122 acres around Hesters Way for the first phase of 1,000 houses.<sup>101</sup> Having agreed to provide 1,050 dwellings for incoming GCHQ employees and faced with opposition from local farmers and market gardeners, the council issued a further compulsory purchase notice for 166 acres in 1950.<sup>102</sup> Site works began in mid-1950 and house construction in 1951.<sup>103</sup>

In 1954 Wimpey's proposed to build houses on 120 a. of Benhall Farm, lying to the south of Gloucester Road. The land had been obtained by St Paul's College, but with the development of the Pittville site was not required.<sup>104</sup> The county council opposed this, which was a substantial departure from the Development Plan.<sup>105</sup> Wimpey's successfully appealed to the Ministry of Housing, arguing that the land would have been designated for housing, if it had not been earmarked for educational use.<sup>106</sup> Work on the site began in 1956<sup>107</sup> and by August 1962 607 houses had been completed.<sup>108</sup>

The Development Plan and associated Cheltenham town map were approved in 1955. This laid down that the Hesters Way estate would provide housing for 10,500 people at 50 people per acre.<sup>109</sup> A survey of the borough in 1957 showed that 395 acres of land had been restored to agricultural use since 1945, but 800 acres had been lost to general

<sup>94</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 July 1950.

<sup>95</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 3 Nov. 1948.

<sup>96</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 152; *Geographia Street Plan of Cheltenham* (c.1960).

<sup>97</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 4 Dec. 1937, 18 June 1938, 6 Apr. 1939; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 40.

<sup>98</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 82; GA, CBR/C2/1/2/40, 197.

<sup>100</sup> GA, CBR/C2/1/2/42, 53, 83.

<sup>101</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 7 Sep. 1946.

<sup>102</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 4 Apr., 1 July & 25 Aug.

<sup>103</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 82.

<sup>104</sup> See Part II, Education, University of Gloucestershire and its predecessors.

<sup>105</sup> GCC/COU/1/1/26, 3 Nov. 1954 & 19 Jan. 1955.

<sup>106</sup> GCC/COU/1/1/27, 2 Nov. 1955; *Glos. Echo*, 1 July 1955.

<sup>107</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 19.

<sup>108</sup> GA, D11753/1

<sup>109</sup> GA, JF7.59GS.

development.<sup>110</sup> By 1958 5,600 dwellings had been built and overcrowding had ceased to be a major problem.<sup>111</sup> In 1971 55% of the borough's housing stock was owner-occupied, 24% council tenancies and 21% private rented. There was no longer a significant shortage of housing in the borough.<sup>112</sup>

From the mid-1960s the area west of Hesters Way Road was developed. Tiverton Close and Dunster Road were built by New Ideal Homesteads from 1965<sup>113</sup>, but the majority of the development in the area, which became known as Springbank, was by the local company Robert Hitchins.<sup>114</sup> Dunster Gardens was added in 1988/9 on land belonging to the Midlands Electricity Board<sup>115</sup> and from 2004 Triscombe Close and the adjacent roads were built on the company's former sports field.<sup>116</sup> Fiddler's Green, to the south of Springbank, was developed by a number of developers from 1973.<sup>117</sup>

Windyridge Road was begun by Robert Hitchins in 1971 as an access road to its Stanwick development to the east of Swindon Road north of Maud's Elm.<sup>118</sup> The road was extended to join Swindon Lane across the borough boundary and the Wyman's Brook estate was built predominantly on the west side of the road by George Wimpey between 1973 and 1975.<sup>119</sup> Windyridge Gardens to the east was developed from 1975 by Wimpey and Westbury Estates.<sup>120</sup> The area between Springbank and the Old Gloucester Road was developed during the 1990s.<sup>121</sup> Between 2011 and 2015 Bloor Homes built a further 176 houses on land formerly part of the Midwinter allotment site between the Windyridge Gardens and the former Honeybourne railway line.<sup>122</sup>

Other development in the late-20th century was predominantly small scale infilling of existing sites. Wheeler & Mansell Ltd. built four roads off Sandford Mill Road between London Road and the river Chelt in the mid-1960s.<sup>123</sup> In Arle the land between Kingsmead Close and the Arle was developed from the late 1970s with the roads being named after former councillors.<sup>124</sup> Reddings Park, to the west of Benhall and south of Reddings Road was

---

<sup>110</sup> GA, GCC/COU/1/1/28, 30 Oct. 1957.

<sup>111</sup> GA, PF4.82, 1.

<sup>112</sup> GA, PF4.69.

<sup>113</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 54, 179.

<sup>114</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 10, 54, 58, 81, 101, 168, 170, 179; GA, DC137/61/26.

<sup>115</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 54.

<sup>116</sup> Geographer's A-Z Map, *Cheltenham* (c. 1986); CBC Online, Residential Land Availability (2003), 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 10, 20, 62, 97, 107, 119, 147, 153.

<sup>118</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 171, 195.

<sup>119</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 12, 52, 102, 109, 111, 164, 197.

<sup>120</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 195.

<sup>121</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 8.

<sup>122</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 4 July 2015.

<sup>123</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 35, 96, 169, 193.

<sup>124</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 32, 65, 67, 91, 126.

developed in the 1980s.<sup>125</sup> In the 1990s Redgrove Park was built to the west of Hatherley Lane on part of the Arle Court grounds.<sup>126</sup> In 1987 the pre-war Poets estate was designated a conservation area, imposing restrictions on development.<sup>127</sup> A report on housing land availability in 1990 found an unexpectedly high proportion of small sites in Cheltenham (21%), especially in comparison with Gloucester (8%), and posited this was due to the conversion of large houses into flats.<sup>128</sup>

In the decade from 1991 63% of new housing in Cheltenham was built on brownfield sites.<sup>129</sup> Although 140 houses were envisaged for the Howell Road allotments in the early 1990s,<sup>130</sup> building did not begin for over a decade.<sup>131</sup> In 1997 the regeneration of Hesters Way began with the demolition of flats in Shakespeare Road and Goldsmith Road.<sup>132</sup> The eight-storey blocks of India and Pakistan House were demolished in 2006.<sup>133</sup> The demolished buildings were gradually replaced by a mix of private and housing association houses and low rise flats. The Howell Road allotment site was developed by Persimmon Homes from 2007.<sup>134</sup> In 1998 the land at the GCHQ Oakley site was sold to George Wimpey to fund the re-development of the Benhall site. The first phase of 159 houses with a supermarket was completed in 2006. In 2007, when it became clear that a proportion of the staff would need to remain at Oakley for some years, about half the original site was bought back, and later released. In 2008 permission was given for a further 150 houses on the site. Following the opening of the new building at Benhall part of the site previously occupied by temporary buildings was released for housing development.<sup>135</sup> In fill development on Gloucester Road included Stow Court (2011) and Taylor's Yard (2017).<sup>136</sup>

## **Public Open Space**

In 1949 the acreage of public playing fields in Cheltenham was below that considered sufficient by the Ministry of Health, although this was to an extent mitigated by access to school and college playing fields and to the surrounding countryside.<sup>137</sup> The first section of the King George V playing field on Brooklyn Road became available in 1949 and eventually with the adjoining St Mark's Recreation Ground covered 28.66a.<sup>138</sup> In 1950 the council

<sup>125</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 147.

<sup>126</sup> *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 147; GA, 21538/78/16/GS.

<sup>127</sup> *Cheltenham Borough Local Plan* (2006), Table 8.

<sup>128</sup> GA, JR9.92.

<sup>129</sup> GA, PR4.51GS.

<sup>130</sup> GA, JR9.92.

<sup>131</sup> CBC Online, Cabinet, 21 Jan. 2003.

<sup>132</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 21 & 31 Jan. 1997.

<sup>133</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 29 Nov. 2006.

<sup>134</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 1 May 2008.

<sup>135</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 22 Apr. & 14 Nov. 2008.

<sup>136</sup> GA, CW/Box W/PR114.398; *Glos. Echo*, 25 Sep. 2017.

<sup>137</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 5 Feb. 1949.

<sup>138</sup> GA, DC137/61/15.

acquired 21.42 a. of the Swindon Hall estate beyond the borough boundary as a playing field.<sup>139</sup> A 15 acre 9-hole golf course was laid out in 1952 to the north of the Marle Hill Annexe of Pittville Park with a number of hard tennis courts and the area was designated the Pittville Sports Area.<sup>140</sup> In 1965 the council acquired land to the west of Marle Hill Annexe, expanding the sports area to 67.06 a. The adjoining Agg Gardner recreation ground provided a further 10.94 a.<sup>141</sup> Following the closure of the rubbish tip on the former Folly Brickworks to the west of Tommy Taylors Lane in 1969, the land was used to extend the golf course to a full 18 holes.<sup>142</sup> The 18a. Tewkesbury Road playing field, which was also beyond the borough boundary, was leased to the Civil Service from the late 1950s.<sup>143</sup> The future grammar school site provided a playing field for Hester's Way into the 1960s, in addition to the park provided between Monkscroft school and the GCHQ site. A playing field, now Springfields Park, was provided on Welch Road as part of the Springbank development.<sup>144</sup>

In 1947 the area occupied by the demolished Winter Gardens was redeveloped to form the Imperial Gardens.<sup>145</sup> By 1956 Cheltenham's parks and ornamental gardens covered around 80 acres.<sup>146</sup> In 1965 the council acquired the former burial ground behind the shops on the Lower High Street and developed it into the 2.9a. Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens.<sup>147</sup> In 1986 Pittville Park was given a grade II listing<sup>148</sup> and in 2016 Green Heritage Site and Green Flag status, recognising its importance and good maintenance.<sup>149</sup> Following the opening of the Prince of Wales stadium in 1981, a cycle track was developed along the former railway line, providing the basis for a green corridor connecting with the river Chelt.<sup>150</sup> Between 2005 and 2009 the former graveyard adjoining Cheltenham Chapel on the Lower High Street, which the council acquired when the chapel was converted to offices in the 1980s, was restored as Jenner Gardens.<sup>151</sup> By 2011 Montpellier Gardens, Naunton Park, Hatherley Park and Springfields Park had all obtained Green Flag status,<sup>152</sup> while the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens received a Green Flag in 2018.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 9 Dec. 1950; *Cheltenham Parks and Gardens* (1956), 28.

<sup>140</sup> *Cheltenham Parks and Gardens* (1956), 28; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 110.

<sup>141</sup> GA, DC137/61/15.

<sup>142</sup> CBR Online, The Landscape Agency, *Pittville Park* (2008), section 2, 32-3.

<sup>143</sup> GA, PF4.82, 32.

<sup>144</sup> GA, DC137/61/15; Geographia map, *Cheltenham* (c1960); Geographer's A-Z Map, *Cheltenham* (c. 1986).

<sup>145</sup> *Chelt. Chronicle*, 1 Feb. 1947; GA, CBR/C2/1/2/44, 139.

<sup>146</sup> *Cheltenham Parks and Gardens* (1956), 21.

<sup>147</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21 May 1966; GA, DC137/6/25 & 27; GA, DC137/61/15.

<sup>148</sup> HE, 1000196.

<sup>149</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 3 Aug. 2016.

<sup>150</sup> GA, DC137/39/5; *Glos. Echo*, 4 June 2015.

<sup>151</sup> GA, D14709; *Glos. Echo*, 1 July 2009.

<sup>152</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 30 July 2008 & 2 Aug. 2013.

<sup>153</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 29 Nov. 2018.

Cheltenham, which promoted itself as the Garden Town of England<sup>154</sup>, won the Britain in Bloom competition in 1985, 1988 and 2003.<sup>155</sup> Between 1983 and 2017 a local Cheltenham in Bloom competition was also run.<sup>156</sup> In 2010 the suggestion that the layout of Imperial Gardens could be altered to provide more space for festival marquees and sponsors' hoardings met significant opposition.<sup>157</sup> In 2008 a statue of Gustav Holst was installed in the gardens,<sup>158</sup> and in 2014 two new beds were created there to commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War.<sup>159</sup>

In 1973 the contribution of Cheltenham's street trees, parks and gardens were recognised as contributing to the overall Regency townscape.<sup>160</sup> Trees within the town's conservation areas received protection in addition to that provided by individual tree protection orders.<sup>161</sup> Dutch elm disease had a significant effect on the town's trees, with over 2,000 diseased elms being removed from streets, parks and council owned land between 1971 and 1975.<sup>162</sup> Many of the original horse chestnut trees on the Promenade reached the end of their natural lives in the 1980s, were felled and replaced. By the end of the decade birch bark, sooty bark and oak wilt had joined Dutch elm disease in taking their toll on the town's trees.<sup>163</sup> Between 2006 and 2008 130 trees were cut down, because they were deemed unsafe.<sup>164</sup> A programme of replacement tree planting was undertaken in Montpellier Gardens in the 1990s and 2000s, where the iconic Trafalgar copper beech was felled when disease made it unsafe in 2014.<sup>165</sup>

Suburban expansion gradually absorbed long established allotment sites as well as those established during the war. The 30a. North Ward allotment site off Marsh Lane was developed for housing and the extension of St Paul's college in the 1970s,<sup>166</sup> while the Creamery Piece and Baglins Piece allotments at Marle Hill provided sites for the municipal swimming pool and Prince of Wales stadium.<sup>167</sup> In 2007 15,000 sq. m. at the northern end of the Midwinter allotment site to the west of the former railway line in Marle Hill was sold for

---

<sup>154</sup> GA, PR4.24GS.

<sup>155</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 21 Jan. 2013.

<sup>156</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 1 Mar. 2018.

<sup>157</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 13 July & 12 Oct. 2010.

<sup>158</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 5 Apr. 2008.

<sup>159</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 28 June 2014.

<sup>160</sup> GA, PR4.48.

<sup>161</sup> CBC Online, *Local Plan Second Review* (2006) 51.

<sup>162</sup> GA, PF4.75, 51.

<sup>163</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 12 July 2014.

<sup>164</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 13 Dec. 2008.

<sup>165</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 16 July 2014.

<sup>166</sup> GA, DC137/30/8-10; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 110.

<sup>167</sup> CBR Online, The Landscape Agency, *Pittville Park* (2008), section 2, 32.

housing development.<sup>168</sup> Asquith Road allotments in Naunton remained unaffected by development in 2020.

Suburban expansion also created a requirement for new allotment sites. The Severn Road allotments were provided for the Lynworth development.<sup>169</sup> As the town developed to the south-west sites were provided off Alma Road, Warden Hill Road and Reddings Road to supplement the existing site adjoining the Hatherley tank.<sup>170</sup> In 1953 the plans for Hester's Way included a 10a. 'model allotment' site and a further 10a. adjoining for further expansion.<sup>171</sup> As the development spread the original site on Howell Road was sold for development and replaced by sites off Hayden Road to the north and Henley Road to the west of Springbank.<sup>172</sup>

DRAFT

---

<sup>168</sup> *Glos. Echo*, 20 June 2009.

<sup>169</sup> .GA, DC137/31/18.

<sup>170</sup> GA, DC137/32/35; DC137/14/16; DC137/29/8; DC137/54/5.

<sup>171</sup> GA, DC137/30/4 & 5.

<sup>172</sup> GA, DC137/53/1-3; DC137/18/30.