



CHIPPENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Chippenham Town Council

River-Green Corridor Masterplan Topic Paper

Appendix 15



POLICY OBJECTIVE(S)

- Promote and enhance the special character of Chippenham as a historic, riverside, Market Town by ensuring that all new development is sustainable and of the highest quality design
- Protect, enhance and extend the 'River-Green Corridor' as a focal point for the Town, establishing green links to it from existing parks/green spaces, and connecting surrounding new development to it via green infrastructure
- Identify sites within the Town Centre which could be developed/enhanced to increase the attractiveness of the public realm

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The River Avon frontage is one of the largest river frontages in the country in comparison to the town's size. Residents see the River and Monkton Park ('Island Park') as an asset to the town, and it is used for events such as the town's carnival and the Folk Festival. The River Avon Corridor is viewed as one of the town's defining and connecting features, yet both the local community and Wiltshire Council consider that it represents a missed opportunity which the town centre turns its back on.
2. The 2014 Draft Chippenham Central Area Masterplan already provides a framework to guide future development in the vicinity of the River Corridor, but has no status in the Development Plan. Such a masterplan that has planning status, is essential if this key component of town centre regeneration is to be realised and this green corridor protected and enhanced.
3. Whilst there are many things that are right with the 2014 Masterplan it is now 7 years old and in need of updating. There are proposals contained in it which do not reflect the climate and ecological emergency, the current economic climate, changes to planning legislation, viability issues and physical changes on the ground.
4. Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 therefore seeks to update and modify the 2014 Masterplan so that it is fit for purpose in the 2020-30s and forms part of the Development Plan to aid decision making in the vicinity of the River Corridor.

B. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5. The Development Plan for Chippenham is:
 - a. The Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)
 - b. Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (2017)
 - c. North Wiltshire Local Plan Saved Policies (2006)
 - d. Minerals Core Strategy (2009)
 - e. Waste Core Strategy (2009)
6. In terms of planning constraints, the Masterplan area is wholly located within Chippenham Conservation Area. The River Avon is also identified as a Local Wildlife Site.
7. There are a number of statutorily listed buildings, all Grade II Listed, located within the Masterplan area, which have the potential to be impacted as a result of any development proposals associated with Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2. These include: Avonbridge House, which fronts on to the River; Nos. 2 and 3 High Street, located close to the Town Bridge; National Westminster Bank and Attached Walls at No. 30 High Street and Lloyds Bank at No. 29 High Street, both located adjacent to Emery Gate Shopping Centre; No. 26 Westmead Lane and Westmead House, both of which back on to the River close to Gladstone Road Bridge; and No. 55 St. Mary Street, No. 56 St. Mary Street and the United Reform Church and Former Ministers House, all of which are clustered together at the eastern end of the area. The listed building descriptions for these properties can be found in **Insert A** at the end of this Topic Paper.

National Planning Policy Framework

8. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are applicable to the River-Green Corridor Masterplan area:
 - 86.** ‘Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:
 - a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability - by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters; ...’
 - 127.** ‘Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this

should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.'

130. 'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'

179. 'To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation...'

190. 'Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.'

199-203. These paragraphs advise how to consider the potential impacts of new development on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

9. Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 would align with the above paragraphs in the NPPF by ensuring that there is a masterplan for the River Avon Corridor which can provide an up to date framework to guide development in order to support the growth/adaptation of the town centre, ensure high quality design in the right locations, secure biodiversity enhancements, and ensure that the historic environment is conserved and enhanced.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

10. The following policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy are applicable to the River-Green Corridor Masterplan area:

Core Policy 9: Chippenham Central Areas of Opportunity

‘In addition, the River Avon Corridor will be enhanced for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner and developed as an attractive cycle/ pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green infrastructure network, while conserving and enhancing its role as a wildlife corridor.

Development will be delivered on opportunity sites elsewhere in the central area in accordance with the key principles listed in paragraph 5.54.’

Paragraph 5.54 lists a number of key principles to be addressed in developing the Chippenham Central Area, one of which is:

‘the river as a defining and connecting feature of the town - any proposals for development in the central opportunity area should demonstrate how they will contribute to enhancing the river as an attractive feature of the development, providing improved pedestrian and cycle routes, public open space and active riverside frontages.’

Within the supporting text to this policy the River Avon corridor is also mentioned several times, at **Paragraph 5.48**:

‘The River Avon is an important asset for the town and the local environment, and will be better integrated with the town centre and urban extension as part of a green infrastructure strategy, as a green corridor for wildlife, as a recreational space and as a sustainable transport route for pedestrians and cyclists.’

and again at **Paragraph 5.50**

‘The town centre will have been improved, with an enhanced mix of retail, leisure and entertainment uses and greater integration with the River Avon, making Chippenham an attractive and popular centre. The River Avon will be a defining and connecting feature and its active riverfront combined with the historic centre, market, parks and open spaces will have provided a thriving artery and distinctive identity for the town.’

Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity

‘Protection - Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term...’

‘Biodiversity enhancement - All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity...’

Core Policy 52: Green infrastructure

‘Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire’s Green Infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to:

- i) Retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure
- ii) Make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards
- iii) Put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development
- iv) Provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and
- v) Identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire...’

Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

This policy seeks to ensure high quality design and place shaping. In particular it refers to major developments at xiii: ‘ensuring they are accompanied by a detailed design statement and masterplan, which is based on an analysis of the local context and assessment of constraints and opportunities of the site and is informed by a development concept, including clearly stated design principles, which will underpin the character of the new place.’

Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

‘Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- i. Nationally significant archaeological remains
- ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire
- iii. Buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest
- iv. The special character or appearance of conservation areas

v. Historic parks and gardens

vi. Important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57...

11. Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 would help to achieve Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy by ensuring that an up to date masterplan, which has planning status, is in place to guide future development of this key area of the town centre - in a manner which ensures high quality design and development that also conserves and enhances the historic environment and biodiversity in accordance with Policies CP50, CP52, CP57 and CP58 of the Core Strategy.

Chippenham Vision

12. One of the six Vision Statements is:

'Chippenham will recognise and build on its natural assets and its important heritage will be cherished. Its setting on the River Avon will be its defining and connecting feature combined with the historic centre, the market, pleasant parks and open spaces; creating a thriving artery and distinctive identity for the town.'

Chippenham Central Area Masterplan (Draft, May 2014)

13. The following sections of the Chippenham Central Area Masterplan are applicable to the River-Green Corridor Masterplan area:

Pg.5 'A key priority for this Masterplan is that green and river corridors should be 'developed and improved' to enhance the sub-regional green infrastructure network. This is relevant to the River Avon corridor and its connection to the countryside and growth sites to the east and south-west.'

Pg.16 'The riverfront is one of the town's greatest amenities, but is not being utilised to its full potential.'

Pg.28 'The Riverfront Area will play a critical role in joining the character areas and promoting a more cohesive and distinctive offer for Chippenham. The River Avon's potential will be realised by enhancing the role of the River Avon as an active focus for retail and leisure uses incorporating additional links across the river.'

Pg.29 'Opportunities for more active frontages on both sides of the River Avon will lead to greater footfall on the riverside that can also be encouraged by greater connectivity through an additional footbridge and more permeable development.'

The Bath Road/Bridge Centre site is seen as a fundamental part of the High Street area that can enhance its retail offer and car parking provision. The development will

provide public realm measures and a built form that will link directly to the Town Bridge and the High Street.

The development should be permeable and the south-eastern corner should comprise a landmark building to encourage footfall over the bridge and into the site. New development at the remaining three corners of the bridge should also be given careful consideration and emphasise this location as a key element of the town centre and encourage footfall in both directions.

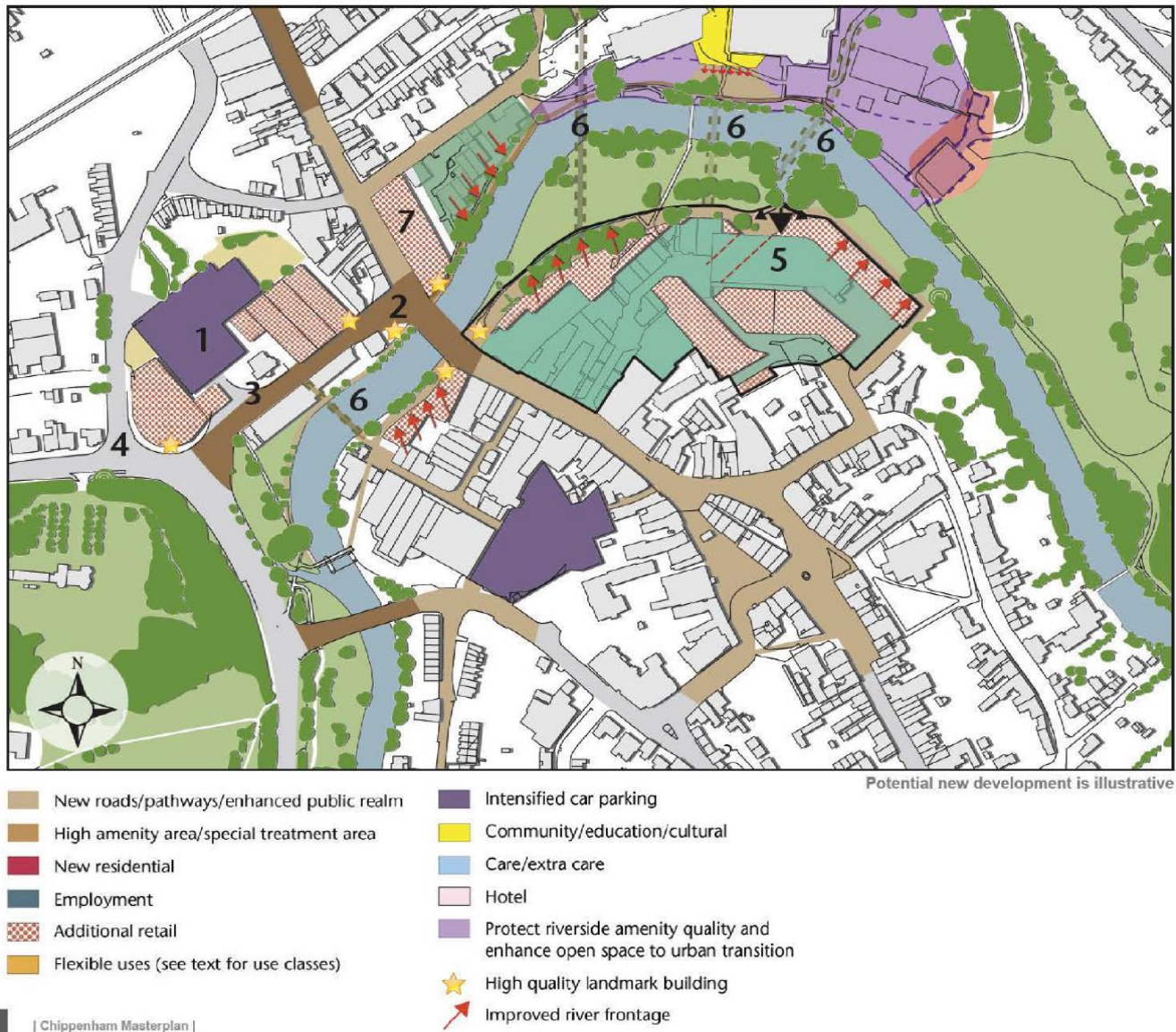
Redeveloped retail at the Emery Gate and Borough Parade shopping centres could be provided to complement development at Bath Road/Bridge Centre and promote riverside activity.'

Pg.30 The High Street Map identifies a number of issues, amongst which is: '3. Poor use or river frontage, unattractive blank elevations and service areas facing river' and '4. Poor public realm/sense of arrival at the High Street. Vehicle dominated area conflicting with ease of pedestrian movement.'

Pg.31 The High Street Map identifies a number of opportunities, amongst which is: '1. Improve active frontage on the river, active retail frontages (A 1-A3) at Emery Gate Shopping Centre' and '2. Improve public realm on Town Bridge to enable it to function as a key node. Improve sense of arrival and attractiveness of key gateway.'

Pg.32 The High Street Masterplan is reproduced at **Figure 1** and recommends, amongst other things: '2. Provide clear visibility between the site and High Street to encourage footfall in both directions and associate the site with the heart of the town centre supported by reducing vehicular traffic and encouraging a high quality redevelopment at Jax Bar' (note: Jax Bar is now Grounded), '5. Emery Gate requires a comprehensive development brief in order to bring together the aspirations of all the relevant stakeholders on this complex key town centre area', and '6. Potential river crossing options'.

Figure 1 - High Street Masterplan from Chippenham Central Area Masterplan (Draft)



Pg.46 'The Riverfront is the primary character area that binds together the other areas. It is the key asset for Chippenham as a market town. The area is currently under-used and development generally faces away from riverfront. This separates the shopping and leisure experience from the riverfront experience. Development within and adjoining this area should combine these experiences and provide for an enhanced role for the River Avon and associated green spaces.'

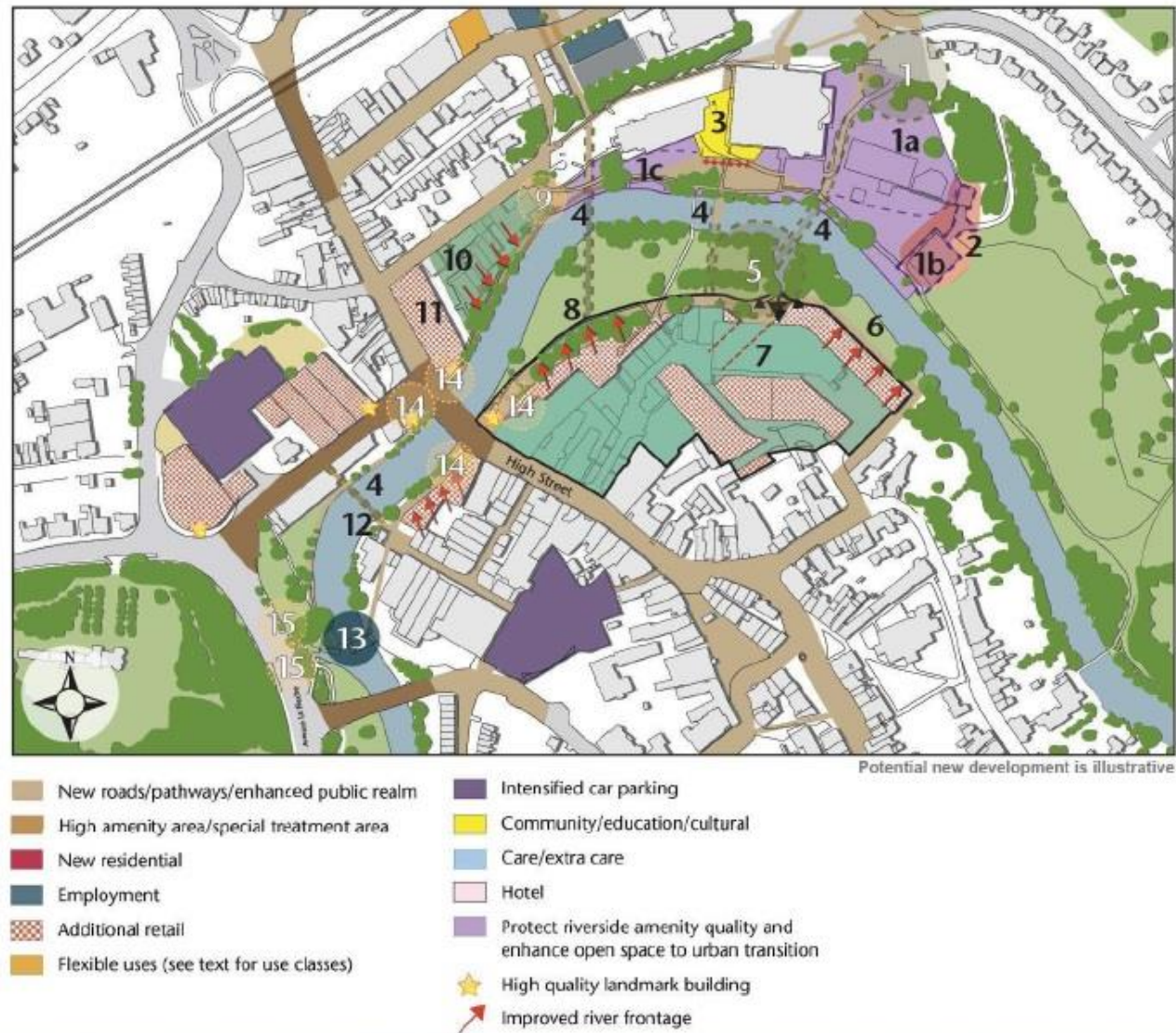
The riverfront should be a focus for outdoor leisure and recreation uses and become a natural destination that is well connected to the retail, leisure and residential uses in the High Street Area and the Cocklebury area to offer residents and visitors an enhanced experience of Chippenham as a welcoming place to relax, meet and be by the riverside.'

Pg.47 The River Character Area Issues Map identifies a number of issues, amongst which is: '1. Poor quality cumulative, piecemeal (sprawling) urban transition into park', '4. Built form turns back on river creating visual and physical barriers/ visual clutter. Traffic movements along front of Emery Gate creates conflict and severance', '6. Town Bridge. Poor town centre focus/node. Weak riverside public realm and frontage/Japanese knotweed' and '12. Poor quality, nondescript or illegible pedestrian entrances or path intersections'.

Pg.48 The River Character Area Issues Map identifies a number of opportunities, amongst which are: '4. Improve and extend active riverside frontage, retail and amenity' and '6. High quality riverside public realm on bridge and riverside entrances. Focal high quality frontage turning corners on development blocks.'

Pg.49 The River Character Area Masterplan is reproduced at **Figure 2** and recommends, amongst other things: '6. Potential to increase activity and passive surveillance of riverside area', '7. Development Brief for Emery Gate and immediate surrounding area.', and '8. Potential to increase activity and passive surveillance of riverside area.'

Figure 2 - River Character Area Masterplan from Chippenham Central Area Masterplan (Draft)



Pg.54 sets out a delivery strategy and phasing for development of Emery Gate Area.

Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

14. The River-Green Corridor Masterplan area encompasses a number of different Character Areas in the Appraisal, most relevant being: Monkton Park; High Street & Emery Gate; Gladstone Road, Borough Parade & Wood Lane; and Avenue La Fleche.
15. Within the Appraisal several references are made to the poor quality frontage on to the River from Emery Gate Shopping Centre buildings and the side elevation of Nos. 31-33 High Street (Wilkinsons). These are identified on the High Street and Emery Gate Townscape Analysis Map as being 'buildings of poor townscape merit' and 'eyesore buildings'.
16. Also identified on the Townscape Analysis Map is a 'negative view' from the Town Bridge towards Emery Gate Shopping Centre, with the Appraisal at **pg. 121** noting '...The ad-hoc form of access to the Emery Gate car park and associated parked cars, the exposed rear wall of Wilkinson's, and the general condition of the south river bank, with worn grass and bramble, and poor quality street furniture and fencing is to be found on one side.'
17. **Pg. 122** describes the view of Emery Gate from the footbridge within Monkton Park: 'To the south is the dead frontage of the shopping centre, a much used but unattractive, uninviting and unsigned hole in the wall to one of the town's prime shopping areas.'
18. At **pg. 130** further reference is made to the poor frontage of Wilkinsons/Emery Gate Shopping Centre to the River:

'The side elevation to Wilkinson's is also its service access and this is a particularly unattractive and prominent intrusion into the park. The poor quality boundary treatment and the line of parked cars adjacent to it compound this. The single storey rear section allows views of the unattractive roofscape of the shopping centre and its lack of height means that it provides a poorly defined edge to the park. This area is in particular need of improvement. The use of this area as an access to the shopping centre car park creates pedestrian/vehicular conflict at the entrance to the High Street.'
19. In reference to No. 1 High Street, the Appraisal explains at **pg. 142**:

'No. 1 (Superdrug) sits on the corner of the High Street and the riverfront (Fig 1, over). Formerly occupied by an attractive three-storey hotel, the site is now occupied by a bland, uninspiring and poorly weathered modern building. This competes with the Woolworths building for the distinction of least attractive building in the High Street replacing the most attractive one. It responds abysmally to its prominent location, lacking stature, presence and quality and totally ignoring the river. The river front elevation is predominantly blank wall or screened plate glass with a purposeless tarmac space in front of a graffiti covered wall. The High Street frontage is plain and utilitarian in appearance.'

20. Further reference to this building and its relationship to the River is made on **Pg. 113**:

‘Adjacent to the Town Bridge is No. 1 High Street (Superdrug). This is a bland and unattractive building of insufficient stature for its important setting. Its side elevation facing the river is particularly unattractive and its setting of a ‘left over’ triangle of ill defined space is equally unattractive...Any redevelopment of the Superdrug site should seek the continuation of a similar terrace or include shops facing, and accessed from, the river path.’

21. The Appraisal identifies the eastern section of the Riverside between Gladstone Road Bridge and the Town Bridge as an ‘enhancement site’. At **pg. 154** it states ‘From the river walk and Porter Black’s pub (now Wetherspoons) there are unattractive views into service areas and to the bland and shabby side elevation of No. 1 High Street (Superdrug). The adjacent car park is a poorly resolved sea of cars surrounded by backs of buildings, service areas and suburban planting. This is particularly noticeable from River Street, Gladstone Road and the entrance into the shopping centre.’

22. The Avenue La Fleche Character Area describes the character of the River Corridor south of the weir, noting at **Pg. 110**:

‘...The river is a recreational and landscape resource with great potential. Unfortunately it is suffering from unattractive interventions such as the weir and unsympathetic development alongside parts of it, such as the shopping centre that turns its back on it and established industrial uses that prevent public access and give the river environment and the gateway to the town an unattractive image.’

It goes on to explain on **Pg.112-113**:

‘The river environment between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road bridge is very urban in character. The west and east banks are quite different in character. The west side is generally attractive with little to detract from this...In contrast, the east side bank is generally sloping land from the town bridge to the weir. The character of the river environment is dominated and defined by the Borough Parade Shopping Centre, which it partly encircles. The shopping centre simply ignores the river. Service yards and unlandscaped parking face the river...The Porter Black’s pub occupies a prime riverside site of some considerable length, yet it makes minimal use of the river bank environment and does not allow public access to it. The small terrace and few seats are provided are for patrons only, the river path itself is diverted through the service yard route. This route contains cycle unfriendly rumble strips yet it is a national cycle route as well as a footpath, car park, service vehicle route and service yard. It is a singularly unattractive, uninspiring and poorly planned environment that contains a potentially dangerous mix of users... Re-routing the footpath and cycle route along the river front would dramatically improve the environment for all users and allow the river environment to be experienced and appreciated by all, better integrating it into the townscape.’

23. In reference to the weir **Pg. 114** states: ‘To the north of Gladstone Road bridge is the sluice and weir installed as part of the 1960s flood mitigation works. This can only be described as one of the most ugly and intrusive features of the river in the town, its extending concrete counter balance being its most dominant feature.’

Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG

24. Within the Conservation Area Management Plan there are a series of 'Development Guidelines' for the Avenue La Fleche Character Area, referred to on **pg. 27**. Those considered most relevant to the River-Green Corridor Masterplan area are:

'5. New development should enhance the potential for biodiversity in the riverside environment whilst also addressing that environment on a positive and, where appropriate, interactive manner;

6. Encourage the redevelopment of the Superdrug building with one of suitable scale and quality for its setting that addresses both the High Street and the river front path; and

7. Investigate, in conjunction with the tenants, potential means of turning the unattractive rear elevations of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre into an attractive riverside frontage and gateway to the town centre.'

25. A relevant enhancement proposal referred to on **pg. 28** is:

'9. Implement a scheme, in association with relevant land owners, to construct a new alignment for the foot/cycle path on the east bank of the river between the town bridge and Gladstone Road bridge, to pass continuously along the river bank to the west side of the Porter Black's pub.'

26. Within the Management Plan there are a series of 'Development Guidelines' for the Monkton Park Character Area, referred to on **pg. 29**. The most relevant to the River-Green Corridor Masterplan area is:

'4. Consider the possibility of providing active frontages onto the park from Emery Gate and Wilkinson's to provide a stronger and more attractive link between the shopping centre and park as a priority. This could be achieved by providing riverside entrances to the shops and/or extending them into the park, or by developing single aspect residential accommodation facing the park. In any scheme, the possibility of reinstating the former by-pass stream should be investigated as a means of enhancing the park environment and creating a transition space between residential/shopping areas and the park. Consideration should also be given to the provision of an upper storey to Wilkinson's to provide better enclosure to the park and additional activities and uses for the town centre, particularly those that are active in the evening.'

27. Within the Management Plan there are a series of 'Development Guidelines' for the High Street and Emery Gate Character Area referred to on **pg. 33**. The most relevant to the River-Green Corridor Masterplan area is:

'12. Pursue, in conjunction with the owners, options for the demolition of No. 1 High Street (Superdrug) and its replacement with a high quality building of more suitable height for its prominent location, and which addresses both the High Street and river frontage and removes the vacant space to the side of the current building.'

C. REVIEW OF EVIDENCE

ATLAS workshops for Chippenham Vision

28. A visioning workshop, facilitated by members of the ATLAS team and officers from Wiltshire Council and the Chippenham Vision, was held in 2010 as a first step towards preparing the subsequent Chippenham Vision and Chippenham Central Area Masterplan. 60 delegates attended the event and the participants represented a wide variety of organisations and views.
29. Paragraph 3.5 of the ATLAS report on the visioning event of the 23rd of September 2010 revealed a list of the most commonly mentioned aspirations and distinctive ingredients in respect of preparing a vision for Chippenham. Top of the list of aspirations was 'The river is an asset - improve and integrate with the town.'

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - River Avon South West of Town Bridge, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (2020)

30. The Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Topic Group engaged Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal for the area of the River Avon south-west of the Town Bridge.
31. **Pg. 3** of the Appraisal confirms the River Corridor is 'an important link between the areas of open countryside on the north-east and southwest of the town. There is a clear link through the town centre that is only broken by the installation of the radial gate weir and to a lesser extent the town bridge. Examples of species that will use this type of corridor include brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), and water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*).'
32. The Appraisal makes the following key recommendations on **pg. 13**:
- 'Town Bridge to Weir:
- Create landscaped area to alleviate rat problem
 - Install signage and seed dispensers on bridge
 - Leaving trees overhanging channel in situ
 - Continue current riparian zone management regime
 - Implement citizen science projects to monitor water quality
 - Commission feasibility study for bridge wildlife underpass
- Weir to Gladstone Road Bridge:
- Develop and encourage partnership working with Environment Agency and other stakeholders to look at the possibility of the future removal of the radial gate weir

- Re-assess or postpone any in-stream works that might be affected by future weir removal
- Look to assess the feasibility of rerouting or improving the Avon Path to limit the risk from flooding and provide year round access to the southern section

Avon Valley Path to Westmead:

- Engage with public usage of the site and improve recording of wildlife sightings to WSBRC
- Put in place bankside management regime to deal with non-native, invasive, Himalayan Balsam
- Engage and manage public volunteering groups and individuals
- Engage and work with river management organisations such as Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Bristol Avon Rivers Trust
- Broadly continue with current cutting management regime
- Manage scrub on long cutting rotation
- Introduce 2m bankside buffer zone where appropriate
- Consider some wildflower planting after monitoring soil conditions
- Arborist to check ash copse with long term goal to replace'

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Land at Monkton Park, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (2020)

33. **Pg. 4** of the Appraisal confirms 'the Bristol Avon is an extremely important natural feature and acts as an arterial route into (from the east), and out of (to the west), Chippenham town centre. The river is nationally important for its communities of dragonflies and aquatic plants.'
34. **Pg. 5** notes historic sightings of Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), and water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) within 250m of the River.
35. The Appraisal makes the following key recommendations for the section of Monkton Park that falls within the Masterplan area on **pg. 16**:

'River Avon:

- Survey current number and quality of fishing platforms. Start phased maintenance schedule of repair and replace, including access steps or pathways
- Commission ecological survey to provide base line data on water vole population

- Seek advice on instream habitat management works from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Water Team
- Implement new cutting regime to increase width of bankside vegetation by 1-2m

Formal Parkland & Golf Course:

- Continue regular yearly tree inspections
- Continue with current tree management schedule of works unless specific trees are detected in ecological surveys
- Continue current fortnightly grass cutting regime
- Implement new tree planting in areas specified in forthcoming management plan
- Implement new wildflower area as specified in forthcoming management plan.'

[Monkton Park Management Plan, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust \(2021\)](#)

36. The Monkton Park Management Plan sets out how the high level recommendations from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which mainly relate to biodiversity enhancements, will be taken forward in detail by the Town Council's management of the land over a five year period. It also sets out a schedule of works for the different areas of Monkton Park.

D. COMMUNITY VIEWS

Pre-Vision Survey Results

37. Q1 of the Survey asked: 'What do you most like about living in Chippenham?' The 'River' was the 13th most mentioned topic (57 mentions). 'Green spaces and parks' was the second most mentioned topic (190 mentions) and 'Town centre environment' was the 17th most mentioned topic (34 mentions).
38. Q2 of the Survey asked: 'What do you least like about living in Chippenham?' The 'River' was the 17th most mentioned topic (27 mentions). The 'Town centre environment' was the 7th most mentioned topic (87 mentions).
39. Q3 of the Survey asked: 'Looking to the future, what kind of place should Chippenham become?'. 'Utilise the Riverside/Monkton Park' was the 4th most mentioned topic in this respect (73 mentions).
40. The Survey responses to Q1 & Q2 evidence that the River is a key focus amongst the local community, with double the number of respondents liking it than disliking it, clearly demonstrating that it is a natural asset for the town. For those that mentioned they disliked the River, its current state was often cited: being a missed opportunity which the town faces its back to, scruffy frontage and lack of activity.
41. The 'Town centre environment' featured quite high on the list of least liked aspects of living in Chippenham, with respondents commenting that it needed regenerating, had poor public realm, is declining, and lacks interest. Having a masterplan in place to regenerate the River Corridor part of the town centre is therefore key to improving the town centre as a whole.
42. In relation to Q3 the high number of responses received relating to 'utilising the River/Monkton Park' clearly evidence the high priority the local community places on improving the River corridor and the need for a Neighbourhood Plan Policy to enable this.
43. The full survey evidence can be viewed in **Appendix 1** of the Neighbourhood Plan.

E. DISCUSSION

44. The Pre-Vision Survey results demonstrate that the local community places a high priority on utilising the Riverfront. Public realm improvements to bring about active frontages and improve sustainable transport along its course could help to transform the River Corridor and enhance the town centre from a place-making, tourism and leisure perspective.
45. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisals for River Avon South West of Town Bridge and Land at Monkton Park confirm the importance of the section of the River Avon running through the Masterplan area, for fauna and flora, whilst recommending key improvements that could be undertaken to enhance biodiversity.
46. Various unrealised proposals have been put forward in the past to transform the River Corridor. The most recent, Chippenham Vision, was formally commissioned by Wiltshire Council, and included a variety of local community stakeholders. One of the key aspirations from the visioning workshops, attended by community stakeholders in 2010, was to improve and integrate the River with the town. This was subsequently translated into one of six Vision statements for the town: 'Its setting on the River Avon will be its defining and connecting feature.'
47. The subsequent 2014 Chippenham Central Area Masterplan set out masterplans for the High Street Area and wider River Character Area, with the River as a key component identified for enhancement and improvement in places.
48. Due to resourcing issues, the Masterplan was never formally adopted as a Development Plan document and the Chippenham Vision Group was subsequently disbanded. The work was translated into Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which refers to the River Avon Corridor being enhanced for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner and developed as an attractive cycle/pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green infrastructure network, while conserving and enhancing its role as a wildlife corridor.
49. The Chippenham Central Area Masterplan now stands as a key piece of work which has no status in the Development Plan. Members of both the Town Centre Topic Group and Green Infrastructure Topic Group considered it essential to have a masterplan for the River Avon Corridor in the Development Plan, to enable regeneration of the town centre, preserve the green character of the River Corridor and preserve and enhance the special historic environment of the town centre.
50. Members of the Topic Groups reviewed the 2014 Masterplan and found much of its content to still be relevant, although there were some aspects they considered would need to be updated. There were also some aspects that were considered not to be viable in the current climate, and therefore the updated Masterplan is arguably a more streamlined and flexible version than previously.
51. The key elements of the Masterplan that Topic Group Members considered should remain were:

- Supporting proposals to redevelop Emery Gate Shopping Centre and the side elevation of No. 31-33 High Street with active frontages on to the River. These are elements are currently identified in both the Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan SPG as having a negative impact on Chippenham Conservation Area. Additional design principles were considered necessary to ensure that the right uses and high quality design were at the forefront of any redevelopment scheme.
- Support for the replacement or removal of the radial gate weir (identified as having a negative impact on Chippenham Conservation Area) in a manner that improves biodiversity and/or renewable energy
- Support for the demolition of No. 1 High Street (identified as having a negative impact on Chippenham Conservation Area) and redevelopment as a 2-3 storey high quality landmark building with active street and river frontages

52. The key modifications Topic Groups Members considered necessary to bring the 2014 Chippenham Central Area Masterplan up to date are as follows:

- Develop a separate parameters plan for the Bridge Centre/Bath Road site focusing on a mixed use scheme rather than the proposed retail-led scheme
- Deletion of references to intensified car parking, which is not sustainable in the context of the Climate Emergency
- Deletion of references to potential river crossings, which are unlikely to be viable in the face of competing requirements
- Deletion of references to increased retail floor space at Emery Gate extending on to Monkton Park. The Topic Groups considered that retail units/active frontages to the River could be utilised within the existing shopping centre footprint and associated areas of hardstanding without having to encroach on Monkton Park and losing green space vital to the River character. It was also considered essential to add reference to closing off the existing vehicular access to Emery Gate car park/service yard from the Town Bridge in order to resolve this pinch point and improve public realm/access for pedestrians to the River
- Deletion of references to new high quality landmark buildings at the four corners of the Town Bridge. It was considered that this was overly aspirational and unrealistic, and that the focus should be confined to supporting the demolition No. 1 and its replacement with a new landmark building
- Adding of references to creating level access or a berm (a flat strip of land, raised bank, or terrace bordering a river) to the River in places to increase biodiversity and public enjoyment of the River. This would include provision of a jetty for small boats

- Adding references to improving pedestrian and cycle routes on the stretch of the River between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road as existing routes here are poorer quality and often illegible
- Adding reference to enhancing the riverfront south of Gladstone Bridge as a natural area with good biodiversity and an attractive open space, as this section of the riverfront often feels neglected and has poor natural surveillance
- Adding reference to the Olympiad site being retained for community and leisure uses, so that this remains a key attractor to the town centre and contributes towards linked trips to the centre

Impact on the Historic Environment

53. Through production of an updated Masterplan to guide future development of the River-Green Corridor it is considered that Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 would likely have a positive impact on the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area for a number of reasons as discussed below.

Demolition of No. 1 High Street

54. No. 1 High Street (Superdrug) is identified as having a negative impact on the significance of the Conservation Area in the Conservation Area Appraisal, and support for its replacement with ‘a high quality building of more suitable height for its prominent location, and which addresses both the High Street and river frontage and removes the vacant space to the side of the current building’ as stated in the Management Plan SPG and carried through in Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2, would enhance the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area.

55. In terms of the scale of any replacement building, Topic Group Members considered that in order to meet the Management Plan SPG aspirations of a building of ‘more suitable height’ any replacement building should be at least two storeys in height to match the height of surrounding buildings (Nos. 2-3 High Street adjoining and Nos. 31-33 opposite being two storeys in height). However, they considered three storeys in height would be preferable given the former hotel building on this site was also three storeys in height (**Figure 3**), and an increase in height would better define the landmark nature of the site location (as the former building successfully did).

Figure 3 - Former Hotel Building at No. 1 High Street



56. The former hotel building on the site (**Figure 3**), was constructed in Bath stone and had active frontages on to both the High Street and River Avon. Topic Group Members therefore considered these to be important design aspects that would need to be adhered to in any replacement building, particularly given the prominence of the site/building in long distance views from Lower New Road and as a 'gateway' building to the High Street from the north. With regard to the use of Bath stone as a facing material, all buildings at this end of the High Street are faced in Bath stone and this homogeneity in building materials is one of the key contributors that gives this part of the Conservation Area its special character.
57. The proposed demolition of No. 1 High Street and its replacement with a more sensitively designed building as described above, would likely have a positive impact on the setting of the Grade II Listed No. 2-3 High Street, given the current building at No. 1 is completely at odds with its neighbour and surrounding buildings being flat roofed, having horizontal fenestration and concrete facing as can be seen in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 - No. 1 High Street from Town Bridge Showing Poor Relationship to Surrounding Buildings and River



Redevelopment of Emery Gate Shopping Centre

58. Emery Gate Shopping Centre and the side/rear section of No. 31-33 (Wilkinsons) are identified as having a negative impact on the significance of the Conservation Area in the Conservation Area Appraisal. **Figures 5-8** demonstrate how these buildings, of poor quality architecture, turn their back to the River/Monkton Park and provide dead frontage. Please note the front section of No. 31-33 (Wilkinsons) is a fine addition to the High Street, identified as a Building of Local Merit under Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC5, and would need to be retained in any redevelopment of this building/Emery Gate Shopping Centre.

Figure 5 - Poor Side Elevation of No. 31-33 High Street (Wilkinsons) from Town Bridge. Note the Attractive Façade of the Building on to High Street



Figure 6 - Poor Side Elevation of No. 31-33 High Street (Wilkinsons) from High Street Looking Towards Monkton Park (River Avon to Left). Note also the Negative Impact the Vehicular Access has on the Main Entrance into Monkton Park



Figure 7 - Dead Frontage of Emery Gate Shopping Centre on to River Avon



Figure 8 - Poorly Defined Entrance to Emery Gate Shopping Centre from Monkton Park



59. Support for 'providing active frontages onto the park from Emery Gate and Wilkinson's to provide a stronger and more attractive link between the shopping centre and park' is a priority listed in Development Guidelines within the Management Plan SPG and

carried through in Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2, and so would likely enhance the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area.

Other Impacts on Historic Environment

60. Support for the removal or replacement of the radial gate weir is likely to have a positive impact on the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area, given the structure's identification as having a negative impact on the Conservation Area as explained in pg. 114 of the Conservation Area Appraisal.
61. Other enhancements of the River-Green Corridor, such as biodiversity improvements and cycle/pedestrian improvements, as set out in Policy TC2 are unlikely to have an impact on Conservation Area.
62. Policy TC2 proposals would unlikely result in any harm to the setting of Avonbridge House, National Westminster Bank and Attached Walls, Lloyds Bank, No. 26 Westmead Lane, Westmead House, No. 55 St. Mary Street, No. 56 St. Mary Street and the United Reform Church and Former Ministers House, all of which are Grade II Listed, given proposals in the immediate vicinity of these buildings would either be confined to biodiversity improvements and cycle/pedestrian improvements or these buildings would not fall within sightlines of any other proposed works.
63. In summary, Policy TC2 would likely result in no harm to the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area or the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings. On the contrary, there would be many potential positive impacts which would better reveal the significance of these heritage assets. The policy proposals would also comply with Section 16 of the NPPF on the historic environment and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
64. As can be seen from the above, the policy proposals would also comply with Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC4 which sets out requirements for new development in Chippenham Conservation Area, in that they would: maintain positive views identified in the Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal; new development would be of high quality design that makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; heritage assets (buildings, trees and other features) which make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area would be retained; and proposals would accord with the relevant development guidelines in the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG

F. MATTERS EXCLUDED FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

65. Many of the land maintenance, biodiversity enhancements and improvement of pedestrian/cycle paths within the River Corridor that are referred to in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisals for the Area South West of the Town Bridge and for Monkton Park will not require planning permission. Monkton Park is now owned by the Town Council and the recommendations of the Monkton Park Management Plan, approved in Spring 2021, are currently being implemented for this land over the next five years, in consultation with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

G. CONCLUSION

66. The Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Vision Survey results demonstrate that the local community values the River Avon as a place-making feature of the town, and considers it a high priority that the River and Monkton Park are fully utilised for the future of the town.
67. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisals for River Avon South West of Town Bridge and Land at Monkton Park confirm the importance of the section of the River Avon running through the Masterplan area, for fauna and flora.
68. In the past, Chippenham Vision also viewed the River Avon as a defining and connecting feature of the town, and subsequently produced the Draft Chippenham Central Area Masterplan in 2014 to guide future development within the River Avon Corridor. Few, if any, of the proposals contained within the Masterplan have to date been realised on the ground, though through no direct fault of the Masterplan itself.
69. In order to revitalise the town centre and protect and enhance the function of the River-Green Corridor it is essential that there is a Masterplan in place, which has development plan status. This can guide future development to ensure that some of the obvious development mistakes of the past are not repeated in this important part of the town.
70. There are things that the 2014 Masterplan did get right, but also a number of things which are in need of modification and updating in order to reflect changes to the current economic climate, the need to address climate and ecological emergencies, changes to planning legislation, viability issues and physical changes on the ground in the intervening years.
71. The updated Masterplan and Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 is in conformity with Paragraph 86 of the NPPF by supporting the role of the town centre and taking a positive approach to its growth, management and adaptation. It is also in conformity with Paragraph 127 of the NPPF through the use of a masterplan to set out a clear design vision and expectations for the River Green Corridor.
72. It fully aligns, and indeed better realises, Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy in supporting the enhancement of the River Avon Corridor for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner and supporting the development of the Corridor as an attractive cycle/pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green infrastructure network, while conserving and enhancing its role as a wildlife corridor.
73. As demonstrated in Section D. of this Topic Paper the Masterplan proposals which form Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 would, when assessed against Paragraphs 199-203 of the NPPF likely better reveal and enhance the significance of Chippenham, Conservation Area, and comply with the Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan SPG. The proposals, when assessed against Paragraphs 199-203 of the NPPF would likely result in no harm to the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings

within the Masterplan area. The policy proposals would comply with Paragraphs 190 of the NPPF and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy in setting out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

INSERT A - LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

Avonbridge House

ST9173SE BATH ROAD 930-1/9/2 (South side) 22/06/78 Avon Bridge House (Formerly Listed as: BATH ROAD (South side) Nestle's Warehouses)

II

Warehouses and factory, now offices. c1873 and later rebuilding of an earlier cloth factory. Squared coursed limestone rubble with freestone dressings and slate roof. 2 blocks, both rectangular plan (and part of a wall to 3rd block to the left, east, now demolished).

EXTERIOR: 2 storeys and attic; block to the left 10-window range, taller block to the right 18-window range. C20 glazing to tall segmental-arched windows with rusticated architraves; similar quoins and jambs to wide segmental arches and to each end and centre. The block to the left has a more steeply pitched roof, a blank left return and a pyramidal bellcote (restored); the block to the right has stone coping over stepped freestone blocks to the right return which has one window to the attic, 3 to the 1st floor and one to the ground floor.

INTERIOR: not inspected but noted as retaining original cast-iron columns and beams.

HISTORY: the site was acquired in 1873 by the National Anglo-Swiss Milk Company for their 1st factory in Britain. (Jefferies S (Chippenham Civic Society): A Chippenham Collection: Chippenham: 1987-: 45-46).

No. 55 St. Mary Street; No. 56 St. Mary Street; and the United Reform Church and Former Ministers House,

Nos. 2 and 3 High Street

ST9173SE HIGH STREET 930-1/9/42 (South side) 19/05/77 Nos.2 AND 3

GV II

Hotel, now shops. c1835. Limestone ashlar with part-rendered rubblestone to the rear wing, double-pitched slate roof with moulded ashlar stacks and stone coping to gable ends. Double-depth plan with rear left wing. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; 8-window range. Chamfered arises to a wide semicircular-arched carriage entrance one-and-a-half storeys high (now glazed), which is flanked by full-height splayed pilasters with pyramidal caps above the blocking course. A 1st-floor band is at impost level. Above the arch a 3-light window with semicircular-arched lights and 4/4-pane sash windows has a sill band spanning the central bay. To the right is a semicircular-arched doorway (now a window) below a shallow splayed oriel window with similar but taller windows. To the 1st-floor left are paired plate-glass sash windows below a bracketed cornice. The cornice and blocking course span the facade, to the centre is a raised plaque "1835". The rear wing has a roof hipped to the rear and a blank ashlar wall to the left with 16 iron rings for harnessing horses. The right-hand wall is rendered with a planked door to a gabled loading bay, a 3-light window to the left with 12/12-pane sashes, other C20 windows and doors, and 4 harnessing rings to the right. INTERIOR: not inspected. HISTORY: mentioned in 1703 as formerly known as the New Inn. (Chamberlain, Joseph A: Chippenham: Chippenham: 1976-: 130).

Lloyds Bank, No. 29 High Street

ST9273SW HIGH STREET 930-1/10/52 (North side) 22/06/78 No.29 Lloyds Bank

II

Bank. c1870. Limestone ashlar, slate roof with coped gables and moulded ashlar stacks to left of ridge and left gable end. Classical, mainly Palladian-influenced style. Double-depth plan with rear extensions. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys; 6-window range. The right-hand range is stepped slightly back over a flat-arched carriage entrance with C20 iron gates. Dentilled cornice and parapet; C20 2-light casement windows to the 2nd floor; 2 moulded string courses, one at sill level; pedimented horned 6/6-pane sash windows with dentilled cornices to shouldered architraves and sill string course to the 1st floor; wide platband over chamfered rustication to the ground floor; chamfered voussoirs to C20 windows; Tuscan doorcase with flat pilasters and cornice to a C20 door. INTERIOR: not inspected. HISTORY: in 1914 Lloyd's Bank took over the Wilts and Dorset Bank and in 1918 the Capital and Counties Bank consolidated them in this building. (Chamberlain, Joseph A: Chippenham: Chippenham: 1976-: 112; The Buildings of England: Pevsner N & Cherry B: Wiltshire: London: 1967-1975: 172).

National Westminster Bank and Attached Walls, No. 30 High Street

ST9273SW HIGH STREET 930-1/10/53 (North side) 22/06/78 No.30 National Westminster Bank and attached walls

II

Bank. 1876. By GM Silley for the National Provincial Bank. Limestone ashlar, hipped slate roof with moulded ashlar stacks which sweep up from the eaves. Mannerist Classical style. Double-depth plan with rear extensions. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; symmetrical 5-bay front. Wide eaves, dentilled cornice and blocking course to facade and returns. Horned plate-glass sash windows to the 1st floor; 3 recessed bays to centre articulated by fluted Doric columns in antis, flanked by carved floral drops; paired antae flank both outer bays and above them are curved brackets to the cornice. The ground floor and walls to the sides have chamfered rustication below an ornamental band and a triglyph frieze to a cornice at sill level. The ranges flanking the door are recessed; a moulded impost band and archivolt to semicircular-arched windows with heavy moulded keystones set in ornamented band. C20 glazing. Moulded sill and plinth. Steps up to C20 door flanked by Doric columns with blocks which rest on the plinth and support the impost string; above it an ornamented semicircular panel continues the arcading of the windows. The returns are similar but simpler. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: on each side coped walls sweep up to meet the triglyph frieze. Each has a wide flat arch with chamfered voussoirs and a large keystone. The arch to the right has C20 double gates. A vigorous and eclectic example of Palazzo-style mid C19 commercial architecture, contrasting in style to the much more conservative but contemporary No.29 (qv). (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N & Cherry B: Wiltshire: London: 1967-1975: 172).

No. 26 Westmead Lane

ST9173SE WESTMEAD LANE 930-1/9/260 (West side) 22/06/78 No.26

II

Cottage, formerly the rear wing of Westmead House (qv). Early and mid C18, restored c1990. Rendered limestone rubble, painted ashlar rear wing, steep-pitched C20 pantile roof with stacks to the left. Rhomboid 2-unit plan with rear wing. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys with attic; 2-window range. The rear wing was probably a former service outshut. The 1st floor has roll-moulded raised surrounds to C19 2-light casement windows at eaves level. C20 windows and door to the left of the ground floor. Half of the rear has a gabled roof and half a pent roof, various windows. INTERIOR: a chamfered axial beam spans the whole building. The left-hand room has a stone-flagged floor and a late C19 cast-iron kitchen range. The rear left-hand room, in the former service outshut, has a well under plate glass to the centre. Beneath the room to the rear right is a barrel-vaulted cellar with a stone floor and steps. The 1st floor has some exposed timber studding. The attic, in the 3-bay collar-beam roof, has 2 rows of heavy tenoned purlins and a ridge in notch.

Westmead House and Attached Wall

ST9173SE WESTMEAD LANE 930-1/9/261 (West side) 22/06/78 Westmead House and attached wall (Formerly Listed as: WESTMEAD LANE (West side) No.26 Westmead House)

II

House, facing south at a right angle to the road. Early C19. Coursed limestone rubble, freestone eaves cornice, lintel band, architraves, plinth and quoins; hipped slate roof with stacks to the rear and bracketed gutter. 2-unit plan with C20 west wing, C18 rear wing now listed separately as No.26 Westmead Lane (qv). EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; symmetrical 3-window range. C20 replica doors and windows. Semicircular arches over 6-panel door and 1st-floor window with unusual radial glazing bars, flanked by horned 8/8-pane sash windows. INTERIOR: the ground floor has 6-panel doors in moulded architraves, panelled shutters, a white marble fire surround to the right-hand room, a repositioned Adam-style fire surround to the left-hand room is flanked by semi-elliptical recesses. There is a dogleg staircase with stick balusters, and a cast-iron arch-plate register grate to the 1st floor. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: a Flemish-bond brick wall approx 3m high, attached to the south-east corner, extends approx 7m southward and fronts the street. An entrance at the end of the wall has an upside-down C19 Gothic-style door with vertical panels.

United Reform Church and Minister's House

ST9273SW EMERY LANE 930-1/10/28 United Reform Church and former 22/06/78 Minister's House (Formerly Listed as: EMERY LANE United Reform Church)

II

United Reform Church. Dated 1825 and 1904. Minister's house mid C19. CHAPEL: squared and coursed limestone with plain freestone dressings, hipped slate roof. Rectangular plan with higher 1904 block to the rear. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; originally symmetrical 3-window range now with a mid C19 porch and extension to front left. Parapet, cornice, platband and plinth. A central pediment has an inscription in the tympanum "Tabernacle first erected in 1770. Rebuilt in the year 1825". Fixed leaded 2-light windows; that under the pediment has a semicircular arch and pointed-arched lights, that to the ground-floor right has a transom with 3 similar windows to the ground floor of each return and pointed arches to the lights of the 1st-floor windows above them. The mid C19 ashlar porch, (a lean-to from the platband), has a cornice and blocking course, double 3-panel doors, and a 4-pane window to the right. The window to the left is covered by the left-hand front extension. The block to the rear is limestone rubble to the ground floor and English-bond brick to the 1st floor, probably heightened in 1904 to accommodate the organ. INTERIOR: the stone-flagged porch gives onto stairs to each side, in tongued-and-grooved lobbies at the base, and with stick balusters and turned newels at gallery level. The tiered gallery, supported by cast-iron columns, has original pews and a modillion cornice. The interior was altered c1904 in a late C19 style when the rear wall was opened with a semi-elliptical arch to give access to the organ which is on the 1st floor of the rear block; an inverted segmental arch to the base of the opening is fronted by a parapet with large patera in ornate recesses. Below, a dais and steps with turned balusters and newels flank a pulpit with trefoil heads to 3 panels. Tongued-and-grooved panelling up to a dado rail surrounds the ground floor. The gallery front has a dentilled cornice; recessed panels with recessed trefoils and a modillion cornice to the base. MINISTER'S HOUSE: Flemish-bond brick with limestone ashlar facade, slate roof with truncated stack to the left gable end. Double-depth plan. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; 2-window range. 6/6-pane sash windows, platband, and a semi-elliptical arched carriage entrance (now blocked) to the right with the edge roll inscribed "Congregational Church". A small 6/6-pane sash window is to the far right. The left return has a 6/6-pane sash window to both floors. The house is now connected to the chapel by a block which covers most of the left-hand range of the building. INTERIOR: not inspected.

No. 55 St. Mary Street

ST9273SW ST MARY STREET 930-1/10/199 (East side) 25/04/50 No.55 The Grove

GV II

House at a right angle to the road, facing south, built in 4 blocks. C17, successively extended to right of front in early C18, early and mid C19. MATERIALS: limestone rubble with freestone quoins to the C17 and C18 blocks, ashlar to the rest; stone slate roof to centre, right and part of rear, Welsh slate to left and part of rear; ashlar stacks to gable ends and rear, brick shafts to some. PLAN: each block is one-unit plan, the C17 block to the left (i) was originally a through-passage plan, probably 2 or more units with rear stair turret; the early C18 central block (ii) has a single-storey rear passage and small rear room; early/mid C19 extension to right (iii). EXTERIOR: 2 storeys and attic; 7-window range (2 to each block and one to the C19 extension to the right). i). The C17 (left) block is set back with a steeply-pitched Welsh slate roof. The quoins rise to 2 storeys. To the garden front a C18 high parapet has been added with a pedimented dormer to a 2-light casement window behind. To the 1st floor are timber

lintels to central paired C19 sash windows and a 6/6-pane sash to the right. An early C19 cast-iron trellis to a former canopy spans this block. To the centre of the ground floor is a moulded architrave to early C19 French windows with margin panes, to the right is a C20 half-glazed door. The rear has moulded architraves to a 6/6-pane sash window. ii). The early C18 block to the centre has a stone slate roof hipped to the front and right, gabled to the left; chamfered rusticated quoins; eaves cornice; moulded architraves to 6/6-pane sash windows with crown glass to the 1st floor over a cornice and blocking course to an early C19 splayed bay of 3 equal facades. The bay has French windows with margin panes and crown glass. The left return has one 6/6-pane sash window to each floor; that to the ground floor (temporarily blocked) in an early C18 moulded architrave with cornice, partly covered by the trellis. iii). The mid C19 stone-slatted wing to the right is lower and cants forward with one 6/6-pane sash window to the 1st floor over a large blind 8/8-pane sash window with painted glazing bars; to the left is a smaller 8/8-pane sash window, all with raised surrounds and bracketed sills; platband between floors. To the far right is an ashlar single-storey lean-to with a 3-light metal casement window. Another smaller windowless lean-to is the far right stepped down the slope toward the River Avon. To rear: to the 1st-floor right is a 2-light stone-mullioned window with edge-roll moulding and leaded glazing, fixed to the right and with a small-paned metal casement to the left. To the left is a 6/6-pane sash window. The eaves cornice formerly continuing along the right return is stopped above the rear quoin. A brick stack to a rear corner fireplace. INTERIOR: the west wall (to the street), of the room to the left is approx 1.5m thick and houses an open fire with a C17 cyma-moulded architrave and a segmental, almost semicircular-arched shaft to a window to the right; an ogee-stopped lateral beam is above the fireplace. Early C18 full-height panelling, coved cornice, and to the rear right is a recess with shaped shelves. The entrance hall has raised-and-fielded panelling below a dado rail; to the rear, in the stair turret is a newel stair with an early C18 wide swept rail and turned balusters. The entrance to the central C18 block is pointed-arched. The main room to the front has an early C18 box cornice and full-height raised-and-fielded panelling, wide floor boards and a late C19 fireplace.

No. 56 St. Mary Street

ST9273SW ST MARY STREET 930-1/10/200 No.56 22/06/78

GV II

House. Probably late medieval with mid/late C17 remodelling and C19 rear extension. Limestone rubble with freestone quoins and plinth, stone slate roof with brick stacks to right gable end and rear slope of left gable end. L-shaped plan with 2-unit central entry front block. EXTERIOR: one storey with attic to the front, 2 storeys to the rear; 2-window range. Timber lintels to C20 windows, except those to the attic which have ovolo architraves and were formerly 2-light mullioned windows, now C19 horizontal sliding sashes. Of the 2 gabled full dormers to the attic, that to the left is of a steeper pitch; a wrought-iron bracketed gutter spans the facade at sill level. A freestone rusticated door case with edge-roll moulding has a C20 planked door and gabled hood flanked by C20 small-paned windows. To the far right is a rusticated freestone segmental-arched architrave to a planked door, entrance to No.55 (qv) The rendered left gable end has been rebuilt. The roof of the rear right wing is of a shallower pitch with freestone quoins (probably later); bracketed gutter; casement windows

of various dates, (C19 and C20). INTERIOR: a cruck to the right gable end and part of a cruck and collar truss to the left end remain. (Wiltshire Building Record: 1988-).