

3 BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

BUILDING HEIGHT – UNDERSTANDING THE GENERAL CONCEPTS

3.1 This section sets out a clarification of the terms and concepts that are used in the analysis of building heights and the subsequent recommendations for Bath.

MEASURING BUILDING HEIGHT

- 3.2 Building heights are normally expressed in two ways, either in absolute metres or as the number of storeys. In most circumstances a definition of height in storeys is sufficient. Storeys directly relate to the organisation and use of a building, and height in storeys is easier to measure than absolute metric height. It is a straightforward concept that allows the simple understanding, controlling and administering of building height.
- 3.3 It should be noted however, that the actual floor-to-floor height may vary between different buildings and uses. In most cases the resulting height difference between equal storey buildings is minimal and does not adversely affect the scale, consistency or character of a street-scene. Often a slight variation in eaves or parapet line brings liveliness to a street scene and emphasises the grain of development. However, there are special cases, where the storey height deviates strongly from the average, such as multi-storey car parks, museums, shopping malls, or where there are great internal variations of height, such as in cultural, sports, leisure or faith developments.

3.4 Many historic buildings often contain rooms of different height on different floors of the building. These cases need particular attention and the building height will need to be referred to in absolute metric height or in relation to its context.

SHOULDER HEIGHT

3.5 The building shoulder height, is the sheer height of a building at the back of the footway up to the eaves or parapet height (see Boxes 1-3). It is recognised that many buildings have one additional storey above this height as a set-back storey or within inhabited roof spaces. This can contribute to a lively roofscape often without a significant impact on the perceived building height from the street. In some cases, however, the number or form of additional set-backs needs to be carefully managed to avoid intrusion into views or impacts on the character or visual coherency of an area.

OVERALL HEIGHT

3.6 The overall height of a building is the height of a building measured from the level of the pavement up to the ridge of the roof (see Box 1).

GENERAL HEIGHT AND EXCEPTIONAL HEIGHT

3.7 This building height study makes a distinction between the general height of an area, and exceptional height.

GENERAL HEIGHT

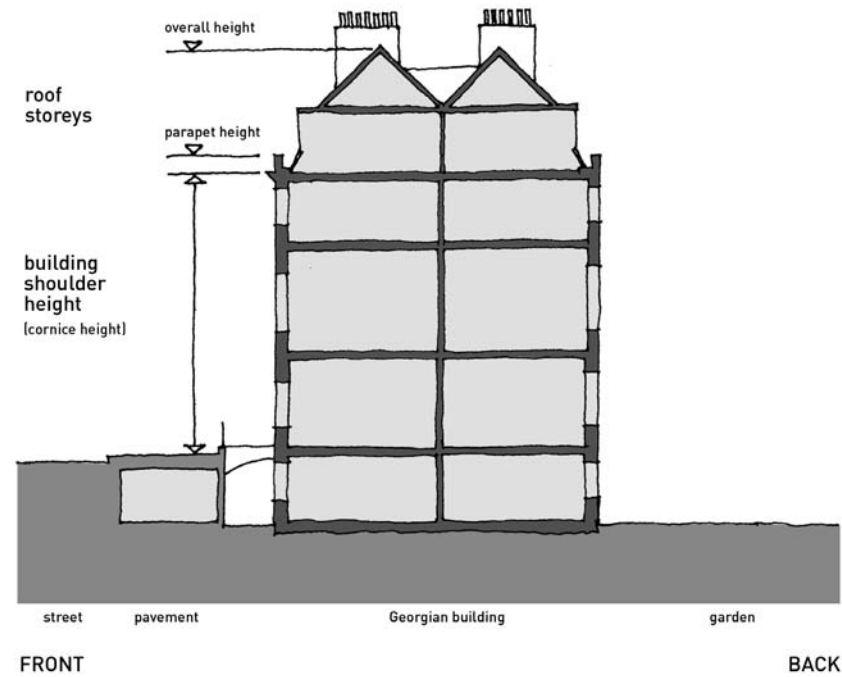
- 3.8 The general height in an area contributes decisively to the character of an area. It determines the scale of buildings, along with grain, and the enclosure of the street space, and also directly has an impact on the density of development and the intensity of urban life. The analysis of general height within an area identifies:
- The prevailing height, which is the height of most of the buildings in an area; or
 - The height range, which is the range of other typical heights recorded within an area.

EXCEPTIONAL HEIGHT

3.9 Exceptional height covers both buildings that are only a few storeys above the general height of an area, and also buildings or structures that are significantly taller than their surroundings.

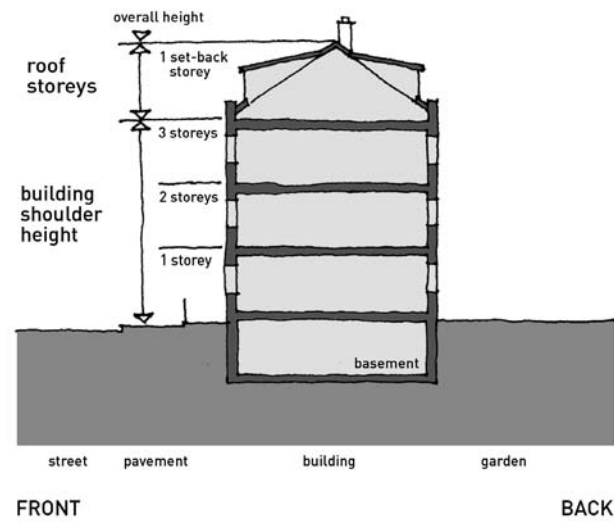
BOX 1: AREAS WITH GEORGIAN FABRIC

Building shoulder height of Georgian buildings is determined as height in metres. It is established at the street-front of the building, measured from the level of the pavement up to the height of the cornice. If a cornice is not expressed, this is to the height of the ceiling of the last full storey. Note should also be taken of the height of the parapet and the overall height of the building to top of the roof (excluding the chimneys).



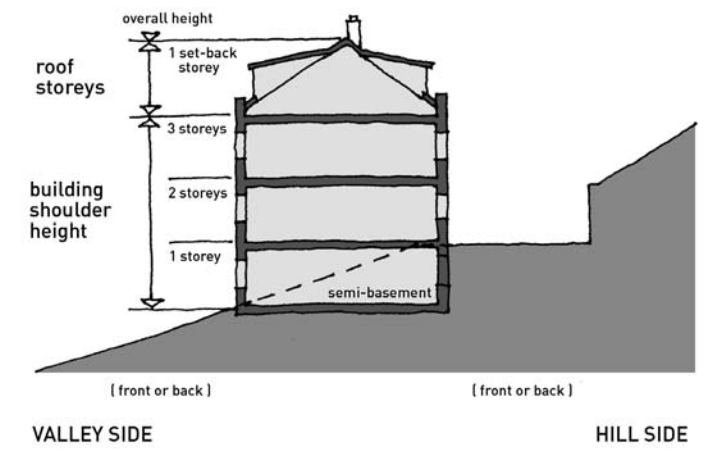
BOX 2: AREAS WITHOUT GEORGIAN FABRIC

The building shoulder height outside areas with Georgian fabric is generally established by counting the number of full storeys from the street level up to the ceiling of the last full floor below the roof.



BOX 3: BUILDINGS ON HILL SLOPES

On hill slopes the building height is established by the height of the building side facing the valley, both for establishing existing height and specifying the height of new buildings.



DEFINING BUILDING HEIGHT IN BATH

- 3.10 This study recognises that Bath is a very special place and this section tailors the concepts set out in the preceding section to determine building heights in Bath.
- 3.11 Much of Bath's special character, and in consequence its world heritage designation, is owed to the prevalence of Georgian urban fabric in the city. This requires a number of key considerations when identifying building height for the purposes of this study.
- Georgian building typologies normally have greater floor-to-floor heights than standard in contemporary developments.
 - In addition the floor to ceiling heights vary through the building; the primary rooms having greater floor to ceiling heights than the secondary rooms. Giving guidance in number of storeys is therefore impractical in these areas.
 - Fronts and backs of Georgian buildings are often of different height, and also the concept of shoulder height needs clear definition.
 - Bath is furthermore, a place with a strong topography, and the visible height of the front and the back of buildings on slopes may vary significantly.
- 3.12 The three boxes opposite set out a consistent approach of how heights in Bath should be determined.

PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING HEIGHT STRATEGY

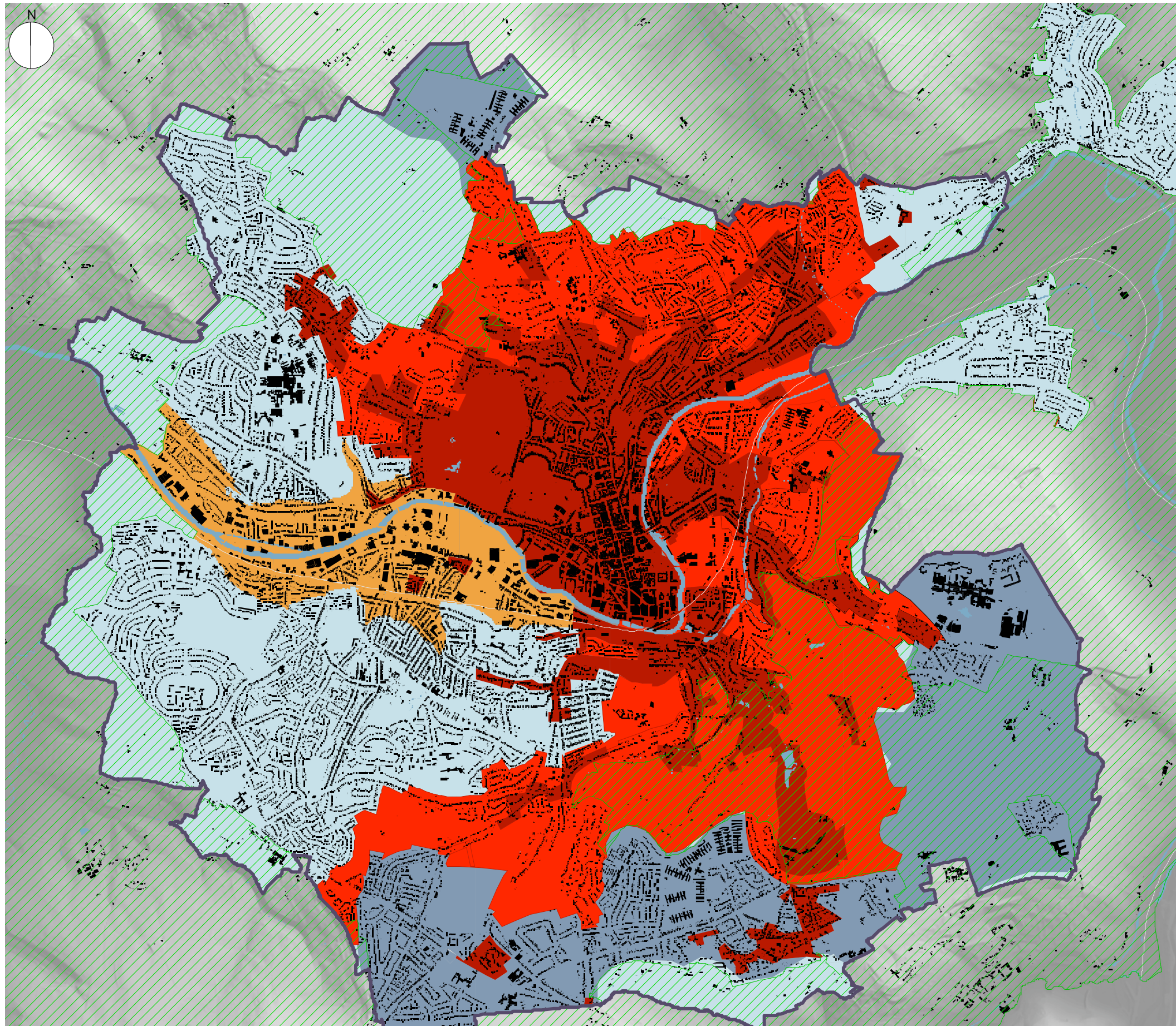
GENERAL PREMISES

- 3.13 This building heights guidance is rooted in fundamental principles of good urban design and heritage conservation. Two premises are at the core of making recommendations for height:
- The height and scale of new development should respect, respond and contribute to the character of Bath, building on its heritage and values associated with it.** Heritage and character are sources of distinctiveness, meaning and quality of a place. As a shared resource they are assets that need to be managed carefully and nurtured for the benefit of future generations. Positive conservation of heritage values should enable cities to respond to social, economic and technological change in a manner that allows change to sustain and reinforce these values.
 - New development should enhance the sustainability of the urban fabric. On a city scale the distribution of new development, its form, scale and height, should aim to establish a more sustainable development pattern by relating density and uses to accessibility and provision of infrastructure.** Concentrating higher density development in areas that are supported by higher accessibility and infrastructure, such as centres or along corridors, is an important aspect of this. Higher density does not necessarily mean higher building. Higher density is often best achieved by more compact development form with higher site coverage. Key considerations will be:
 - Environmental capacity of an area;
 - Its function and opportunities for development;
 - The space requirements and feasibility of uses; and
 - Adaptability of buildings.
- 3.14 In many areas these two premises harmonise, but in some areas, such as Bath city centre there may be conflicts. If conflict cannot be avoided the weight attached to place and heritage values should be proportionate to the significance of the place as set out in the OUV and the impact of this proposed change on that significance.



Top: View from High Common

Bottom: Former Telephone Exchange



- Z1 - Georgian city
- Z2 - Immediate setting of the Georgian city
- Z3 - Valley floor outside Z1 and Z2
- Z4 - Hill slopes outside Z1 and Z2
- Z5 - Plateaux outside Z1 and Z2
- Green belt
- Boundary of World Heritage site

Figure 3.1 : Height Strategy Zones

APPROACH TAILORED TO BATH

3.15 Bath's designation as a World Heritage Site is in recognition of the OUV that is embodied in Bath deriving from its history and manifested in and signified by its physical form. Bath is a living city, and as such it needs to continually adapt its spaces to shifting contemporary socio-economic requirements.

3.16 The objectives of this study are to:

- 1 Set out an approach to building height in Bath that can support the preservation and enhancement of Bath's special character as recognised by the OUV.
- 2 Inform the development process by providing clarity on the appropriate height of development in the various parts of the city when considering the OUV of Bath.

3.17 The world heritage designation covers the entire city of Bath. Different areas within the city contribute in different ways to this value. In some areas the OUV directly relate to Georgian Fabric while in other areas it is derived primarily from the setting of the city in its landscape surroundings. Therefore in relation to building heights there are varying levels of sensitivity to change within Bath depending on the significance of location in relation to the Georgian city, landscape setting and other valued heritage assets.

3.18 This study undertook a thorough analysis of the factors that contribute to the OUV of Bath. It assessed their sensitivity in relation to a change in building height and established how they were spatially distributed. Appendix B contains the detail of this appraisal.

3.19 This analysis led to a division of Bath into five principal zones. Specific conservation and development objectives were set out for each zone, and specific building height approaches were defined accordingly. There may be particular spatial or thematic sub-areas in zones for which specific guidance is given.

3.20 These five zones are the following:

- Georgian City and Georgian fabric
- Setting of the Georgian City
- Hill slopes
- Plateaux
- The Valley Floor

3.21 A summary of the rationale for the selection of these zones together with objectives and height guidance is given in the following section of this guidance.

3.22 It is important to note that this study only gives guidance on building height. Building height is only one, albeit important, aspect of development form. To ensure that new development preserves and enhances the OUV of Bath, further guidance needs to inform the appropriate development response to other design parameters. Box 4 below identifies other design aspects that will need to be considered.



Top: Walcot Street

Bottom: Southgate Centre

BOX 4: OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Owing to the topography of Bath there are a number of views that present the opportunity to appreciate the city from higher ground. These views facilitate a common understanding of the aerial perspective of Bath. In particular they allow the observation of the coherence of the built form in the Georgian areas and many other character areas.

Exceptions to the typical pattern are clearly evident, especially from close range viewpoints such as Alexandra Park. Even if the height of such developments is deemed appropriate, buildings that divert substantially from the other typical characteristics of

built form in Bath are likely to have a detrimental impact on the homogeneity and consistency of an area when viewed from the street and from higher ground.

In addition to building height a number of other aspects of built form will need careful consideration when assessing the impact of development on the OUV of Bath, particularly in areas with Georgian fabric. The following elements are considered intrinsic to the definition of the character of the Georgian City that new developments should seek to preserve and/or enhance.

This list is not exhaustive and there are a range of other design considerations which should be taken into account. These are set out in the B & NES Council's Local Plan 2007 and the national guidance *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System, Towards Better Practice* (DETR 2000).



Urban form

Georgian terraced development had due regard to its underlying land-form. On hill slopes Georgian development takes two principal approaches to the topography:

- Curvilinear terraces that follow or respond to the contour lines, or
- Stepped terraced development against contours.

In the Georgian city centre tight urban perimeter blocks are developed, where individual development is integrated in a closed block. Oblique aerials of the Snowhill estate show the impact on the consistency of the city image, when this principle of urban form is not followed.

Scale and proportion of development

Georgian terraced houses generally have a balanced proportion of height to depth. Larger grand terraces are commonly deeper while ordinary terraces are of lesser depth. This relationship is clearly visible from above.

Modern insertions such as the telephone exchange and the City College show the impact of buildings of a different scale and proportion on the typical pattern.

Grain and building subdivision

Georgian architecture skillfully combined individual buildings within larger grand and iconic building forms, such as terraces, crescents and the Circus. However, their architecture, façade and roof design include a regular rhythm of repeating elements (windows, doors, drainpipes, joints etc.) that structure the larger building form and express its inherent fine urban grain and subdivision. The Hilton hotel, despite a limestone façade stands out due to its different façade pattern and the lack of a recognisable fine urban grain.

Roof form and detail

The typical roof of a Georgian building comprises a double mansard roof situated behind a stone or brick parapet. Regular chimneypieces at partition walls, similar roof details and the uniform use of materials contribute to a distinctive roof pattern typical of Georgian Bath. The roof detail can be observed both from oblique aerial views as well as from the street views. The roofscape of the Southgate Centre aims to blend in, but does not succeed in internal courtyards, where different roof forms clearly stand out.

Materials and colours

The limited palette of materials and colours used in Bath contribute to a notable visual uniformity of the city. In many areas the most prominent feature is the use of soft mellow limestone, historically quarried around Bath on prominent and visible façades. This, together with the typically grey-slatted roofs, limestone chimneys and white dormer windows forms the typical pattern of Georgian development which can be observed from higher ground. Developments, such as refurbishment of the tram sheds, with a different use of materials (and roof detail) stand out and detract from the homogenous character.

GUIDING BUILDING HEIGHT IN BATH

- 3.23 The purpose of this study is to define the appropriate *general height* for new development in Bath. The general building height can be specified within the following concepts of recommended heights and modifiers. Together they establish a strong tool to govern building height by clearly defining an appropriate height while allowing flexibility to adapt to local circumstances.
- 3.24 This study is based on the premise that the primacy of the Georgian City must be maintained physically and visually in the City of Bath. The OUV of Bath is intrinsically linked to the Georgian City which is also the centre of the city and new development must be subservient to this hierarchy.
- 3.25 It is not within the remit of this study to recommend exceptional building heights in Bath. This is in recognition of the likely adverse impact of a new tall building on the OUV of Bath.

RECOMMENDED HEIGHT

- 3.26 Recommended height is the height to which new buildings should be built. This height is normally established in relation to the prevailing height of an area.
- 3.27 Recommended height defines the shoulder height of a new building. The recommendations will further specify whether additional set back storeys may be appropriate.
- 3.28 In the Georgian City (Zone 1 below) and the Immediate Setting of the Georgian City (Zone 2 below) recommended heights are related to the existing prevailing heights of Georgian buildings in the immediate area and are defined in absolute metres.
- 3.29 In the remaining three zones below, the recommended heights are defined as the number of storeys.

MODIFIERS

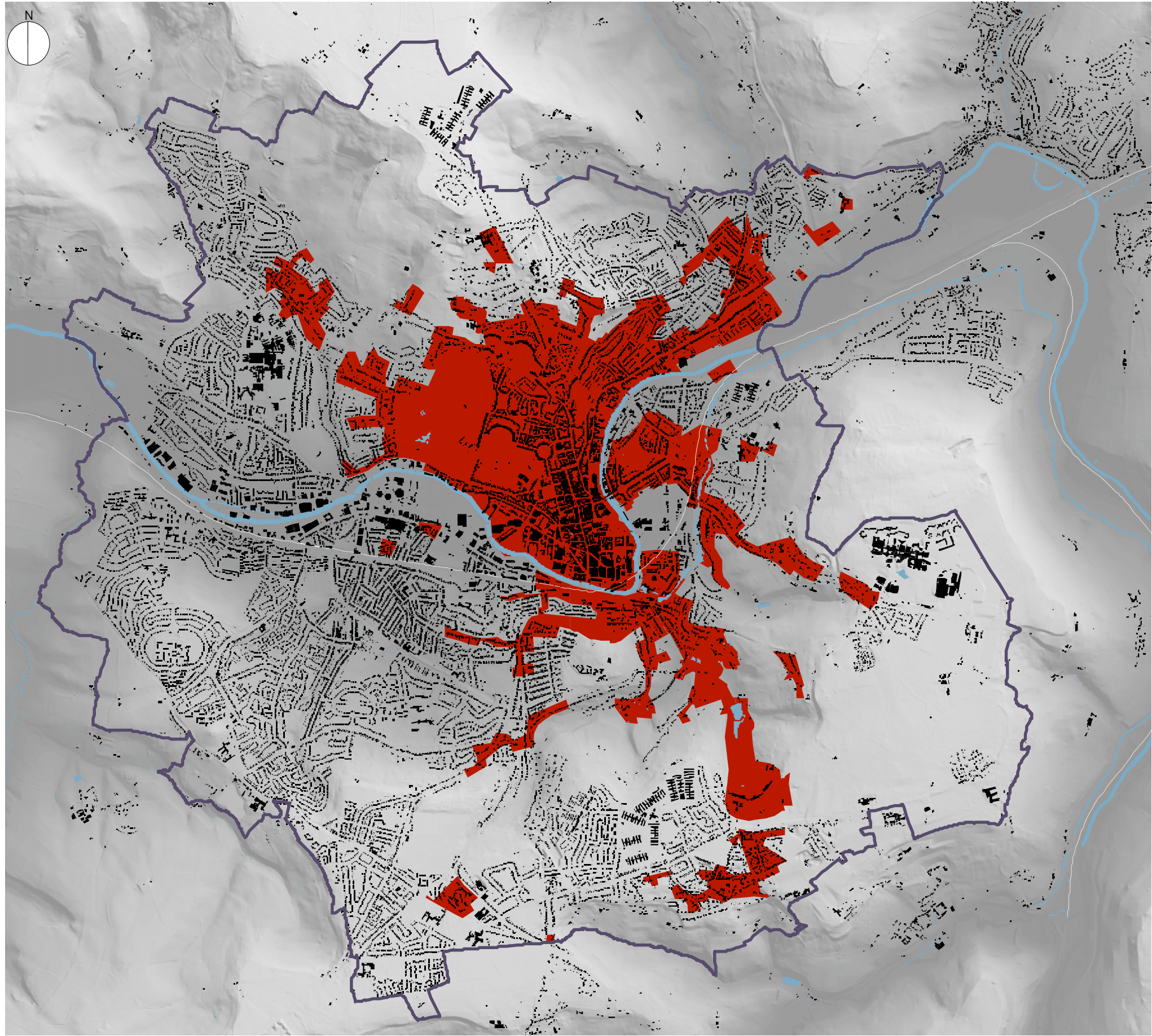
- 3.30 Modifiers are permitted minimal deviations from the recommended height, normally not more than one storey up and one or two storeys down where they can be justified. Modifiers allow development to react to local circumstances, such as the potential to accommodate an additional storey to create better enclosure or legibility, or the need for development to step down to appropriately relate to neighbouring lower buildings. Modified heights normally stay within the typical height range of an area. They are not used to achieve buildings of an exceptional height.

- 3.31 The recommendations indicate where modifiers may be deemed appropriate. However, the use of modifiers is at the discretion of the council and justification will be required on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.32 Modifiers are stated as additional or lower than the recommended shoulder height. The additional or lower storeys relate to full storeys plus any setback roof storeys stated in the recommended height.



Top: Raised pavements on Lansdown Road

Bottom: St Michael's Place



- Z1 - Georgian city
- Z2 - Immediate setting of the Georgian city
- Z3 - Valley floor outside Z1 and Z2
- Z4 - Hill slopes outside Z1 and Z2
- Z5 - Plateaux outside Z1 and Z2

Figure 3.2: Georgian city

ZONE 1 - GEORGIAN CITY

AREA DEFINITION

- 3.33 This zone mirrors the developed area within the Georgian city as recorded by the 1852 plan of Bath, adjusted to remove any subsequent redevelopment.

RATIONALE

- 3.34 Much of the OUV in the recognition of Bath as a World Heritage Site refers to Georgian Bath. The OUV recognises the uniqueness of the Georgian built fabric of Bath, in particular the qualities of the layout, composition, architecture, use of materials, coherency of urban form and completeness of the City.
- 3.35 The OUV further recognises the distinct topographical and landscape setting of Bath. The compactness of Bath is accentuated by the topography and its location within the 'bowl'. There is a strong relationship between the Georgian buildings and surrounding landscape with buildings orientated to make the most use of framed views out to undeveloped slopes and wooded hills. This relationship is further expressed through the numerous views into the Georgian City from above and the visibility of the landscape from within the City. Buildings commonly orientate their finely detailed ashlar façades towards prominent views. The use of uniform materials; Bath stone, clay and slate tiles and development of whole terraces rather than single houses all contribute to the visual integrity of the City.
- 3.36 The Georgian city includes a number of regeneration sites with underused land and inappropriate modern insertions. These present an opportunity to repair the urban fabric and remove out of scale development to further enhance the character of the Georgian City.

OBJECTIVES

- To preserve and/or enhance the character and/or appearance of the Georgian City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Height

- Building or shoulder height along streets should not be less than or exceed the prevailing cornice height of nearby Georgian buildings.
- One additional setback storey behind parapet within the roofscape is generally acceptable. Roofscape should normally take its design cues from nearby Georgian buildings (including parapet, pitch, sub-division and materials).
- Rear extensions and buildings in interior of blocks generally should be lower than principal buildings along the street.
- The overall height should not be less than or exceed the overall prevailing height of nearby Georgian buildings.

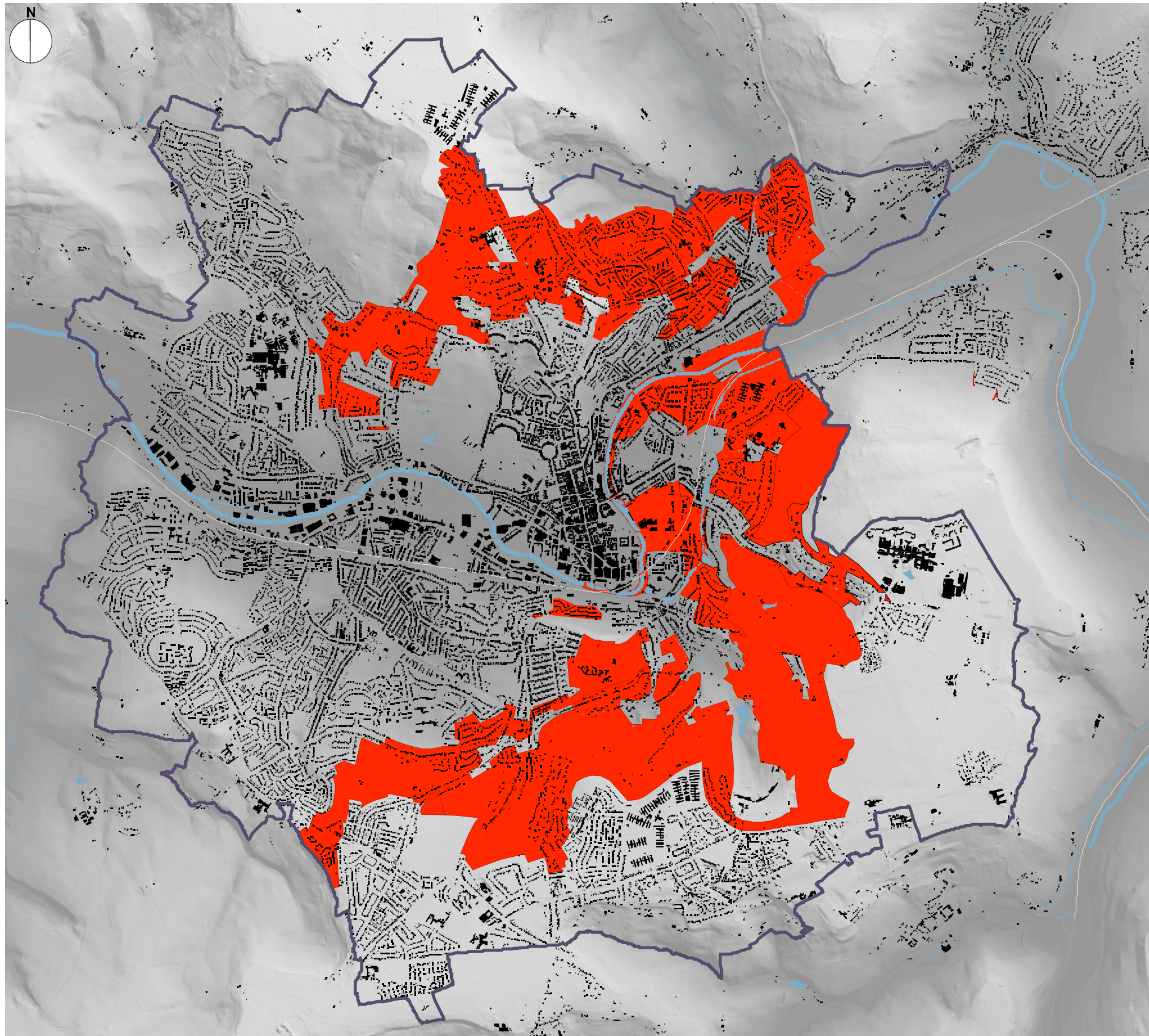
OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Buildings should take their design cues from nearby Georgian buildings in relation to scale, site coverage, built form, grain, rhythm, roof detail and form, materials and colour.
- Buildings should be oriented to relate to the contours of the land.



Top: City Centre Opportunity Site

Bottom: Georgian City viewed from Alexandra Park



- Z1 - Georgian city
- Z2 - Immediate setting of the Georgian city
- Z3 - Valley floor outside Z1 and Z2
- Z4 - Hill slopes outside Z1 and Z2
- Z5 - Plateaux outside Z1 and Z2

Figure 3.3: Immediate setting of Georgian city

ZONE 2 - IMMEDIATE SETTING OF GEORGIAN CITY

AREA DEFINITION

- 3.37 This zone includes the character areas (Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal SPD, August 2005) that adjoin the Georgian City and provide the immediate setting to the Georgian City as recognised by the OUV.

RATIONALE

- 3.38 The area immediately surrounding the Georgian City contains some Georgian elements but has generally developed since. The character is defined by built form interspersed with large areas of open land with significant tree cover. The areas are generally located on hill slopes. They are generally very visible from the Georgian city and prominent within views to the Georgian city. The area particularly to the south of the zone has large undeveloped land much of it within the Cotswolds AONB. The green areas are in contrast to the built form and are integral to the OUV of the World Heritage Site. The built form mainly comprises detached houses, villas and few terraces which are sub-ordinate to the buildings in the Georgian City.

OBJECTIVES

- To preserve and/or enhance the landscape setting of the Georgian City in terms of its openness, degree and type of landscape features, siting and orientation of development and visual relationships between built form and landscape; and,
- To maintain the visual coherence of the Georgian City and its primacy in the physical and spatial hierarchy of Bath by avoiding visually outstanding buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Height

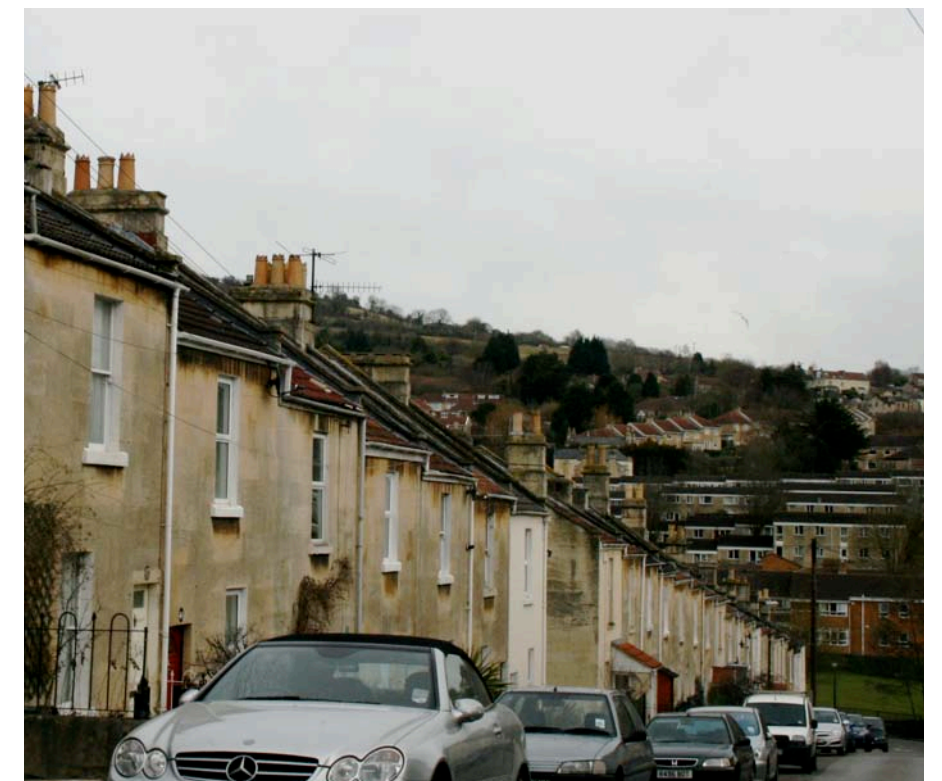
- Building shoulder height of new development should not exceed the shoulder height of nearby buildings.
- The overall height should not exceed the overall height of nearby buildings.

Modifiers

- In suburban single storey residential areas 1 additional storey may be possible providing the resulting building does not intrude in views and preserves or enhances the green character of the area.
- It may be necessary for the height to be less than the shoulder height of nearby buildings in response to heritage assets and to prevent intrusion in views.
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the council and justification will be required on a case-by-case basis.

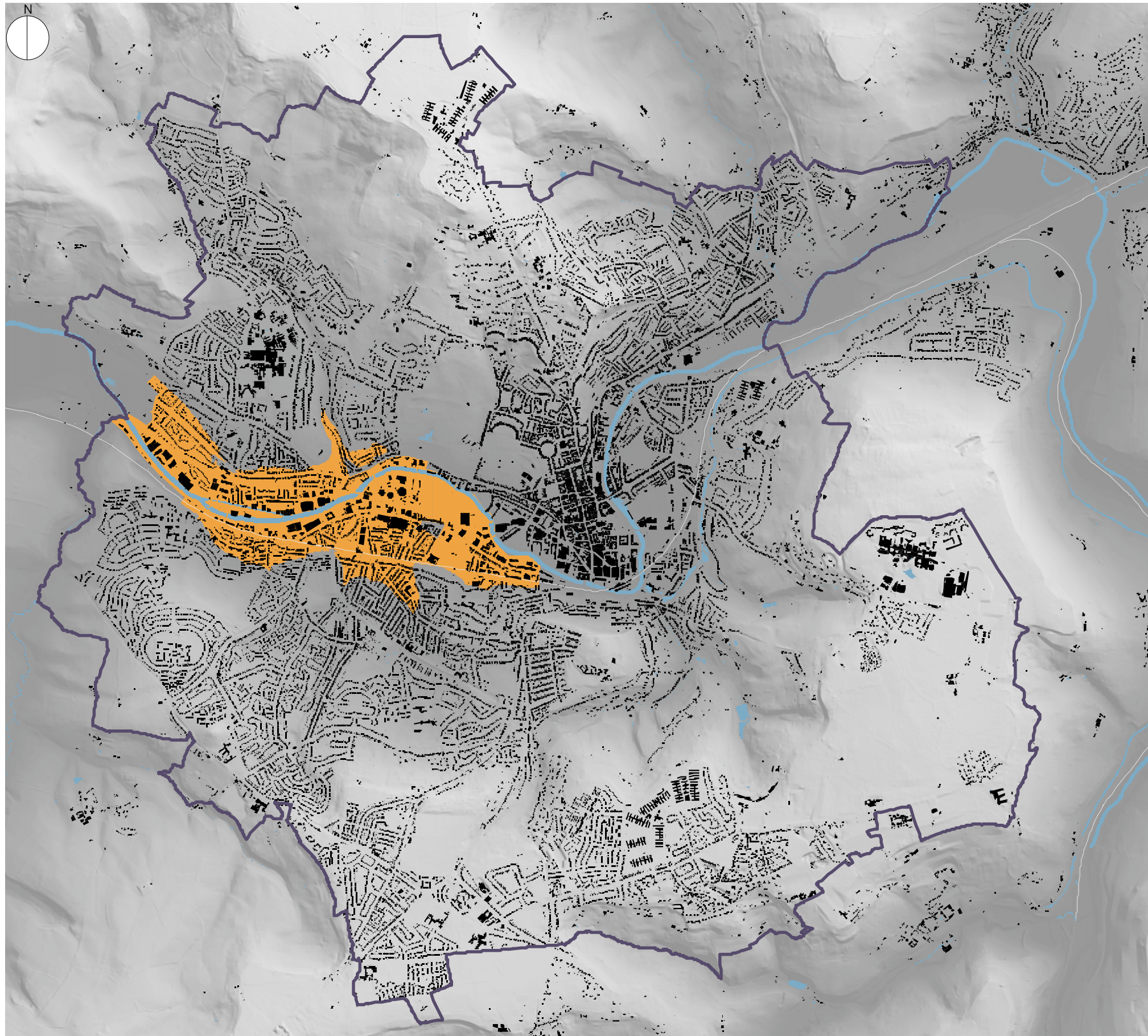
OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Buildings should take their design cues from nearby buildings in relation to scale, site coverage, built form, grain, rhythm, roof detail and form, built materials and colour.
- Buildings should be oriented to relate to the contours of the land.



Top: View from Little Solsbury Hill

Bottom: Larkhall



- Z1 - Georgian city
- Z2 - Immediate setting of the Georgian city
- Z3 - Valley floor outside Z1 and Z2
- Z4 - Hill slopes outside Z1 and Z2
- Z5 - Plateaux outside Z1 and Z2

Figure 3.4: Valley Floor

ZONE 3 - VALLEY FLOOR

AREA DEFINITION

- 3.39 This zone is defined by the relatively flat valley floor below the 30 metre contour line. The zone's eastward extent is the western edge of the Georgian city and its westward extent the World Heritage Site boundary. The valley floor to the east of the city centre is within the Georgian City or the immediate setting of the Georgian City to the edge of the World Heritage Site boundary, and is therefore not considered part of this Valley Floor zone.

RATIONALE

- 3.40 The valley floor located along the River Avon to the west of the city centre has seen waves of change throughout its history. The river is a green leafy landscape corridor running through the centre of this zone. However, historically development has turned its back on the river and it is largely a hidden asset visually disconnected from the main streets.
- 3.41 Until the 1830's the area was largely undeveloped. The Victorian era saw the arrival of the railway through the area, and it became industrialised by large areas of goods yards, a coal yard, gas works, a saw mill and stone and timber yards, along with rows of terraced houses. The area was still industrial by the 1980's by which time the area was occupied with the goods yard, an expanded gas works and some housing had been redeveloped to make way for large floorplate engineering works. Since that time many of these industries have declined and their buildings demolished. They have to some extent been replaced by supermarkets and other big box retail and commercial buildings, though there are significant areas of vacant land.
- 3.42 The general height in the Valley Floor is 1 to 2 storeys however many of the industrial buildings such as the Mill Buildings up to 6 storeys are taller and provide skyline accents along the river. Industrial buildings also have a higher floor to ceiling height. Buildings along Upper Bristol Road range from 1 to 3 storeys and along Lower Bristol Road between 1 to 4 storeys.
- 3.43 The topography of the valley floor at the bottom of the valley enables the built form to be seen against its own backdrop. The approach from the west is relatively weak and indistinct in contrast to the grand approach into the city from the east as discussed earlier at para 2.47.

- 3.44 In summary, unlike other areas of Bath, the heritage assets in the valley floor are limited and much altered over time. The development of this area was influenced by Victorian industrialisation and has seen waves of change throughout its history. It is therefore visually distinct from the Georgian City with its fragmented townscape and a variety of building heights.
- 3.45 The area is accessible by existing road and public transport infrastructure and in walking and cycling distance of the city centre.
- 3.46 Unlike other zones, this zone provides the opportunity to maximise development potential while ensuring the protection of the OUV of the Georgian City and its primacy within the urban form. The Georgian city centre with its compact urban form provides the highest densities in Bath and should provide a good model for new urban development to make the most of the opportunities such a large site offers, particularly given the lack of other such sites within Bath. New built form can further strengthen and improve the western approach to the city. A cohesive development of this zone should be achieved through creative, comprehensive and masterplanned place shaping.

OBJECTIVES

- To preserve and/or enhance the landscape setting of the Georgian city in terms of its openness, degree and type of landscape features, siting and orientation of development and visual relationships between built form and landscape.
- To maintain the visual coherence of the Georgian City by avoiding visually outstanding buildings.
- To protect, manage and plan appropriately for a green and treed river corridor in support of the OUV and SNCI designation of the river and its corridor.
- To maximise the regeneration potential of the valley floor and support sustainable development.



Top: Lower Bristol Road

Bottom: Big retail stores in the area

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Height

- “ Building shoulder height should be 4 storeys. One additional setback storey within the roofscape is likely to be acceptable.

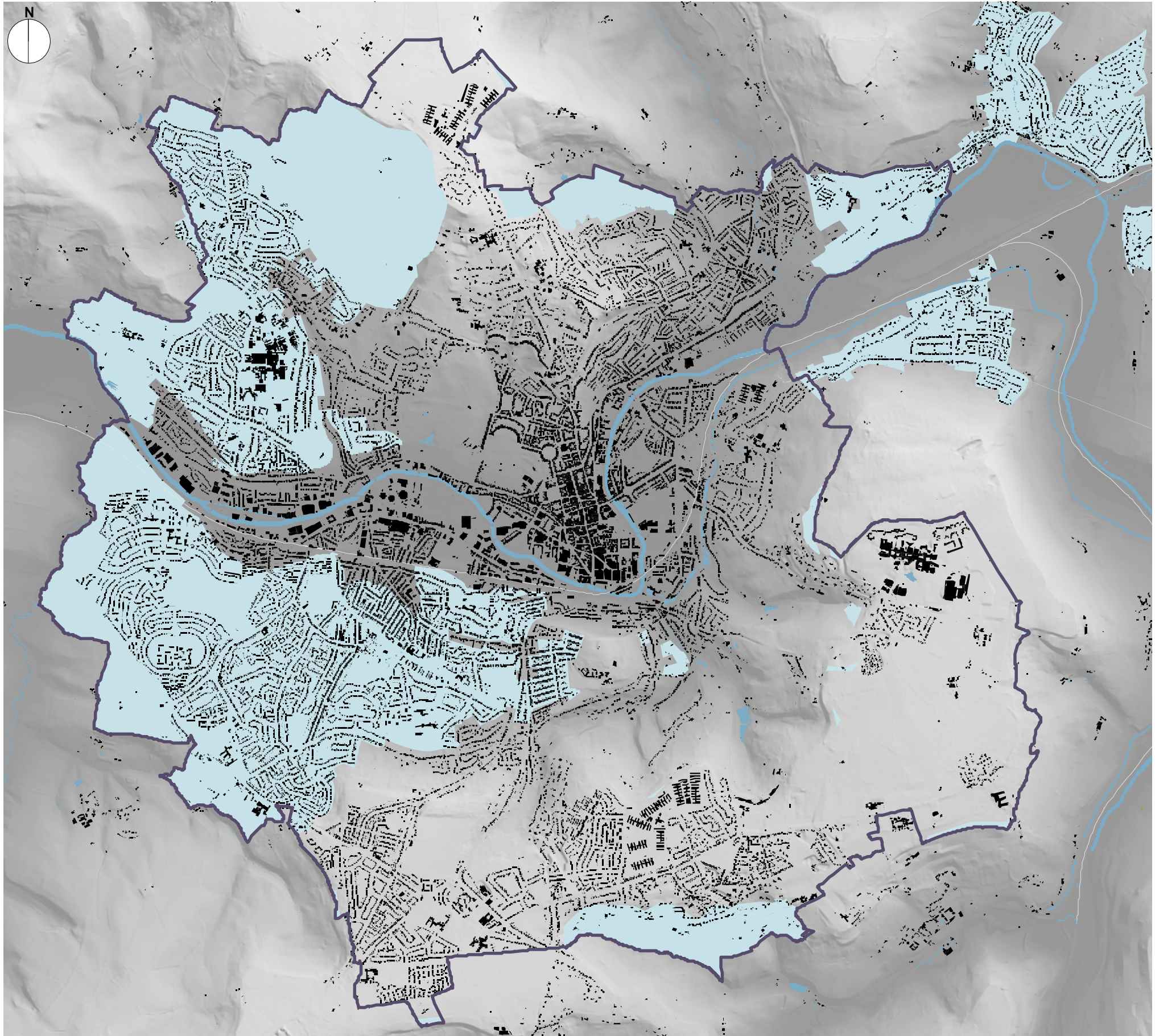
Modifiers

- 1 additional storey may be acceptable along Lower Bristol Road except where it is in close proximity to existing 2-3 storey residential areas.
- 1 additional storey may be appropriate fronting public space and marking key locations such as corners or gateways and mixed use centres.
- “ It may be necessary for the height to be less than 4 storeys in response to heritage assets, residential amenity and to prevent intrusion in views.
- “ The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the council and justification will be required on a case-by-case basis.

OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- “ Development along the riverside should be subservient to the Georgian city and avoid merging with it to retain legibility of the Georgian city particularly when seen from higher ground.





- Z1 - Georgian city
- Z2 - Immediate setting of the Georgian city
- Z3 - Valley floor outside Z1 and Z2
- Z4 - Hillslopes outside Z1 and Z2
- Z5 - Plateaux outside Z1 and Z2

Figure 3.5: Hillslopes

ZONE 4 – HILLSLOPES

AREA DEFINITION

- 3.47 Hill slopes are defined as the area above the 30m contour line up to the edge of plateaux. The edge of Bathampton Down is at approximately 160m, and the edge of Lansdown at approximately 220m.

RATIONALE

- 3.48 Hillslopes are visually present from within the city, including the Georgian city and form the backdrop to many views. The importance of the relationship between the built form and its landscape setting is clearly stated in the OUVs and expanded upon within the World Heritage Site Setting Study. Views to the green skylines from within the city reinforce that Bath is set within a hollow in the landscape.
- 3.49 The character of the hillslopes is defined by built form interspersed with large areas of open land and with significant tree coverage with open countryside prevailing on the upper halves of hillslopes. The Royal United Hospital is located within the hillslopes zone and is an anomaly in terms of its height and massing and is visually present in certain views given its elevated position. However, being a public facility at an established location provision needs to be made for potential further expansion if it is considered of significant strategic need whilst preserving and/or enhancing the OUVs.

OBJECTIVES

- To preserve and/or enhance the character and appearance of green hillslopes and skylines as an integral element of the OUV.
- To enhance views into the Georgian city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended height

- Building shoulder height of new development should not exceed prevailing shoulder height in the area.
- The overall height should not exceed the prevailing overall height in the area.

Modifiers

- In suburban single storey residential areas 1 additional storey may be possible providing the resulting building does not intrude in views and retains or enhances the green character of the area.
- It may be necessary for the height to be less than the shoulder height of nearby buildings in response to heritage assets and to prevent intrusion in views.
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the council and justification will be required on a case-by-case basis.

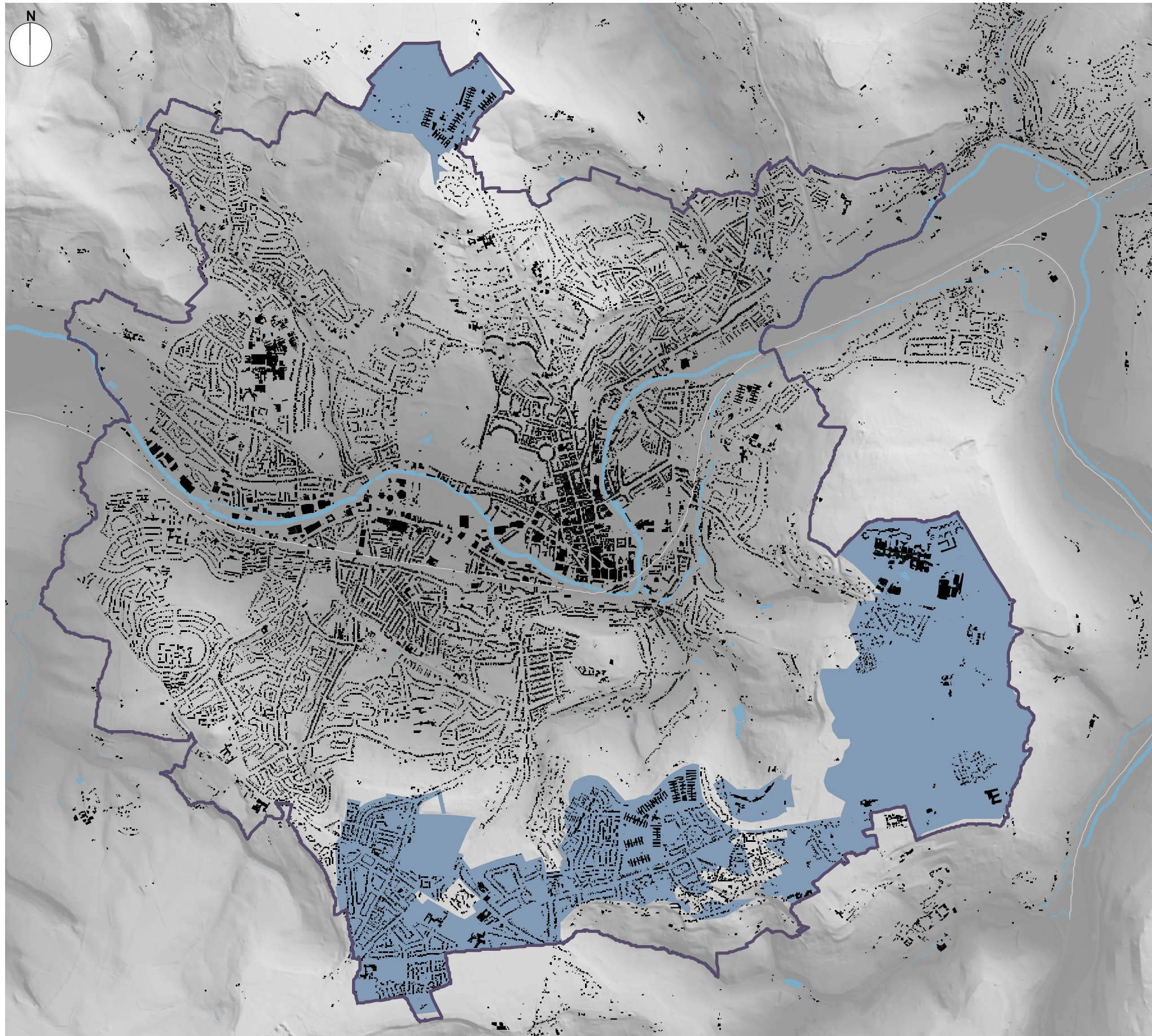
OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Roof form and detail and material should relate to its context.
- Site coverage, orientation, scale, form and relationship with landscape, form should relate to context.
- Buildings should be oriented to relate to the contours of the land.



Top: Bear Flat

Bottom: Hill Slopes in Twerton



- Z1 - Georgian city
- Z2 - Immediate setting of the Georgian city
- Z3 - Valley floor outside Z1 and Z2
- Z4 - Hill slopes outside Z1 and Z2
- Z5 - Plateaux outside Z1 and Z2

Figure 3.6: Plateaux

ZONE 5 – PLATEAUX

AREA DEFINITION

- 3.50 This zone is defined by the contour lines at the edges of the plateaux of Lansdown, Bathampton Down, Claverton Down, Odd Down, Combe Down. The omission of Southdown in this zone is deliberate as unlike the others it is almost completely covered with suburban development, giving a developed skyline.

RATIONALE

- 3.51 Some development has occurred on plateaux particularly where the urban area has expanded along routes and around historic villages. However, due to topography and tree covered plateaux edges development on plateaux is usually not visible in views from locations within the valley, on hill slopes or even on the plateaux themselves. This reinforces the OUVs and character of Bath as a city contained by the countryside and hidden in a valley.
- 3.52 A notable exception to this is the University of Bath, the taller elements of which can be seen from Alexandra Park.
- 3.53 The existing character of the plateaux is of a landscape dominated environment interspersed with built form. Generally, this built form is two-storey residential development, though it also includes two of the single storey MOD complexes and a number of mixed-use local centres.
- 3.54 New development that would be high enough to be visible above the tree cover, or too close to the edge of plateaux, would be detrimental to the OUV and therefore needs to be managed.

OBJECTIVES

- To protect and enhance the green and tree covered appearance of plateaux.
- To prevent visual intrusion of development into views from the urban fabric out towards the hills.
- To prevent visual intrusion of development into views from hills and plateaux onto the Georgian City and wider Bath and its setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended height

- Building shoulder height of 2 storeys.
- One additional setback storey is generally acceptable.
- At the University of Bath campus the recommended shoulder height is 4 storeys.

Modifiers

- 1 additional storey could be acceptable where it aids legibility, for example local centres, creates better enclosure or provides regeneration benefits and does not intrude into views onto plateaux by exceeding the height of the tree cover.
- 1 - 2 additional storeys above 4 storeys may be acceptable within the University Campus providing the buildings do not detract in townscape and panoramic views of the Georgian City and are not visible in any important views particularly in the views from Alexandra Park.
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the council and justification will be required on a case-by-case basis.

OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- It is advisable to define a cordon of non-development along with a landscape screen along the edge of the plateaux to prevent visual intrusion of development into the horizon line formed by plateaux edges and its vegetation from mid and long range views.



Top: View from Alexandra Park with University Buildings visible

Bottom: MOD Buildings at Lansdown



4 GLOSSARY

Source of definition shown in brackets. Where no source is indicated, the term has been defined by Urban Initiatives.

Character assessment (By Design)

An area appraisal identifying distinguishing physical features and emphasising historical and cultural associations.

Context (By Design)

The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

Density (By Design)

The floorspace of a building or buildings or some other unit measure in relation to a given area of land. Built density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); number of units or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; or a combination of these.

Form (By Design)

The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

Height (By Design)

The height of a building can be expressed in terms of a maximum number of floors; a maximum height of parapet or ridge; a maximum overall height; any of these maximum heights in combination with a maximum number of floors; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

Heritage asset (PPS5)

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in PPS5) and assets identified by the local planning

authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).

Landmark (By Design)

A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

Massing (By Design)

The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

Roofscape

The visual appearance of roofs (the area of a building above the eaves), including the way the components of the roofs combine together across an area.

Scale (By Design)

The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is used simply as a synonym for 'size'.

Significance (PPS5)

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Tall building (CABE/EH, 2007)

A building that is significantly taller than the prevailing height and falls out of context. It may also impact on the skyline.

Topography (By Design)

A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

Townscape (Dictionary of Urbanism)

The visual appearance of streets, including the way the components of a street combine in a particular locality.

Urban grain (By Design)

The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

5 REFERENCES

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