

Bath and North East Somerset Council
Development

Draft Twerton Character Appraisal Bath Conservation Area

June 2018



**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**



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1. Introduction and description of the Character Area

General description and form

This document is a character appraisal for the Twerton Character Area of Bath Conservation Area.

Twerton lies south of the River Avon about 1¾ miles due west of the centre of Bath. It was a village that developed by the 16th century into a significant centre of woollen milling and continued so well into the 20th century. On a hillside visible from many points, it makes a significant contribution to the green setting of the World Heritage Site

The Character Area is bounded to the north by the Twerton railway viaduct; to the west by Watery Lane, to the south by Kelston View and to the east by the footpath from Bath City Farm (the junction of Kelston View and The Hollow) to Shophouse Road.

The Twerton Character Area and the World Heritage Site

Core values and significances of Bath:

- Bath is a World Heritage Site, the only entire city in Britain to be so designated
- It is not a museum but a living city
- It has a remarkable degree of visual homogeneity
- Authenticity of the city is of the essence, and its preservation and enhancement should be key criteria for all new development
- Its complex and delicate hierarchy of interrelated urban spaces, landscape and architecture could be easily disrupted by overbearing or misinformed development and by the accumulation of harm.

Bath was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1987. The designation describes the city as “a masterpiece of human creative genius whose protection must be the concern of all”.

The World Heritage Site designation was awarded for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) with six cultural attributes:

1. Roman archaeology

Many of the City's Roman remains are centred around the Roman Baths. These include the archaeological remains of the Roman temple of the Goddess Sulis Minerva and the extensive bathing complex. The Roman town of Aquae Sulis was a walled settlement. Beyond the city wall are Roman and Iron Age remains including hill forts, field systems and villas, demonstrating the extent of the settlement. The road system and Roman street plan influenced the Mediaeval and Georgian layout.

2. Hot springs

Bath's hot springs are the only ones in Britain, producing 250,000 gallons of water every day. There are three main springs - the King's Spring, the Hetling Spring and the Cross Bath Spring. They have been central role to every stage of the city's development, creating a unique social history and culture where the waters are central to healing and recreation.

3. 18th century architecture

Neo-classical architectural style dominates in Bath. Architects including John Wood the Elder, John Wood the Younger, Robert Adam, Thomas Baldwin, John Palmer, John Eveleigh and John Pinch followed Palladian principles to build houses, public buildings, bridges and churches. The Georgian arrangements of crescents, squares, the Circus and terraces form iconic, internationally recognisable structures. The widespread use of local limestone and the uniform scale and height of buildings contribute to Bath's beauty today.

4. 18th century town planning

In the 18th century Bath was re-invented as a fashionable health resort, expanding dramatically beyond its city walls. Mediaeval streets were transformed into a spacious and beautiful classical city, where architecture and the natural landscape complemented each other. Uniformity of design was enhanced with the universal use of honey-coloured Bath limestone. Innovative forms of town planning including squares, crescents and the circus were introduced. Attractive views and vistas were deliberately created. Bath's Georgian town planning influenced subsequent developments in the UK and beyond.

5. Green setting

The City of Bath lies within a hollow of the hills. There are green views in every direction from the city centre. The countryside stretches right to Bath's doorstep. The hilly, green landscape was exploited by Bath's 18th century architects and developers, who created elegant terraces and villas on the slopes. The hills to the south of the city provided the oolitic limestone from which the city was built. Trees and woodlands populate the skyline, and lend natural beauty to the river, canal, parks and gardens. Open agricultural land on the edge of Bath is still used for grazing animals, just as it was by the Georgians.

6. Social setting

Bath's Georgian architecture reflected 18th century social ambitions. The city was a destination for pilgrimage, and for playing out the social aspirations of fashionable spa culture. The social, economic and physical re-birth of the city as an internationally famous spa resort was largely due to three key characters: the architect John Wood the Elder, wealthy postmaster and stone entrepreneur Ralph Allen and Bath's famous Master of Ceremonies Richard 'Beau' Nash. Visitors flocked to Bath. The list of famous and influential people who visited, lived in or wrote about the city is extensive. Customs and practices associated with 'taking the waters' were practiced and developed here. The fashion for promenading influenced the design of Bath streets and gardens. The rules and etiquette governing polite society were embodied in buildings such as the Assembly Rooms and Pump Rooms.

How does this Character Area contribute to the World Heritage Site?

1. Contribution to Roman archaeology

Twerton has contributed some scattered finds of Roman archaeology, evidence of its place in the network of scattered settlements along the Avon valley which supported *Aquae Sulis*. It is very likely that more such finds await discovery.

2. Contribution to hot springs - None

3. Contribution to 18th century architecture

Twerton offers some isolated examples of polite Georgian architecture such as Clyde House, formerly the Rectory. Its contribution to this OUV of the World Heritage Site is minor, as would be expected of an industrial village outside the orbit of the Georgian city.

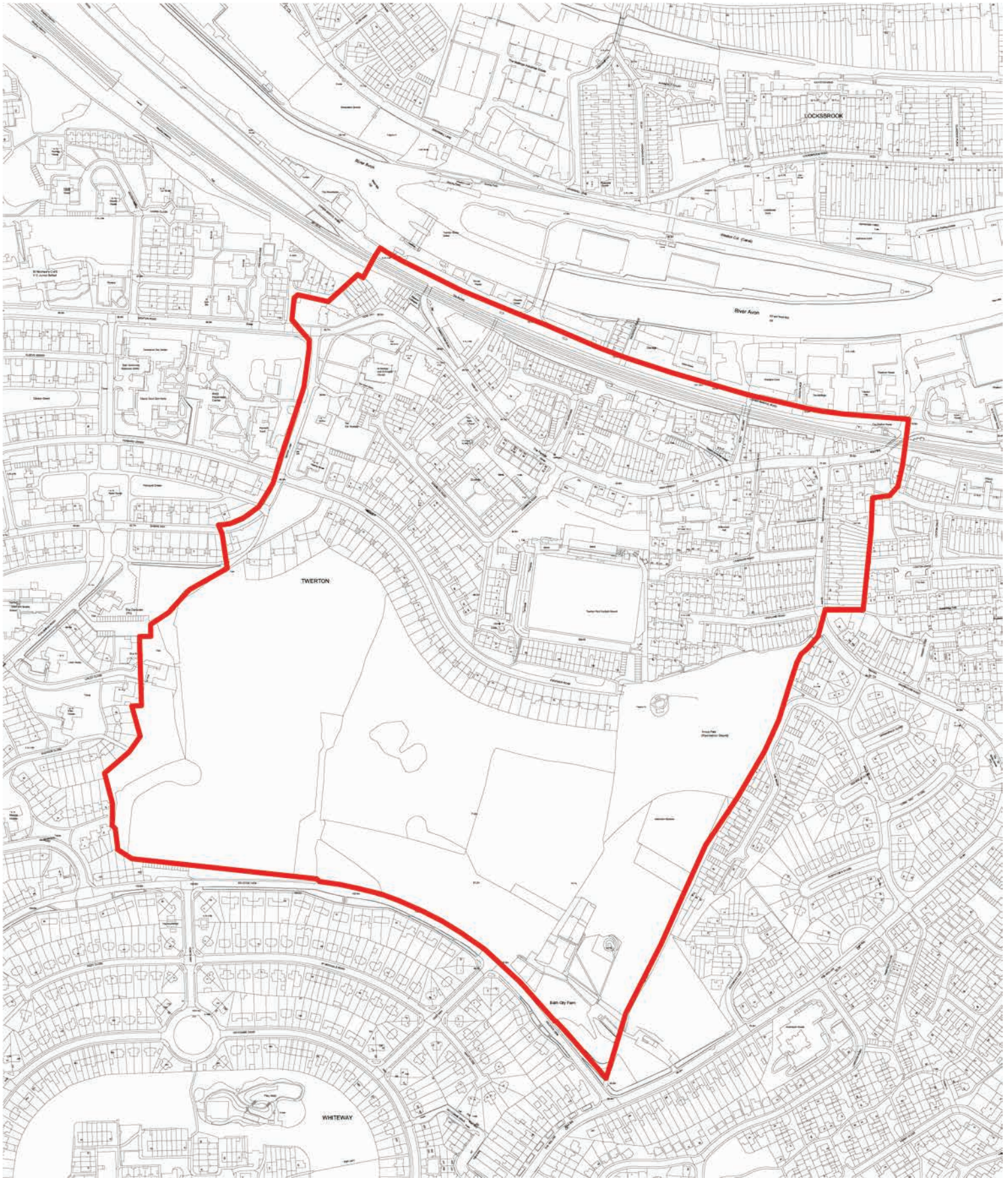
4. Contribution to 18th century town planning - None

5. Contribution to green setting

Twerton's major contribution and significance for the World Heritage Site is its importance as part of the continuous ring of green hillsides surrounding Bath. It is visible from the northern slopes of Lansdown, Beckford's Tower and is a key component in views south from Locksbrook, Newbridge and Weston. Further, it is also visible as part of the distant skyline from points on the hills east of the city centre; inappropriate development may therefore risk disruption to these significant viewpoints and to the integrity of the World Heritage Site.

6. Contribution to social setting

This Character Area makes only a minor contribution to this OUV: the presence of the house of Georgian author Henry Fielding (demolished) and mentions in Jane Austen's letters of Twerton as the destination for country walks may be cited. Twerton has been claimed as the birthplace of John Wood the Elder though this is disputed (he was christened in Bath not Twerton parish).



Twerton Character Area Map



2. Summary of key characteristics

- An Anglo-Saxon settlement possibly overlaying thinly scattered Roman sites.
- Mediaeval church mostly rebuilt in the 19th century
- On a steep north-facing slope c. 1 ¾ miles west of Bath city centre
- Intensive post-mediaeval industrial development as a centre of woollen milling
- Mill sites along the Lower Bristol Road redeveloped since the mid 20th century
- Bounded on the north by Brunel's 600 metre long Great Western Railway viaduct
- High Street has some remaining weavers' cottages c. 1700-1850
- Good small later Victorian housing in long terraces.
- Traditional materials: local Lias rubble or Bath stone; slate and clay tiles
- Vernacular buildings mixed with some polite 18th and 19th century housing
- Significant open spaces above the old village (Innox Park and Bath City Farm)



Twerton Character Area is broadly divided into three character types. First is the area of the Saxon/ medieval village between the High Street and the railway viaduct. It groups into two parts, one around the parish church and the other a quarter of a mile or so east, reflecting the two medieval manors around which the village developed, overlaying medieval archaeology and street lines. The character in both these areas is of vernacular houses, mostly 17th to 19th century in date, interspersed with a few polite Georgian houses, chapels, and around Shophouse Road and Mill Lane some late 19th century terraced houses of brick or Bath stone. These areas reflect Twerton's historical development as a centre of the woollen cloth trade.

The second character is of post-war construction, and consists of shops and flats along the central part of High Street connecting the two older areas. The same character continues south up the slopes around Shophouse Road, Watery Lane and Freeview Road, the beginning of Council-built and private housing estates which stretch south to Whiteway etc. These reflect the period of post-industrial transition as the cloth mills closed and Twerton became part of Bath's suburban hinterland, with big residential estates to accommodate Bath's expanding population and replace housing destroyed during the war.

The third character type is the green space in the south of the area (between Freeview Road and Kelston View) where the ground is too steep for building. Its use is divided between a recreation ground (Innox Park) and remnants of medieval field systems, with Bath City Farm at the top of the slope.

3. Historic development

Physical influences : geology, landform and drainage pattern

The lower slopes of the Twerton area are Lower Lias clays. Above the area covered by this report the higher ground is a mixture of rubbly Oolitic limestone and foundered strata of lower and middle Jurassic clay and limestone.

Twerton sits on a north-facing slope rising 140m from the River Avon. To the west the Newton Brook valley cuts through the main slope running out towards Newton St Loe creating a steep west-facing valley side, up which runs Whiteway Road.

Historic influences

The modern name Twerton has superseded the former name of Twiverton, supposed to be derived from the Old English 'two ford town'. In Saxon times there were two manors and, although unified as a single parish in Mediaeval times, evidence of two core areas of the village was apparent until recent times.

Roman and Anglo-Saxon Twerton

Given the proximity to the hot springs, the Roman spa of Aquae Sulis and the Fosse Way (which ran through Oldfield Park to the east), settlement around Twerton probably consisted of scattered farmsteads. A Roman villa with a fine mosaic pavement was uncovered in 1837 about a mile away near Newton St Loe. Two coffin burials dated c. 400 AD were discovered during the construction of Argyle Terrace on Lower Bristol Road in 1872. Two manors were evident in Saxon land holdings. The western manor around the parish church had a farm and a corn mill on the Avon (later Lower Mill, roughly north of How Hill). The eastern manor had its mill (later Upper Mill) at the north end of Mill Lane; its site was cut off from Twerton by the railway viaduct and was recently rebuilt with housing.

Mediaeval and Early Modern Twerton

The Domesday survey records that in 1086 Twerton was owned by Geoffrey Bishop of Coutances, and held by two subtenants; Geoffrey Malregard's lands were valued at £3, Nigel de Gournai's at £10. The font and north doorway of the parish church are the only known Norman survivals. By the 16th century the two mediaeval corn mills were used for fulling cloth woven in Bath. The fulling mills are listed in Bath Abbey's records from the thirteenth century. The Lords of the Manor had never been resident in Twerton. Erosion of mediaeval manorial rights was evident by the late 17th century. Twerton remained in Wellow Hundred and outside the administration of the city of Bath until 1911.

Bath's explosive growth in the 18th century influenced Twerton's economy. The Bath Turnpike Trust administered the main road (High Street) west to Bristol from 1707 and in 1727 the Avon Navigation Scheme enabled river traffic between Bath and Bristol. Two mills north of the Avon opposite Twerton were converted to brass production. Twerton's Upper Mill began producing fine fabrics under the ownership of the Sperring family from c. 1720. Associated with the mill was a rack close for tentering (stretching the cloth to

dry after fulling). The rack close for drying cloth is indicated by the surviving street name of 'Rackfield Place' (see below). The Lower Mill produced leather and writing paper. Maltings also sprang up near the river. New housing was largely small scale and vernacular in style (e.g. Chilcott's Buildings, High Street), intended for industrial workers and unrelated to Bath's polite Georgian architecture.

By 1787, the upper mill was manufacturing serge with machinery including spinning jennies and a gig mill, an early use for south-west England (machinery was introduced in the north in the 1760s). By 1790 it was producing worsteds, and by 1802 a new six-storey mill was built. An adjoining 'Cloth House' was probably built later. Together they had a combined total of working floor space to 44,000 square feet. These buildings were still standing in the 1930s.

Twerton c. 1800-1940

Charles Wilkins was Twerton's major cloth mill owner by about 1820, owning most of the village and both mills. In about 1838 he built Wood House for himself west of the village (Woodhouse Road now marks the approximate site). Wilkins's estate was bought by the Carr family in 1847; they remained in control of local affairs into the mid-20th century.

The Great Western Railway (GWR) Company was created in 1835 to provide a double-track line from London to Bristol via Bath. Construction of the Bristol – Bath section took place in 1836-40. Land reserved for an unbuilt extension of the Kennet & Avon canal in 1809 was purchased by the GWR; Twerton viaduct follows its route. Twerton railway station was built against the north side of the viaduct, near the point where the viaduct crosses High Street. It was closed in 1917 although the building survives. The southern end of Rackfield Place was demolished for the viaduct. At its western end Brunel incorporated twelve small mill workers' cottages into the arches beneath the viaduct, as recompense to Wilkins for the loss of his housing at Rackfield Place. The old Twerton vicarage (now Clyde House) north of High Street was bought by the GWR and leased to a curate until a new Neo-Tudor style vicarage south of the church was built in 1845 by the architect G.P. Manners.

The cultural and historical impact of the railway's arrival in 1840 was significant. It linked the village symbolically and physically with the centre of Bath, yet at the same time the viaduct cut Twerton off from the riverside and mills. Later the main Bath to Bristol Road (now the A4) was rerouted along the north side of the viaduct. The viaduct acts physically and psychologically as a wall, cutting off the old centre and protecting the village from the worst of today's traffic depredation. This has contributed significantly to Twerton's distinct sense of local identity.

Typically for a working-class and industrial community, Nonconformity was a major force in the early 19th century. Chapels were built for the Baptists (Mill Lane, 1808), Methodists (1816) and for the Zion Free Methodists in 1853. The parish church was enlarged by John Pinch in 1824-5, and the nave completely rebuilt in 1839. The 19th century work was replaced in 1885-6 by Edmund Buckle, diocesan architect and the illegitimate son of Twerton's former vicar. The mediaeval tower, Norman font and doorway were incorporated. In 1854-5 a parochial school was built opposite the railway station; the architect was C.E. Davis.

East Twerton was developed on farmland from the mid-19th century (outside this Conservation Area but significant for Twerton's development). A new gaol was built in Caledonian Road in 1840-2; it closed in 1879. East Twerton was incorporated in the city in 1864

and by the 1890s the open fields were covered by terraced housing, joining Twerton with the city. The 1885 Ordnance Survey map shows that the central section of Twerton High Street (i.e. from Clyde House to Chilcott's Buildings) remained largely unbuilt on both sides of the road. Innox Park was given by the Carr family in 1909 as a public park. Twerton became part of the City of Bath in 1911. In 1932-3 Bath City football club played its first season at the Twerton Park ground, having purchased the land about three years earlier.

Twerton after 1940

Twerton suffered considerable damage in the 'Baedeker' bombing raids of April 25-26th 1942. The railway lines, gas works and riverside industries were bomb targets but many bombs fell wide, hitting Twerton and especially in the east towards Oldfield Park. Church Farm and Eleanor Place on High Street were hit. 26 people were killed at Roseberry Road and the parochial schools were destroyed.

Major changes occurred c. 1950-80. The cloth trade had been in decline for decades and the mills finally closed in 1954. The Upper Mill buildings were mostly demolished by about 1970. The Carr estates were compulsorily purchased in March 1945 and Wood House was demolished in 1965. The lands were developed from c. 1950 with council housing schemes on the slopes to the south and west of Twerton.. The High Street was redeveloped extensively with concrete and reconstituted stone buildings of little merit. Large housing estates were built on sites west and south of Twerton, infilling formerly open agricultural land and changing the setting of its village character significantly.



4. Cultural influences

Industrial and commercial concerns have shaped Twerton significantly over its history. Medieval corn mills were converted to woollen cloth production by the 16th century and continued into the 20th century. Road improvements in the 18th century and the building of the Great Western Railway (1840) shaped Twerton's development physically and culturally. The association since the 1930s with Bath Football Club's ground has been the major sporting association.

5. Archaeology

The village of Twerton is mentioned in Domesday and incorporated into Bath. The mediaeval village which was situated on a gravel terrace was divided into Upper and Lower Twerton. Elsewhere there were largely water meadows belonging to Twerton Parish prior to the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These have subsequently been built over. The alluvium has been raised through dumping prior to redevelopment and the alluvial deposits and underlying gravel are consequently largely untouched. There is therefore a high potential for prehistoric and possibly Roman archaeology.

6. Landmarks and views

See map, Annex 1

Landmarks

The Character Area is a small one with relatively few landmarks:

- Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels (listed II*)
- Great Western Railway viaduct (listed II)
- Twerton Park football ground (unlisted)

Views

The area has many views and panoramas along streets, from public spaces, between buildings towards the Georgian city and to the higher undeveloped hillsides on the opposite side of the Avon valley.

For the most part housing layouts were not designed to capture or make a virtue of these views. Some streets higher up the slopes (e.g. Kelston View) are clearly designed with the outlook in mind. Freeview Road is said to have been named because it afforded a free view of football matches at Twerton Park.

Kelston View offers extensive views across the whole of Bath city centre and its skylines west, north and east.

The following are important views from within the Character Area:

- How's Hill: views to Kelston, Lansdown ridge and Beckford's Tower
- Shophouse Road: view of Lansdown ridge.
- Freeview Road/ Innox Park: glimpses of the northern part of the Georgian city, including Royal Crescent and Lansdown Crescent.



- Freeview Road: views east towards Claverton and the skyline around Bath University.
- High Street: glimpses via Mill Lane etc. of the railway viaduct to the north.

Most of this Character Area is visible from Beckford's Tower. In addition the football ground stands are visually prominent from many points outside the Character Area and from within it. The floodlights also have a significant impact especially when illuminated at night. Twerton's open and wooded slopes are visible from the western outskirts of the city centre, with glimpses from the Western Riverside and towpath, and good views from building gaps in Locksbrook and on Newbridge Road.

7. Land uses and their influence

Twerton is a residential area overlaid onto a much older landscape around the former village of Twiverton or Twerton on Avon. The old village has been subsumed into the city by extensive housing development.

Industrial activity along the riverside has shaped Twerton's identity and character until the late 20th century.

High Street accommodates local shops and commercial services, with many buildings having residential flats over the shops.

Innox Park forms a significant open space for recreation. Bath City Farm is a significant land use on the upper part of the slope. Twerton Football Club is the major public sporting/events land use in this area.





8. Buildings, architectural quality and townscape

Building Age

Twerton High Street contains strong reminders of the former rural village, with 17th and 18th century buildings among intrusive redevelopment post-1945. Throughout the area there are individual and small groups of 19th century housing. Some relate to historic roads and tracks that have survived the comprehensive residential development. Later housing highlights the changing trends of the 20th century, such as council housing on Freeview Road, built 1950.



The High Street shows occasional signs of its 19th century past as a centre for local shopping and leisure, e.g. a good Victorian shop front at No 12 High Street, and the Old Crown pub with its unspoiled frontage.

The Baptist Chapel, Mill Lane (early 19th century) and Zion Free Methodist chapel, High Street (1853) are evidence of the strength of Nonconformity here. Simple late Georgian details, round-arched windows, and the avoidance of Gothic or 'churchy' details, typify the form of chapels at this time. There are few secular public buildings of any architectural significance, as would be expected given the history of the settlement.

Building form



Twerton High Street has a small-town urban character with continuous frontages of two and three storey buildings. The grain of building is generally fairly open, although subsidiary and commercial buildings around rear lanes and yards increase the density around Mill Lane and Twerton Farm Close.

Residential development is mostly of two-storeyed houses interspersed with occasional blocks of flats of three storeys. Pre-1914 housing is generally terraced, with only occasional detached or semi-detached villas. Housing from c. 1914 – 1960 tends towards semi-detached houses which offered space, light and air reflecting the values of the time. Development post-1960 is often at increased densities, in short terraces and with occasional blocks of flats usually of three storeys.

Twerton Park football ground is visually prominent due to its form, height and materials.



Buildings of merit

Significant buildings listed here are purely indicative of character. They are not a complete list and the omission of any building does not denote lesser importance.

Anchor buildings

See map, Annex 1

- Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels (listed II*)
- Great Western Railway viaduct with the old Station building and Nos. 1-13 The Arches, Lower Bristol Road (listed II)



Other listed buildings of historical/townscape significance

- Parish church rooms (former Sunday School, 1816), How Hill (listed II)
- Hope Cottage, How Hill (listed II)
- Full Moon public house, How Hill (listed II)
- Old Vicarage, Watery Lane (listed II)
- Clyde House, High Street (listed II)
- Rose Cottage, High Street (listed II)
- Zion Free Methodist Chapel (former), High Street (listed II)
- 20-23 High Street (listed II)
- The Old Crown public house, High Street (listed II).
- 132 and 133 High Street (listed II)
- 11-18a High Street inclusive (listed II)
- 145-146 High Street (listed II)



Unlisted buildings of merit

There are a number of examples of unlisted buildings which are important to the character area. These buildings are indicative of character. They are not a complete list and the omission of any building does not denote lesser importance.

Unassuming stone-fronted 19th century terraces e.g. 10-29 Shophouse Road, and houses in Orchard Terrace, Landseer Road and Highland Road (built c. 1885-1900).

Freeview Road houses: these seem to be related in style and planning to the Moorlands estate (designed by City Engineer J. Owens and Paul Kennerel Pope, chief assistant architect, c. 1947-50). The Moorlands estate was highly regarded at the time as balancing respect for Georgian tradition with honest modernity.



Townscape features of merit

The raised pavement in front of the Full Moon public house, How Hill is a survivor of a once common feature in Twerton.

Freeview Road/ Shaw's Way junction is a spacious planned streetscape that typifies the high quality of post-Second World War public housing and planting.

Buildings at risk

None identified

Negative buildings and townscape features

Twerton Park football ground is architecturally and visually intrusive, although socially significant for the community. The building type is usually expected to be utilitarian in terms of style and materials.

The car parks north of the football ground are gravelled, with potholes, and generally in poor repair. Boundaries to the rear of High Street shops are in poor condition and generally unattractive.

The central north side of the High Street (c. Nos 68 – 115) consists of flats over shops of concrete / blockwork and render construction, mostly built c. 1955 – 80. Their design is neither overtly modern nor

in harmony with the character of the older village, and as a group their effect is deadening and largely negative. Some suffer from maintenance problems and appear down-at-heel.

Cracked and damaged paving on parts of the High Street is probably caused by delivery vehicles and shoppers parking on pavements.

The large and prominent electricity substation opposite the churchyard (junction of How Hill and Connection Road) is unattractive and not mitigated by screening.

Road signage can be intrusive, e.g. outside the churchyard at the north end of Watery Lane.

9. Materials and detailing

Twerton High Street and village remnants display a traditional vernacular and generally show little influence of Bath's Georgian fashions. Rubble and ashlar are used for walls with clay pantiles and slate roofs. The High Street retains small pockets of historic materials such as pennant kerbs.

Lias Limestone was quarried in the parish. It is recognisable as a creamy-white or grey stone, sometimes with a friable surface on weathering. It is much in evidence in the village as rubble stone masonry used for housing pre-1850.

The Great Western Railway viaduct is constructed of local Lias limestone and blue-black engineering brick with Bath stone dressings, materials not generally characteristic for Bath. It forms a characterful and distinctively industrial boundary to the area. The Twerton Wood tunnel portals are of Pennant sandstone with Bath stone dressings.

After the mid-19th century, Lias was largely abandoned in favour of Bath stone which became the most usual facing for housing e.g. the small terraces around Shophouse Road.

Post-Second World War building is often of reconstituted Bath stone which at least matches reasonably well in terms of colour, but fails to weather like natural stone and has a dead and rather 'mechanical' texture. Concrete tiles are much in evidence for roofing.

Architectural details on housing before c. 1870 are often quite simple and show signs of the local vernacular: e.g. three-storey weavers' cottages in High Street, some with two or three-light mullioned windows; other windows updated with two-leaf sashes.

In the late 18th and early 19th century house fronts were more commonly of Bath stone ashlar, following the building trend in the city of Bath. The sides and backs were still built of rubble stone, as was the case in the city, clearly denoting a hierarchy of significance in buildings designed to be seen from the street. In the later 18th century upright sash windows rather than mullioned casements become the norm, with small panes arranged six over six or eight over eight. Where the wall surface is Bath stone ashlar, windows often have no frame (i.e. a simple hole in the wall). Occasional examples exist here of rubble stone walls with an unmoulded ashlar window frame sitting flush with or just proud of the wall surface (e.g. Chilcott Buildings, High Street). This treatment is found on the rear of Clyde House, High Street, and elsewhere. Sash windows are occasionally treated in pairs, separated by a narrow stone mullion but generally not linked by any frame or canopy. Many sashes had glazing bars removed after the mid 19th century, as plate glass became cheaper with the removal of glass tax. Houses of c. 1850-1914 invariably have plate glass two-leaf sashes.

Entrances to housing pre-1850 often consists of a simple opening in the wall with no frame, or with a narrow ashlar frame flush with the wall surface. Occasionally there are simple door canopies on curved and shaped brackets. Shallow moulded door hoods on scrolled brackets become common after 1850.

External doors may have four or six panels, with or without raised

moulded surrounds. There are occasional simple plank doors without embellishment (e.g. No. 14 High Street).

Rose Cottage, High Street, is a Neo-Tudor villa of c. 1830-5 with shallow-pitched roofs, Tudor-arched openings, iron-framed diaper patterned casements and square hoodmoulds. A number of cottages were built in this style around How Hill, of which Rose Cottage is the only survivor.

The mid C20 developments display a strong design approach to layout and elevations. Inter-war estates such as Whiteway are built using natural Bath stone range work with dark mortar and clay tiled roofs. The mansard-roofed houses on Kelston View (c. 1939) are the only part of this estate that borders the Conservation Area.

From about 1960 onwards there is an obvious reduction in quality with a move towards much higher densities but with no specific architectural approach. Modern development on the High Street has been insensitive, using reconstituted Bath stone, painted render and concrete tiles and often relates poorly to the road.

Front boundary treatments are diverse, including open, informal shrub planting, hedges, reconstituted stone walls and chain link fences. Occasionally there are good quality iron railings, e.g. the raised pavement on the east side of Shophouse Road.



10. Streets and movement

Density and degree of enclosure

The historic core of Twerton is highly enclosed with two and three storey buildings abutting the pavements. This breaks down in places with modern development set back from the road.

The Garden City and “Homes for Heroes” movements influenced the early housing developments e.g. Kelston View, at the southern boundary of the Character Area. They were built to low densities by providing greens and garden space. These areas have a spacious feel with houses set back from the roads, views between the houses and generous open spaces. This visionary planning created a memorable urban form which is reflected too in post-1945 developments such as those around Freeview Road and Shaw’s Way.

More recent private and social housing developments have built to higher densities and lower quality and consequently have not created such memorable places.

Street pattern

The open space from Innox Park southward up to Bath City Farm is the only substantial survival of the historic field system.

Streets tend towards two types: those that follow the contour lines across the slope, roughly east-west (e.g. Twerton High Street, Kelston View); and those that follow roughly north-south lines up and down the slope, possibly along the lines of ancient depressions caused by drainage patterns or human activity (e.g. Watery Lane, Shophouse Road). A third type might be defined as infill, which may lie in any direction.

High Street is the remainder of the ancient high street of the former village of Twerton. Nearby historic routes surrounding the area include Newton Road, The Hollow, Mount Road and Englishcombe Lane.

Planned housing such as the Whiteway estate centred on Haycombe Drive adopted geometrical layouts (concentric curves, connected loops, etc.) following the example of the Garden City movement. Kelston View forms part of the northerly boundary of this estate, which was under construction in 1939. These layouts were generally inward looking and the plan geometry is difficult to appreciate on the ground.

Later housing development was often based on cul de sacs as typified by Freeview Road, c. 1950.

High Street forms the main area of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, with significant volumes of vehicles leaving and entering the area via the narrow bridges beneath the railway viaduct onto Lower Bristol Road. Short-term parking is generally on-street or in the car parks of Twerton Park football ground behind the shops.



Public Realm

The predominant materials within the public realm are tarmac and concrete. Small areas of stone kerbs and traditional paving exist around High Street. South of High Street is a large area of car parking associated with the football ground. It is part tarmac and part gravelled.

Around Watery Lane are more open post-war streetscapes with plentiful grass verges, with tree planting singly or in small groups.

Vitality and tranquility

Twerton High Street is a busy and vital place with a high degree of pedestrian activity especially on market days. Football adds extra life on match days.

With the exception of Twerton Hill Farm (also known as Bath City Farm) the remainder of the area is residential and is therefore quieter. Play areas in the open spaces display signs of anti-social behaviour.

The frequent mainline trains on the viaduct contribute to the noise and sense of activity around the High Street, creating a sense of connectedness with the world at large.

11. Trees, open space, parks and gardens



Trees and vegetation

Trees were planted as part of the consciously planned set pieces e.g. the junction of Watery Lane and Pennard Green; these now have a significant impact. Kelston View is lined on its north side with small trees, hedging and areas of low woodland on the City Farm lands, giving it a semi-rural character.

The churchyard of Twerton parish church has a fine grouping of statuesque trees including conifers, yews and lime trees. Nearby at the west end of Freeview Road is a broad area of grassland planned as part of the post-war housing schemes, bordered with groups of small trees such as sycamore and cherry.

Open space and parks



Twerton Hill Farm, also known as Bath City Farm was listed under the Localism Act (2011) as an Asset of Community Value on April 9, 2013.

Bath City Farm on the north-facing slope overlooking the Avon valley is a remnant of the historic field system. This undeveloped area is of city-wide visual importance breaking up the Twerton townscape. Innox Park, although more manicured in character, is contiguous with the fields higher up the slope. At night this area appears as a 'pool of darkness' surrounded by the Twerton street lights.

The Character Area also has plentiful groupings of larger trees bordering the hillside above Twerton. These are a significant contributor to the wider landscape setting and to the immediate area.

Private gardens

Trees and shrubs in private gardens make a considerable but uncoordinated contribution to the character of the area.

12. Night-time character

Twerton's night-time character is predominantly quiet and residential. There are few evening venues other than a small number of pubs. Twerton Park football ground has bars and function rooms for hire which cater for evening events; there are also occasional evening sports and other functions such as boxing matches.

Inside the 'barrier' of the railway viaduct vehicle traffic is mostly limited to local residents and people returning home from work or leisure activities beyond Twerton. The streets have relatively little pedestrian activity at night.

The expanse of open space south of the High Street forms a pool of darkness in a brightly lit city suburb.

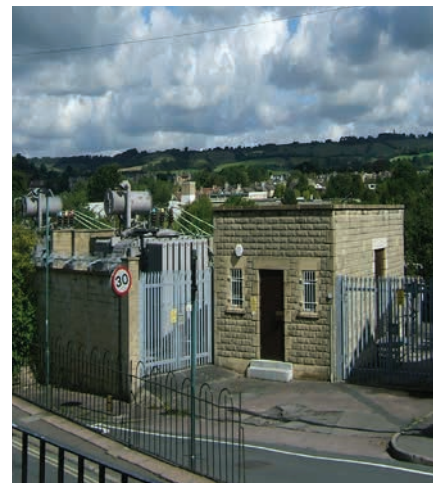
13. Issues affecting the Character Area

What are the assets of the Character Area?

- Evidence of a robust local identity and specific history still reflected in the built environment.
- A core of local shops and business around the High Street give a sense of vitality.
- The presence of Twerton Park football ground as a potential driver for Twerton's economic and social development.
- Recent high-density housing development along Lower Bristol Road will generate an influx of residents who are potential customers of local facilities and businesses.

What are the weaknesses of the Character Area?

- The busy Lower Bristol Road and the railway viaduct create a physical and psychological barrier between Twerton and the new residential developments on the former industrial sites to the north.
- Twerton suffers undeservedly from a neutral-to-negative reputation as a place to live and visit, by comparison with other residential areas of Bath.



- The High Street has a disjointed quality because of its historic development as two separated areas of village buildings, with the central section infilled only since the 1940s.
- Unattractive development in the central section of High Street has a dispiriting effect.
- Widespread use of uPVC glazing and doors erodes the vernacular character.

What opportunities exist to improve the area?

- Encouraging improvements to the building quality and detail in the central section of High Street thereby upgrading the built environment of the Character Area.
- Upgrading the Twerton Park car parks and the appearance of the buildings facing it as a means of improving the area's attractiveness for visitors and residents.
- Impact assessment of proposed developments should include consideration of views into the Character Area from the sensitive Bath skyline and on views outward from the Character Area.
- Developments could better address the fine views north towards Kelston, Beckford's Tower, the Lansdown ridge and the Claverton skyline.
- Development of better crossings and pedestrian management on Lower Bristol Road to encourage a flow of users between the new residential areas and High Street.
- Identification and recognition of undesignated heritage assets of architectural and historic interest.

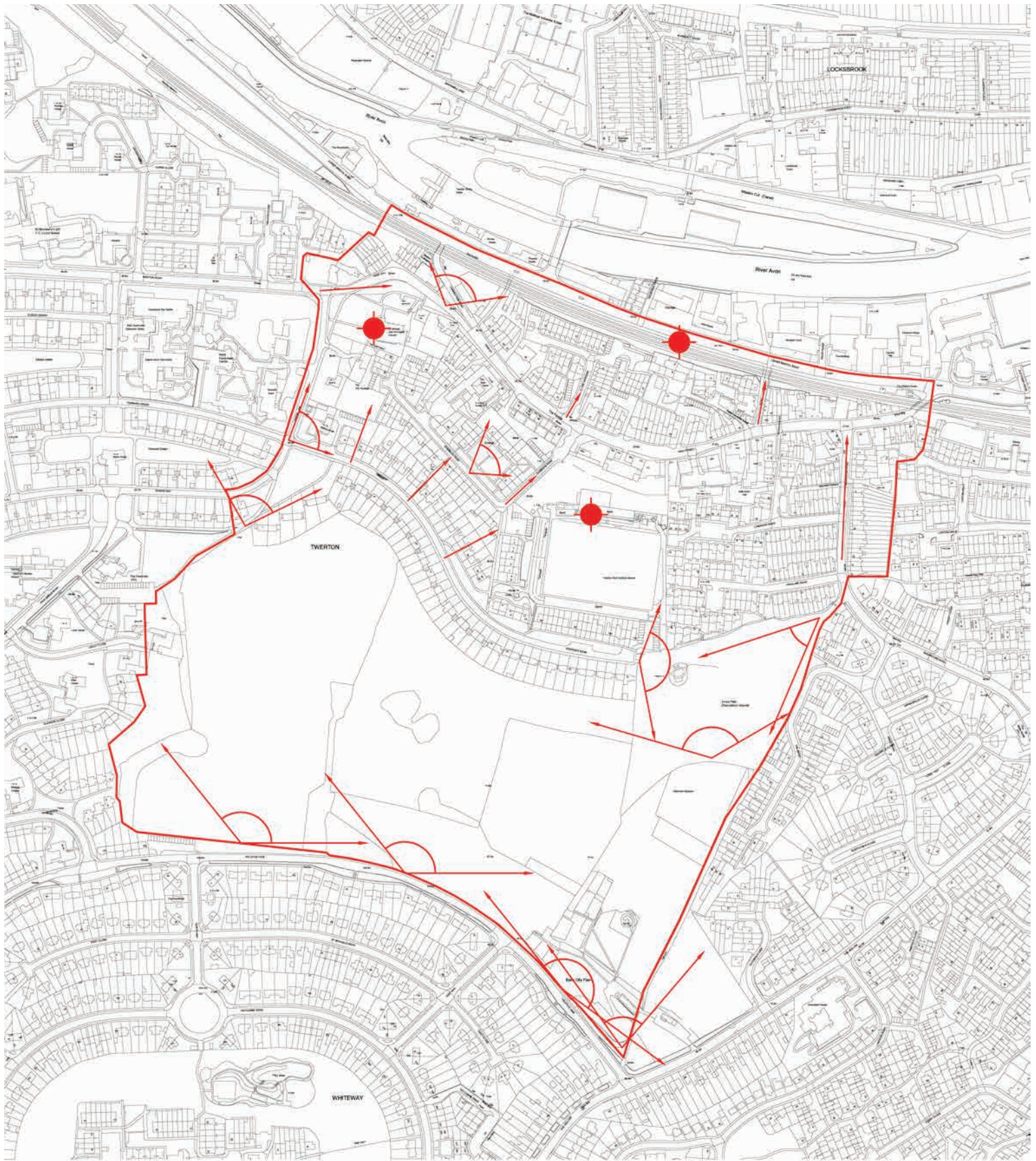
What factors may be seen as threats?




- Poor quality and unattractive development along High Street may erode the area's character further.
- Traffic levels in this area may lead to erosion of the historic fabric with pollutants likely to cause surface damage particularly to Bath stone.
- Gentrification may encourage a tendency to add formal Georgian architectural treatments and features to conversions of mews buildings or other relatively low-status buildings; such features are historically inappropriate to such building types and erode their specific meanings and visual qualities.
- Unsympathetic alterations to unlisted buildings are a threat to the character of the Conservation Area as a whole and specifically to this Character Area.
- Building height of new development exceeding the traditional limits of Bath's historic core and disrupting the hierarchy of public and private buildings.
- The spread of uPVC double glazing and doors on and around

the High Street may further erode the special quality of the historic buildings in the area.

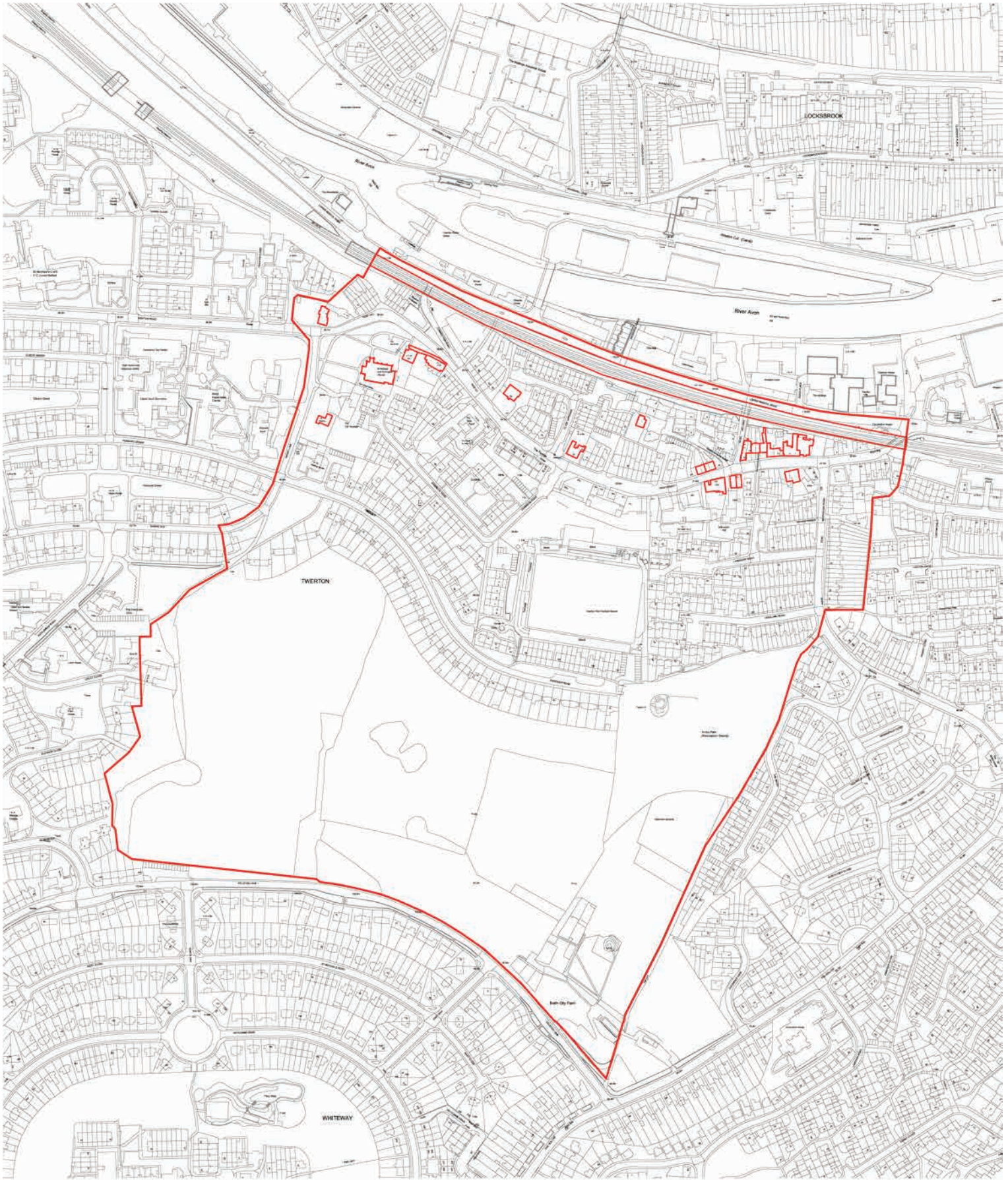
- The impact of the Great Western Railway line electrification on the appearance of the line and its historic structures.

Annex 1 - Maps

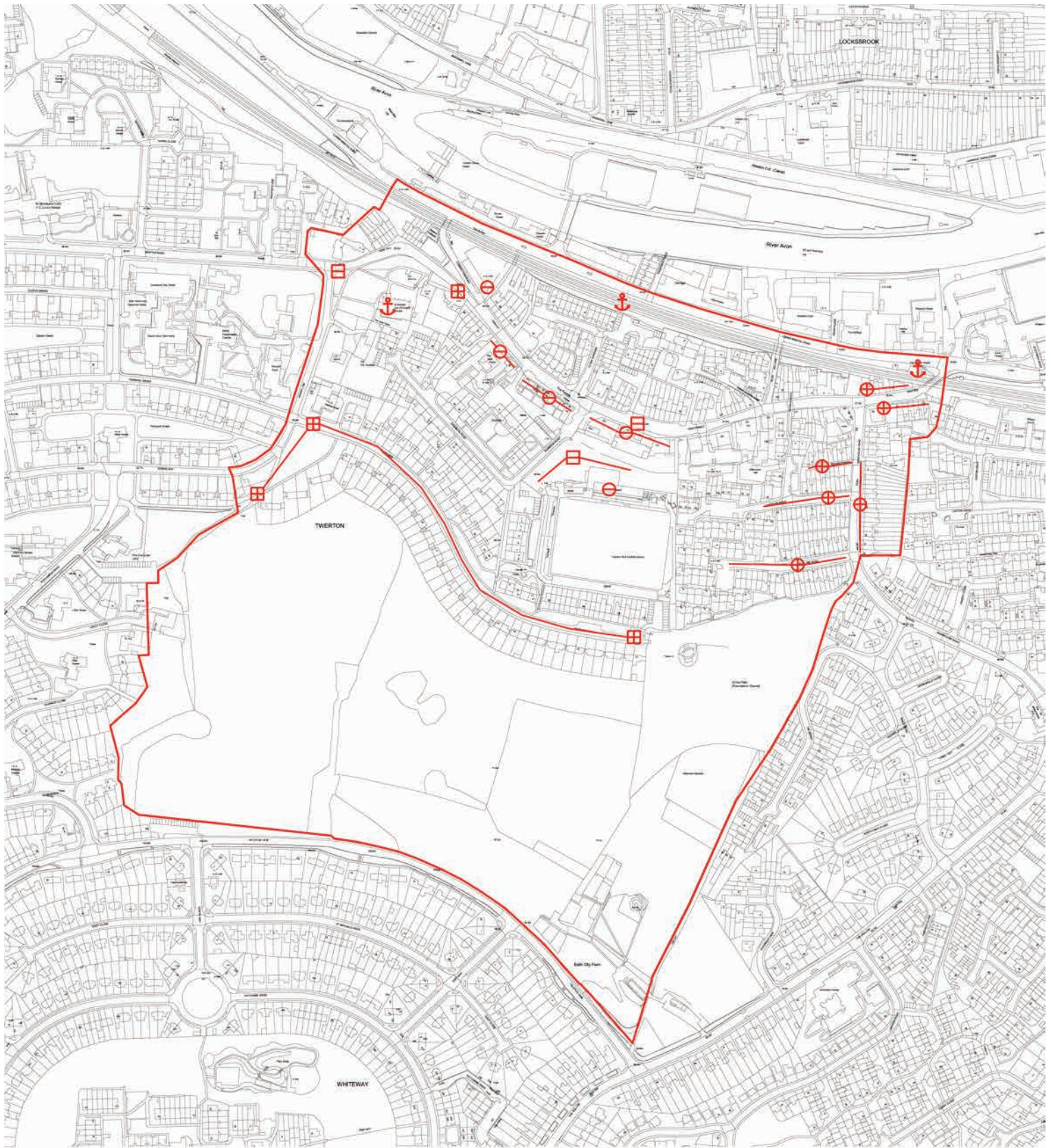


- Key:**
-  : Landmarks
 -  : View
 -  : Panoramic view

Landmarks and views



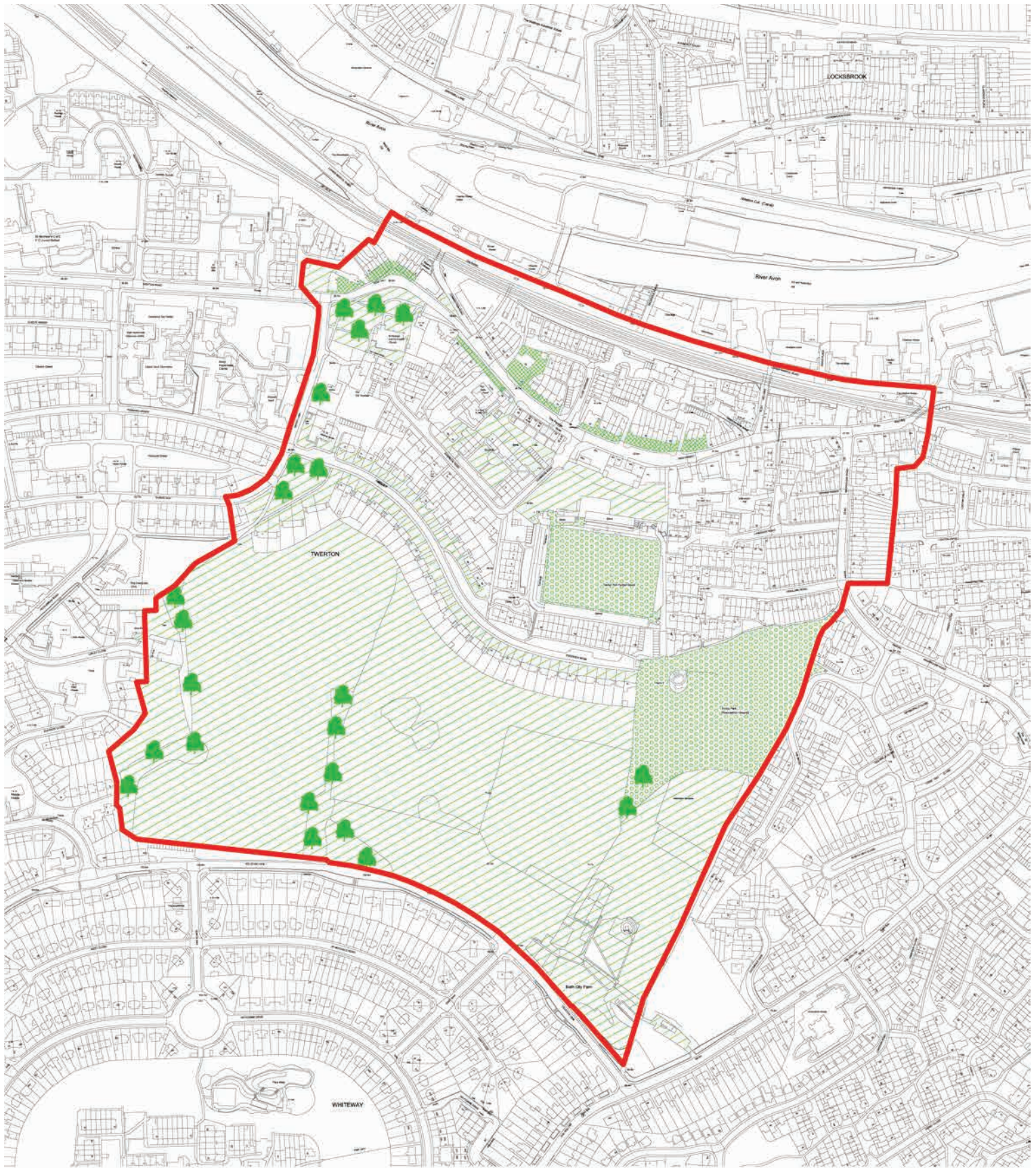
Listed buildings



Key:

- ⊕ : Unlisted building of merit
- ⊖ : Negative building
- ⊞ : Positive townscape feature
- ⊠ : Negative townscape feature
- ! : Building at risk
- ⚓ : Anchor building
- : group/included

Townscape features



Key:

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

Trees, open space,
parks and gardens

Annex 2 - Context

A conservation area is designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The quality and interest of the area as a whole, rather than individual buildings, is the main consideration when designating such areas.

Section 71 of the Act requires the local planning authority to periodically formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas within the district. Section 72 requires that in considering applications for development in a conservation area, attention shall be paid to the desirability of conserving or enhancing the character of that area.

Conservation area appraisals are considered by Historic England to be vital to the conservation of these special areas. More detailed policies are to be found in the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy and draft Placemaking Plan.

Annex 3 - References

Mike Chapman, The High Street, Twerton; An Historical Survey, (B&NES council, 2003) provides a more detailed account, from which some information here is condensed. http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/historical_survey_-_high_street_twerton_part_1.pdf

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