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ALBERT PARK CONSERVATION AREA, ABINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE - CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Preamble

This draft Conservation Area Appraisal has been produced by Roger Thomas (Friends of Abingdon Civic Society) and Grant Audley-Miller, under the auspices of a Working Group convened by Abingdon Town Council. This Working Group was originally chaired by the late Councillor Jeanette Halliday, and latterly by Councillor Dr Jim Halliday. The draft has been produced for submission to the Vale of White Horse District Council. The District Council, as local planning authority, is responsible for the designation, review and appraisal of Conservation Areas. Following internal review, it is anticipated that the District Council will undertake public consultation on the Conservation Area Appraisal, including on the proposals to extend the Conservation Area, and to make some other small modifications to its boundaries. The consultation responses will be taken into account when producing a final version of the Appraisal, which will then be considered for formal adoption by the District Council.

Please note that the adopted version of the Appraisal will include a range of photographs to illustrate some of the key characteristics and features of the Conservation Area.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Appraisal is to define the special interest which warrants the designation of the Albert Park area as a Conservation Area. This includes the quality and distinctiveness of the place, derived from its character and appearance. The appraisal will lead to a better understanding of the area and what makes it the place it is today, as well as providing the basis for positive management of the area in the future.

Albert Park Conservation Area was designated on 24 February 1975, primarily to protect the character and appearance of Albert Park and the well-preserved Victorian residential suburb which encircles it. The designation boundary is shown on **Map 1**.

This appraisal defines both the special interest of the Conservation Area as originally designated, and the special interest of a proposed extension to the Conservation Area.

1.1 Acknowledgements

This Appraisal is the result of a joint project between Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council and the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society. The project was overseen by a Working Group, chaired initially by the late Councillor Jeanette Halliday, and latterly by Councillor Dr Jim Halliday. The principal authors were Roger Thomas (Friends of Abingdon Civic Society) and Grant Audley-Miller (heritage consultant and formerly

Conservation Officer with the Vale of White Horse District Council). Jackie Smith (Honorary Archivist with Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council), also contributed to the text. The other members of the Working Group were: Tom Ayling (then a Governor of Christ’s Hospital of Abingdon), Bryan Brown (Albert Park Residents’ Association), Louise Brown (then at Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council), Councillor Lorraine Oates, Gillian Kent (then the Clerk of Christ’s Hospital of Abingdon), Nigel Warner (then the Town Clerk, Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council).

2. Planning policy framework

2.1 National

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review their boundaries. Such areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Local authorities also have a duty to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing” that character or appearance in their planning work. A Conservation Area is also a material planning consideration under National Planning Policy which consists of the NPPF (2025) and the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

2.2 Local

The development plan currently comprises the [Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2](#). Additional supplementary planning documents and other relevant policy can be found on the Council’s website. In December 2024, the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils submitted their Joint Local Plan 2041 to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

2.3 The effects of Conservation Area Designation

Conservation Area designation is the means of recognising and protecting all the features that contribute towards the special character or appearance of the conservation area. Extra controls apply in conservation areas. These include controls over demolition, reduced permitted development rights and special protection for trees.

Further information can be found on the Council’s website:

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/building-conservation-and-design/conservation-areas/>

2.4 Public Consultation

Public consultation is an important part of the process of reviewing Conservation Areas and undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals. Views are sought on the content of this document, with a period of public consultation running from [date] to

[date]. [To be completed when the draft document goes out to public consultation.]

3. Summary of special interest

The Albert Park Conservation Area is a well-preserved example of a high-quality planned Victorian suburb, with a large Grade II Registered Park & Garden at its heart. Key characteristics include:

- a unified plan, mainly dating to the 1860s, which was then developed to include a broad range of housing types and statuses, along with community facilities (including three schools, two churches, a small chapel, shops, a dairy, a bakery and a public house).
- strong coherence and good preservation. The 19th century layout survives almost entirely intact. Almost all the housing dates from between about 1860 and 1912, and very little has been demolished since then.
- the Albert Park itself, a Grade II Registered Park & Garden which forms the heart of the Conservation Area. A monument to Prince Albert forms a focus within the Park, which contains many mature trees.
- the orderly and symmetrical layout of the area.
- wide roads with kerb-free grass verges and mature trees and shrubs in and around the Park.
- medium to large detached or semi-detached houses of Victorian and Edwardian date, some of them of some architectural distinction, fronting onto and facing over the Park.
- two Victorian churches (one with its associated Hall and Keeper's House).
- an overall feeling of greenness and spaciousness around the Park.
- informal and low-level recreational activities in the Park (*ad hoc* games, picnics, walking, sunbathing, dog-walking). There is also a bowls club in the Park.
- a peaceful and safe pedestrian environment around the Park (especially Park Crescent with generally limited traffic). The area provides a quiet route for pedestrians and cyclists, linking Abingdon town centre with areas to the north and west.
- the institutional buildings (both Victorian and Edwardian, but also including recent modern additions) and playing fields of Abingdon School.

- an area of more modest terraced and semi-detached Victorian and Edwardian housing (“residences for artisans and mechanics”) on a grid plan to the south of the Park. These form part of the overall suburb.
- former commercial and institutional premises that served the suburb and nearby areas.
- considerable unity in the architectural styles and range of building materials present throughout the suburb as a whole. Many of the key buildings in the suburb were the work of a small number of known architects.

4. Assessment of special interest

4.1 Location and setting

The Albert Park Conservation Area is situated just outside Abingdon town centre (which is separately designated as the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area). The two conservation areas have a very short stretch of common boundary. On its west, north and east sides, the Albert Park Conservation Area is largely bounded by Spring Road, Faringdon Road and Bath Street respectively, although the Conservation Area boundary also takes in a small area on the west side of Spring Road and a larger area on the north side of Faringdon Road. On its south side, the boundary takes in Exbourne Road, Edward Street and Bostock Road. It also includes Conduit Road, Mayott’s Road and Victoria Road to their junctions with Ock Street (Map 6).

4.2 General character and plan form

Within the framework provided by existing roads (and the rear boundaries of properties on Ock Street and Bath Street) the suburb has a very clear and symmetrical plan form. An east-west road (Park Road), straight, broad and tree-lined for most of its length, runs from Bath Street to Spring Road. This provides the major east-west axis of the suburb.

Two roads – Conduit Road and Victoria Road – run north from Ock Street, parallel to each other, both intersecting at right-angles with Park Road. Each roadway continues northwards and then curves around to form a crescent (Park Crescent) enclosing the Albert Park. A short length of road runs from the top of this crescent onto Faringdon Road. This road is on a north-south axis; the monument to Prince Albert, the main entrance to the park from Park Road and St Michael’s Church also lie on this axis (as does, although slightly offset, St Michael’s Avenue, to the south of the church).

South of Park Road, Bostock Road, Exbourne Road and Edward Street provide further east-west axes, linking Spring Road, Victoria Road and Conduit Road to form something of a grid of streets.

This layout provides the structure for the house plots (mostly long and rectangular) and other buildings and uses.

4.3 Landscape setting

The land slopes down gently from north to south (from around 60 m OD in the north to about 52m OD in the south). At the rear of properties on the west side of Park Crescent, the land falls quite steeply down to Spring Road. It is possible (as indicated by the name) that there was formerly a watercourse on the line of Spring Road, but there is no trace of one now. There is also a significant drop in level down to Faringdon Road at the north-eastern end of the Conservation Area. The southern part of the Conservation Area is more or less level down to Ock Street.

4.4 Communal value

The Conservation Area and its amenities are much valued by the community. Albert Park itself is used for a variety of recreational activities by both those living in the immediate vicinity and people from slightly further afield. Running, dog-walking, sun-bathing and informal games are popular, and there is also a bowling club in the Park. The Park and the roads around it are also much used, and valued, as part of walking routes to and from Abingdon Town Centre. The two churches in the Conservation Area are used for concerts, lectures and other events, as well as being popular places of worship. Carswell School is a popular primary school, and Abingdon School is a well-known institution, drawing pupils from the local area and from further afield. A variety of events open to the general public also take place at the school. The Royal British Legion in Spring Road, is a much-liked place for socializing. Finally, the Conservation Area is a popular place to live, reflected in strong house prices.

5. Historic development and archaeology

5.1 The origins and historic development of the area

Until the 1860s, the area was almost entirely in agricultural use. Conduit Field was one of the open fields of Abingdon from medieval times onwards, and remained as farmland until development of the suburb began in the 1860s. The field took its name from a 16th century stone conduit house, built as part of a system to supply water to Ock Street and which still stands today. In medieval times, Conduit Field was owned by Abingdon Abbey. In 1553, almost all of it passed to Christ's Hospital, as part of the original endowment of this important Abingdon charity. It was then owned continuously by Christ's Hospital until the 1860s. Much of the land still belongs to the charity (including Albert Park itself), and some house plots are held on long ground leases from Christ's Hospital.

Conduit Field was bounded by what are now Spring Road, Faringdon Road, Bath Street and the rear boundaries of the properties on the north side of Ock Street. More agricultural land lay beyond Spring Road and Faringdon Road to west and the

north.

Historically, there were some buildings on the west side of Bath Street. No 64 Bath Street is medieval in origin, and probably marks the approximate limit of the built-up area of the medieval town. Beyond to the north was Lacies Court, a farmhouse apparently 16th century in origin, and Waste Court (now known as Austin House), an 18th century house with possibly earlier origins and various outbuildings.

5.2 *The establishment, growth and historic interest of the Albert Park suburb*

The Albert Park suburb originated in a Charity Commissioners' scheme of management for Christ's Hospital, produced in 1859. Projects specified in the scheme included a recreation ground, allotments, a site for a new church and infant school, and the relocation of Abingdon's grammar school ('Roissey's', now known as Abingdon School) from the town centre. These projects were to take place on Conduit Field.

Work on the recreation ground started in 1860. It seems likely that the roads which provide the basic framework for the suburb (Park Crescent, Park Road, Victoria Road and Conduit Road) were laid out at this time, as part of an overall plan, as they define the shape and extent of the recreation ground. Conduit Road and Victoria Road were linked to Ock Street by the demolition of Christ's Hospital-owned properties on Ock Street. Christ's Hospital acquired property from other owners to create the main entrance to Park Road from Bath Street, and the alignment of Park Road here reflects pre-existing boundaries. At the Bath Street entrance, two lodges were built, one on each side of the new Park Road.

Once the main roads of the new suburb were in place, houses and other buildings began to be built on plots lining them. Some additional roads were also laid out within the basic framework mentioned above (Edward Street, Exbourne Road, Bostock Road and St Michael's Avenue). Bostock Road was originally called Bostock Avenue, and was a private road controlled by Christ's Hospital until 1936. In some cases, plots were sold to builders on long ground leases (900 or 999 years), with leases being sold on after the houses had been erected. Christ's Hospital still owns the freeholds of some of these plots.

Edward Street and the south side of Exbourne Road were built on land which was in a different ownership, but Christ's Hospital acquired land so that the two streets could connect with Victoria Road. They were clearly seen as part of the same overall development. The houses and other buildings of these streets were constructed at the same time as the rest of the suburb, between the 1860s and 1906.

A significant part of the suburb was given over to the buildings and playing fields of Roissey's Grammar School (named after its 16th century founder, John Roissey, but now known as Abingdon School). The school moved here from the town centre in 1870, although it may have been some years before all the land to the north and south of Park Road became the school's playing fields.

Public buildings in the suburb included St Michael's Church (1864-67), Trinity Methodist Church (1873-75), Abingdon School (1868-70 onwards) and Carswell School (1865 onwards). Local facilities were also provided in the area of Edward Street and Exbourne Road: two corner shops, at the junctions of Spring Road with Edward Street and Exbourne Road respectively, a public house on Spring Road (the Prince of Wales, now the Royal British Legion club), a bakery in Edward Street and a dairy on the junction of Victoria Road and Edward Street. There was also a 'tin tabernacle' (corrugated iron chapel) on the north corner of Edward Street and Spring Road. This is recorded in directories as being in use by the Primitive Methodists in 1876 and 1883. The building still survives but was given new cladding in the 1980s.

A sequence of Ordnance Survey plans (1874, 1899 and 1912) shows how the area was gradually built up. One of the houses in Edward Street has a date plaque of 1867 on it. In a newspaper advertisement in 1861, Christ's Hospital was offering building plots in the new suburb for both "cottages .. for mechanics and artisans" and "villas". This shows that it was intended from the start to house a range of social classes. In 1876, the proposed cottages in Victoria Road and Ock Street were described as being "suitable for artisans and labourers".

By 1912, almost all the houses which now stand in the Conservation Area were in existence. Very few have been demolished since, and there has been relatively little infilling either. Where this has occurred, it has been on plots which, for whatever reason, had not previously been developed, or by sub-dividing and building on the gardens of existing houses. The Albert Park suburb is therefore a very well-preserved example of a mid-Victorian to early 20th century suburb of an English market town (Map 3).

The Park itself was to a design by a Mr I.W. Chapman of Dulwich. His design had a Latin name, 'Commune Bonum', which translates as 'The common good'. This perhaps give an insight into the philosophy behind the development. The Albert Memorial in the Park was designed by John Gibbs of Oxford. St Michael's Church was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, and Trinity Methodist Church by W.H. Woodman. Abingdon architects Edwin Dolby, Harry Redfern and J.G.T. West were responsible for a number of buildings in the Conservation Area, including Abingdon School, Carswell School and various houses (one of them Dolby's own residence), while Woodman was also responsible for some of the housing.

Overall, the new suburb provided housing for a range of classes, from some of the most prosperous citizens of Abingdon to middle managers, craftspeople and labourers. It also provided a range of community facilities and commercial premises, as described above. There was also a cottage hospital, now demolished, on Bath Street. Its site is now occupied by the Mercer's Court building of Abingdon School. The suburb illustrates the role of the Christ's Hospital charity in providing housing (including what might now be called 'social housing'), along with recreational and other facilities, for a range of classes of people.

The suburb also shows how the different classes were spatially separated. This was in contrast to the situation in the pre-existing built-up area of the town, where quite prestigious dwellings on the one hand, and ‘courts’ of very poor dwellings on the other, stood in fairly close proximity to each other. There was a clear south-north trend in this social separation within the new suburb. The more modest houses were closest to Ock Street, with progressively larger houses going northwards; the largest and most prestigious houses were on the highest ground on the north side of the Park.

The Albert Park Conservation Area reflects some of the important themes and concerns of Victorian England: rising middle class prosperity, an emphasis on education and religion, gradations of class, the provision of good housing, and the provision of recreation grounds open to all.

5.3 *Archaeology*

The Abingdon area is rich in archaeological finds of all periods. There are no records of any discoveries being made during the construction of the Victorian park and residential suburb, but archaeological observation or investigation ahead of new development was not routine at that time in the way that it is now. It is therefore quite possible that items of archaeological interest were missed in the 19th century. Just outside the Northern boundary of the Conservation Area, three ring ditches (considered to be the remains of Bronze Age burial mounds) have been recorded by aerial photography in the playing field on the north side of Faringdon Road.

Roman and medieval remains have been found (some in the course of developments undertaken by Abingdon School) on the east side of the Conservation Area. The Roman material presumably forms part of the large but rather poorly understood Roman settlement which lies under much of the present-day centre of Abingdon. The medieval material relates to occupation on the northern edge of the medieval market town of Abingdon; 64 Bath Street, which abuts the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area, is in origin a medieval timber-framed building.

5.4 *Changes since 1975*

Most of the Conservation Area has been little altered since it was designated in 1975. An exception to this is in Character Area 2 (Abingdon School – buildings and playing fields). Here, the School has constructed a series of substantial buildings (see below). These have changed the character of that part of the Conservation Area which is occupied by the school; however, the area still merits Conservation Area designation.

6. Spatial analysis

6.1 *The character and inter-relationship of spaces within the area*

The Albert Park Conservation Area has a strong spatial structure, defined by the main roads, by the division between the residential area and park on the west and the buildings and playing fields of Abingdon School on the east, and by the division between the larger houses on and to the north of Park Road and the more modest ones to the south of it. The houses on the north-east shoulder of Park Crescent, while in the ownership and use of the School, form part of the residential area in historic and visual terms.

There are four large areas of open space: Albert Park itself, and three areas of Abingdon School playing fields: south of Park Road, north of Park Road in front of the 19th-mid-20th Century school buildings, and north of those buildings running up towards Faringdon Road. The school buildings are separated from this last area of playing fields by Roysse's Alley, a walled alley and public right of way which links Park Crescent to Bath Street.

Wide, tree-lined and kerb-free verges (Park Road and part of Park Crescent), including the verges on Park Crescent and Park Road outside the perimeter hedge to Albert Park, are also important. So too are the private gardens; some of these, especially in the northern part of Park Crescent, are very large. The houses around the Park are mostly built to common building lines, set back behind substantial front gardens; this helps to maintain the sense of spaciousness which is important to the character of the area.

The Albert Memorial in the Park, St Michael's Church in Park Road, Trinity Methodist Church in Conduit Road are important focal points in the overall layout. Carswell School in Bostock Road is also a significant feature in the street scene.

The area of housing in the southern part of the Conservation Area is set out on something approaching a grid pattern of roads, with terraced and semi-detached dwellings. Only Bostock Road (with St Michael's Avenue) has grass verges. The houses in Edward Street and on the north side of Exbourne Road front directly onto the pavement, while those on the south side of Exbourne Road, and the terraces on Victoria Road, have only small front gardens.

Within the overall housing stock of the suburb, there is a clear south-north trend in terms of density and status. Closest to Ock Street (and Spring Road) are mostly fairly modest terraced houses. As one moves northwards through the suburb, the houses, and the plots, become progressively larger: semi-detached houses on the north side of Bostock Road, some larger semi-detached houses on the south side of Park Road, larger ones still on the south-west side of the Park, and most of the largest houses on the north side of the Park.

6.2 *Key landmarks, views and vistas*

The Albert Memorial, set on the north-south axis of the Park, St Michael's Church which is on Park Road at the other end of that axis, Trinity Methodist Church, which

has a spire, on Conduit Road, and the Victorian buildings of Abingdon School in Park Road are important landmarks within the Conservation Area, providing focal points for some of the main views.

The key views and vistas fall into four main categories (see [Map 3](#)). The first is the views along Park Road (including views of Trinity Church), and up and down Conduit Road, Victoria Road and Park Crescent. Looking up Park Crescent, one has views of the Park and substantial houses around it; this view unfolds as one moves round the Crescent. Looking down Conduit Road or Victoria Road, one can see the buildings of Ock Street; this links the Conservation Area to an older part of the town. At the west end of Park Road, there is a view out to the Italianate eastern part of Spring Terrace on the opposite side of Spring Road; the Conservation Area boundary takes in the end of this terrace. The view along the road which links the top of Park Crescent to Faringdon Road is also important; it looks towards three large Victorian houses, set in large plots with mature landscaping, on the opposite side of Faringdon Road. These houses and their gardens are included in the Conservation Area.

The second is the views within the park, especially from the path along the southern side, northwards across the area of open grass to the focal point of the Albert Memorial, and from the Albert Memorial southwards across the open grass to St Michael's Church and the houses on Park Road.

The third set of views are from Park Road across the playing fields to the buildings of Abingdon School (to the north) and the rear of Ock Street (to the south). In the former view, the gap between the school chapel and the block of buildings to the east is particularly important, because it is open and unobstructed, enhancing the sense of space and openness. In the latter view, the spire of St Helen's Church is clearly seen, providing a visual link with the historic heart of the town.

The fourth set of views are those along Bostock Road, in both directions, where the width of the street and tree-lined verges are important aspects. The louvre on the roof of part of Carswell School also provides something of a focal point in the street scene.

7. Character analysis

7.1 Definition of character areas

Four main character areas (CAs) can be defined (see [Map 5](#)):

Character Area 1 – Albert Park and Park Road

This includes Albert Park itself, along with the houses overlooking it on Park Crescent and on Park Road (much of which directly faces the Park, forming its southern boundary). Many of the houses are large, and set in large plots, often containing mature trees. The houses on Park Crescent are predominantly detached, with a

smaller number of semi-detached ones. Most of the houses date to the late 19th century. This Character Area extends north across Faringdon Road to embrace three large Victorian houses in large plots. These can be glimpsed from the road which connects Faringdon Road and Park Crescent, and they are included to protect this vista.

There are large detached houses, built of 'crazy paving' stone, on the corner of Park Road and Conduit Road. That on the eastern side of Conduit Road was originally the manse for Trinity Methodist Church. On the south side of Park Road, semi-detached houses overlook the Park, with St Michael's Church at the midpoint (on the central axis of the Park). The houses to the west of the church, so further from the town centre, are larger than those to the east.

Also included are the houses on Park Road to the west of Victoria Road, and on the northern parts of the north-south axial roads of Conduit Road and Victoria Road. These houses are mostly semi-detached, with a small number of detached houses. Almost all pre-date 1912. Plot sizes vary but are generally smaller (and the houses correspondingly more modest) than those on Park Crescent. This Character Area includes, on the south side of Park Road, a short terrace of 19th Century houses which fronts onto the east side of Spring Road. Character Area 1 also extends across Spring Road to include the eastern end of the Italianate Spring Terrace opposite the end of Park Road. This protects an important vista out of the Conservation Area.

This Character Area also includes a row of mainly semi-detached villas on the north side of Park Road between the main entrance to the School and Stratton Way. Opposite, on the south side of Park Road and enclosed by a high stone wall, is part of the former grounds of Stratton House, an 18th century house which itself lies in the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area. The grounds were severed from the house by the building of Stratton Way in 1969. The Net, a 20th century brick built local authority building, now occupies part of this area, which also includes a grotto associated with Stratton House. The grotto is listed by virtue of being in the former curtilage of Stratton House. While the Net building is not of architectural merit, its grounds, with grass and mature trees, link it to the rest of the Conservation Area.

Before the construction of Stratton Way, a pair of lodges flanked the entrance to Park Road from Bath Street. The north lodge was demolished for Stratton Way. The former south lodge still stands, on the opposite side of Stratton Way from the Albert Park Conservation Area. It is included in the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area.

Character Area 2 – Abingdon School (buildings and playing fields)

This includes the buildings and playing fields of Abingdon School. The playing fields give an impression of spaciousness, and are an important part of the Conservation Area. Arranged around and between the playing fields are the large institutional buildings of the school. These are in a variety of styles, dating from between 1870 and the early 21st century. The school buildings are of a markedly different scale to

the domestic buildings that characterize most of the rest of the Conservation Area.

The oldest of the school buildings is 'Big School' designed by Edwin Dolby (built in 1868-70, extended in 1878-80). Adjoining its east end is a further extension, including a chapel, by J.G.T. West (1901-2). To the east again is a detached block, built in the 1950s and originally flat-roofed. It was re-modelled, to add a pitched roof, gables and new windows in about 1990. On Park Road is the School Lodge, designed by Harry Redfern and modestly extended in the late 20th century.

Also within this Character Area are the older buildings of Lacies Court and Waste Court (the latter now known as Austin House). Austin House had a large extension added to it in about 2020.

A number of other buildings have been constructed by the School in the years since the Conservation Area was designated (1975). These include the new dining hall adjacent to the original 1870 block; the Amey Theatre (1980); a new sports hall and swimming pool north of Austin House (1984); Mercers Court on Bath Street (1994); the Yang Science Centre on Faringdon Road (2015); the Beech Court sixth form block adjacent to Lacies Court (2018); large extensions to 21 Park Road and Austin House (2023); and a pavilion north of the Amey Theatre (2023). Most of these buildings are of contemporary design, many using modern materials.

While the houses on the north-east part of Park Crescent are now owned and used by Abingdon School, in terms of character they form part of Character Area 1. Although the gardens of two of the houses have had parts of their boundaries removed, and have been partly encroached on by other uses, the houses are still, in terms of character and appearance, clearly part of the Victorian residential suburb, and distinct from the more substantial institutional buildings that are predominant on the school site.

Character Area 3 – Suburban Housing and Carswell School

This Character Area is focused on Bostock Road, and also includes St Michael's Avenue, the east side of the southern part of Victoria Road, the southern part of Conduit Road, and Mayott's Road and the terrace of houses on its west side.

Bostock Road has grass verges with trees at regular intervals along it. The houses on both sides have front gardens. Although some of these have been paved over, the overall appearance is of a well-vegetated area. St Michael's Avenue has wide grass verges with some trees.

On the north side of Bostock Road are semi-detached houses with small front gardens and long gardens at the rear.

The housing on the south side of Bostock Road consists almost entirely of a single terrace, Tesdale Terrace, built by Christ's Hospital in 1895, to a design by local architect J.G.T. West. Apart from changes to doors and windows, the terrace is little

altered; most of the small front gardens also retain their original low brick walls.

The eastern part of the south side of Bostock Road is occupied by the buildings and playgrounds of Carswell School, which was a Board School. The first building (1865) was by Edwin Dolby and, adjoining to the west, a later part (1902) is by Harry Redfern. There is a detached two-storey brick-built building in the grounds. This was originally the 'Abingdon Manual School', opened in 1909.

Access to the school site was once via Mayott's Road, a short road which leads off Ock Street. This was constructed by Christ's Hospital in 1901, so that children going to and from the school would not disturb the residents of Bostock Road. At the time, Bostock Road (then called Bostock Avenue) was still being developed, and was a private road owned by Christ's Hospital. The surviving short terrace on the west side of Mayott's Road seems to have been built at about the same time.

On the east side of Victoria Road, to the south of Bostock Road, is a terrace of houses built by Christ's Hospital (for "artisans and mechanics") to a design by W.H. Woodman. They have small front gardens. The brickwork is elaborate. A pair of houses in the same style, and very clearly part of the same scheme, front onto Ock Street and are included in the Conservation Area.

The part of Conduit Road which lies in this Character Area has on its east side a mixture of semi-detached and detached houses. One pair of semi-detached houses is of cream coloured brick, with a roof of alternating bands of red clays tiles and slates, and ornamental ridge tiles and finials on the gables of the porches and bay windows.

Character Area 4 – Urban Housing

This includes the terraced housing on Exbourne Road, Edward Street, the west side of Victoria Road and the east side of Spring Road (between Edward Street and Exbourne Road), along with some associated buildings. In terms of layout, Edward Street and Exbourne Road seem integral to the overall Albert Park suburb, but the development history is slightly different. In the first half of the 19th century, a block of land here was owned by the Quakers. Subsequently, local industrialist John Creemer Clarke apparently played a significant role in developing this area. This is reflected in the former names Exbourne Place and Exbourne Terrace, and now in the street name Exbourne Road (Exbourne being Mr Clarke's home village in Devon).

Victoria Road, Edward Street and Exbourne Road do not have verges. All of the houses in Edward Street, and those on the north side of Exbourne Road, front directly onto the pavement, while all the rest of the houses in this Character Area have only small front gardens at most.

The houses are almost all terraced. Materials are, as elsewhere in the Conservation Area, mainly red brick and clay tiles, sometimes with stone dressings. Some roofs (especially in Edward Street) are of slate. Some wooden sash windows remain, although many have been replaced.

Edward Street contains a mixture of two- and three-storey houses. It seems to have been built as a series of individual developments, of between two and seven houses each. One has a date stone of 1867, and the whole street had been built up by 1874.

Exbourne Road is made up of two long terraces. Both are of two and half storeys. The one on the south side had been built by 1874, that on the north side was built in about 1906. There was formerly a corner shop (now converted to residential use) at the Spring Road end of the 1906 terrace; an associated store building survives adjacent.

The building (now a house) on the south side of the Edward Street-Victoria Road junction was once a dairy. Adjacent to it in Edward Street is a building that was once a bakery, now in residential use. There is a corner shop on the south side of the Edward Street-Spring Road junction.

On the north side of the Edward Street-Victoria Road junction is a modern functional metal building, in commercial use. This was originally a corrugated iron 'tin tabernacle' chapel. It was given new cladding in the 1980s and is in commercial use. On the south side of the Spring Road-Exbourne Road junction is the former Prince of Wales public house, now a Royal British Legion club. Between these two buildings, on Spring Road, is a terrace of five two-storey houses fronting directly onto the pavement.

On the west side of Victoria Road, between Exbourne Road and Edward Street, are two terraces. One is of six tall town houses of four storeys (including a half-basement). Unusually for the area, they are faced in cream-coloured brick, possibly London stocks. They had been built by 1874. The other terrace is a modern, flat-roofed block, probably dating to the 1960s. Materials include buff-coloured brick and hung tiles. The houses have integral garages, with driveways and small garden areas opening onto onto the pavement. Historic mapping indicates a timber-yard here in the 19th century, along with a house on Edward Street called Claremont Villas, now demolished.

To the south of Edward Street, adjoining the former dairy building, is Rose Cottage, which has a small front garden and an attractive iron porch and balconies. Adjoining this to the south is a terrace of five two-storey houses. All these had been built by 1874.

The perimeter walling

Finally, although not a character area in its own right, the perimeter of the Conservation Area merits separate mention. Much of it, particularly on the western, northern and eastern boundaries, is marked by stone walls, often quite high. This helps to create a strong sense of separation between the Conservation Area and the areas around it.

7.2 Activity and prevailing or former uses and their influence on the plan form and buildings

Four main classes of activity take place in the area: domestic (in houses and their gardens), recreational (in and around the park), educational, including sporting (at Abingdon School and Carswell School) and community-based (at the two churches and at the Trinity Church Hall buildings). There is also some commercial activity, and the social focus of the Royal British Legion (formerly a public house) on Spring Road. All of these uses were established in the 19th century, in buildings and spaces designed for these purposes. Movement within and through the Conservation Area can be seen as a further class of activity. Some of this is movement to and from premises (houses, the schools, the two churches) in the Conservation Area. Park Road, Park Crescent and the Park are also popular routes for pedestrians and cyclists, linking the town centre with northern and western parts of Abingdon. The gates to the Park from Faringdon Road and Spring Road are kept permanently closed, which prevents Park Road and Park Crescent from being used by through traffic.

7.3 The qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area, description of dominant architectural styles, prevalent types of buildings and periods of buildings

7.3.1 Early buildings

Only three buildings in the Conservation Area certainly pre-date the 1860s: the Conduit House, Waste Court (now known as Austin House) and Lacies Court. The first two are listed (Grade II). A fourth building, a grotto in the grounds of the Net (formerly part of the grounds of Stratton House) may well pre-date the 1860s, as it seems to be shown on the OS 1/500 Town Plan of 1874. This structure is listed by virtue of being in the former garden and curtilage of Stratton House, which is listed at Grade II; the former garden is now severed from Stratton House by Stratton Way (built in 1969).

7.3.2 Housing

The great majority of the buildings in the Conservation Area are houses built between 1860 and 1912. They are quite homogenous in terms of the range of materials used and styles present, but there are many differences of design and detailing. In scale and embellishment, houses vary from quite modest terraced ones in Edward Street up to some very large and quite elaborate detached ones in Park Crescent.

Houses are mostly set in rectangular plots, the long axes of which are usually at right angles to the street. Many of the houses have a front garden and a much longer rear garden. In some cases (especially the larger houses in Park Crescent) there are service buildings in the gardens. Some of the terraced houses in the southern part of the area (Edward Street, Exbourne Road, Spring Road) front directly onto the pavement.

The houses around or close to the Park are all detached or semi-detached, and of two or three storeys. In some cases there are attic rooms lit by dormer windows, some of them the result of recent loft conversions. To the south of the Park, housing predominantly consists of terraces and semi-detached dwellings. Terraces range from simple short terraces on Spring Road and Victoria Road through to the impressive Tesdale Terrace on Bostock Road, with considerable variety in between.

The buildings are predominantly of red brick (with some use of polychrome brickwork) or stone (some of Corallian type, probably from quarries a few miles west of Abingdon). In a few cases, side (and possibly rear) walls are of brick, with a front wall of stone. There are some examples of 'crazy-paving' stonework. Dressings may be in fine-grained oolitic limestone (possibly Bath stone). A terrace of town houses in Victoria Road and some houses on Conduit Road are of cream-coloured brick, likely to be London stocks.

Roofs are often steeply pitched, and can include gables and hips. Red clay tiles or Welsh slate are the near-ubiquitous roofing materials. Some of the roofs have ornamental detail, such as ceramic finials or ornamented ridge tiles. Ornamented wooden barge-boards are a common feature.

A number of details are commonly found on the Victorian and Edwardian houses. These include bay windows (sometimes only at ground floor level, sometimes extending up to the first floor), tile-hung gables, roof dormers and gablets, external timber porches with tiled roofs, and tall brick or stone chimneys.

Features in Gothic style, for example arches to doors and windows are present in some of the houses, especially the larger ones around Park Crescent.

Front gardens tend to have low brick or stone walls (sometimes combined with a hedge), with taller pillars at gateways. Some previously had cast-iron railings, now almost all removed (but with some modern replacements). There are some higher garden walls. Sometimes a hedge is combined with a low wall to enclose the garden on the street frontage.

7.3.3 Abingdon School, the churches and the Albert Memorial

The earliest buildings of Abingdon School are in materials (red brick and yellow brick with stone dressings, roofed with red clay tiles and some slate) and style (Gothic) similar to those used for the nearby housing of similar date. The first, westernmost, part of Abingdon School was built in 1868-70, to a design by Edwin Dolby. Dolby was also responsible for some of the houses in the Park and for part of Carswell School. An eastwards extension of Abingdon School, also by Dolby, was built in 1878-80, and a further eastwards extension, including the Chapel, was designed by J.G.T West and built in 1901-2.

Buildings constructed by the school since around 2000 – such as the Sports Centre

adjacent to Waste Court, the Science Centre on Faringdon Road and the Sixth Form block adjacent to Lacies Court – make more use of non-traditional materials such as glass and metallic cladding. Many of the school buildings are institutional in scale, as one would expect.

There are two churches in the Conservation Area: St Michael's (Church of England) and Trinity (originally Methodist, now jointly Methodist and United Reform Church). The former is listed at Grade II, while the latter is unlisted. Both are of coursed rubble with stone dressings and red clay tiles, and in Gothic style. Trinity Church has a spire, St Michael's a bell-turret. A large house, also of stone, adjacent to Trinity Methodist church on the north, was once the manse. To the south is a Keeper's House and adjoining it a former school, now used as a church hall.

The Albert Memorial has a statue of Prince Albert atop a tall slender column. It dates to 1863-5, and is listed Grade II. It is now maintained by a dedicated charitable trust.

7.3.4 The Albert Park

The Park is a well-preserved example of a formal park laid out in the 1860s to a design by I.W. Chapman of Dulwich, London. The Park is designed to be the centerpiece of the Victorian residential suburb which surrounds it. It is maintained to a very high standard by its owner, Christ's Hospital of Abingdon. It is listed at Grade II in the national Register of Parks and Gardens.

The Park is D-shaped, bounded by Park Road on its south side, with Park Crescent defining the remainder of its perimeter. Hedges define the boundary, with entrances at south-west and south east corners, and on the north and north-east sides. The north-east entrance gives vehicular access, but is gated when not in use. The Park is of a compact, symmetrical design, laid out along a north/south axis, with a central open lawn enclosed by a perimeter shelter belt containing many mature deciduous and coniferous trees, probably part of the original 1860s' planting. A number of paths run through the trees, forming a circular route which is popular with walkers. There is a bowling green and club-house (surrounded by a hedge) and hedge, a car park which is gated when not in use, and a maintenance building which is well-screened by trees. The Albert Memorial, completed in 1865, stands on the north-south axis, and is a focal point in the Park. It has a statute of Prince Albert atop a high column.

The full official list description of the Park is reproduced as Appendix 1.

7.4 Non-designated heritage assets of particular interest (see also Appendix 2)

The Conservation Area contains a number of non-designated heritage assets of particular interest. These are listed in Appendix 2, but a summary is provided here.

Lacies Court is in origin a timber-framed farm-house probably of the late 16th Century, with later heavy alterations and reconstruction after a fire in 1940. Trinity

Church, with its Keeper's House and hall to the south (linked to the church by a covered passageway) is prominent, especially because of its spire. Some of the larger houses in Park Crescent, especially on its northern side, are notable. The 19th and early 20th Century main buildings of Abingdon School are prominent elements of the Conservation Area. The School's Lodge is also of interest. The late 19th and early 20th century buildings of Carswell School are of interest.

7.5 *Local details*

Boundary walls of red brick or stone (often Corallian stone) are common. Some are built using so-called 'rat-trap' bond. High brick walls line much of Roysse's Alley (although in its eastern part the walls, similarly high, are of stone). Stone walls also separate the school playing fields on the north and south sides of Park Road from the road itself. Much of the west, north and east boundaries of the Conservation Area are formed by high stone walls.

Historic street furniture includes the iron park gates, and some surviving cast-iron street name signs. The park gates are of wrought and cast iron construction, and are important because they add to the sense of the Park area being somewhat separate from its surroundings, particularly from Victoria Road and Conduit Road. The gates onto Spring Road and Faringdon Road are kept closed permanently, except for very specific and occasional reasons.

7.6 *Prevalent local building materials*

Red brick and coursed Corallian stone are the most common building materials. There is some patterned and polychrome brickwork, and some 'crazy paving' stonework. Red clay tiles and Welsh slate are the main roofing materials used. Dressings (quoins, windows and doors frames and other detailing) are often of sawn fine-grained oolitic limestone (possibly Bath stone).

7.7 *The contribution made by green/open space and its biodiversity value*

The Park and its surroundings are strongly characterised by its spaciousness, greenness and biodiversity. These are the result of planned spaces and planting, and are among the area's most important characteristics. A more detailed account of the biodiversity of Albert Park can be found in the publication *Celebrating 150 Years of Albert Park, Abingdon-on-Thames* (S. King, 2015).

This contribution is derived from several different causes. Most important is the presence of the Park, with its specimen trees and shrubs, but important contributions are also made by wide verges and tree-planting, the mature pollarded trees along roads, the extensive playing fields of Abingdon School, and the gardens (some of them large, especially in the northern part of Park Crescent) of private houses with their trees and hedges.

The grass verges and trees in Bostock Road and St Michael's Avenue, and the plane

trees at the south end of Conduit Road also add to the biodiversity and overall impression of greenness.

The maturity of the trees, both in the park and in the surrounding streets, private garden and other spaces makes an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The park and the public realm areas surrounding it are maintained to a high standard by Christ's Hospital, and at the charity's own expense.

8. Proposed boundary changes

The original designation of the Albert Park Conservation Area in 1975 focused on the Park and the higher status dwellings, and the educational and religious buildings around it. It is now possible to see that the more modest housing and establishments found to the south of the 1975 conservation area are, in fact, part of an overall scheme which saw most of Conduit Field developed from about 1860 onwards as a single suburb, providing housing and facilities for a range of classes. It is therefore proposed to include the southern part of the overall Albert Park suburb in the Conservation Area. A number of other more minor changes to the Conservation Area boundary are also proposed. Four changes to the existing boundary are proposed. These are shown on **Map 6**:

1. The overall Albert Park suburb, including the residential streets in its southern part, was conceived largely as a single scheme, and was laid out from 1860 onwards. The suburb included a range of housing types, designed for different sections of society, along with a range of other buildings which served the community. These included two churches, a 'tin tabernacle' chapel, a grammar school, a Board school, a cottage hospital (now demolished), a public house, a dairy, a bakery and a general store.

The proposed modification extends the boundary southwards to include Exbourne Road and Edward Street; the buildings which front onto Spring Road between those two roads; the Victorian houses on west side of Victoria Road to the south of Edward Street; the Victorian terrace on the east side of Victoria Road south of Bostock Road along with the related houses on Ock Street; Bostock Road and Carswell School; and the street (Mayott's Road) which once gave access from Ock Street to Carswell School, with the row of terraced houses on its west side.

2. It is proposed to extend the new southern boundary down Conduit Road to its junction with Ock Street, so as to include the carriageway and the pavements on either side (but not the adjacent buildings). This will protect the plane trees which line the road here, and will provide some control over adjacent development which could affect this area, one of the key entrances to the Albert Park suburb.

3. The northern-most tip of the Conservation Area, on the north side of Faringdon Road was formerly part of the garden of Lindfield, one the three large 19th

Century villas there. This area was built on, in about the 1980s, when it became part of a housing estate (Curtyn Close) which has no meaningful relationship with the Conservation Area. No useful purpose appears to be served by the continuing inclusion of this small area, and it is proposed that the Conservation Area boundary be modified to remove it.

4. For reasons which are not obvious (possibly a mapping error) the most southerly house on the east side of Conduit Road (3 Conduit Road) is outside the Conservation Area boundary. This single house is in an identical style to the adjacent semi-detached pair (5 and 7 Conduit Road) which is within the boundary. It is therefore proposed that the boundary is modified so that 3 Conduit Road is also included in the Conservation Area.

9. Community involvement

Community involvement is an important integral part of the appraisal of a conservation area.

The production of this Conservation Area Appraisal was led by a Working Group established by Abingdon Town Council, and which included representatives of Christ's Hospital, the Albert Park Residents Association, and the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society.

[Public consultation is also undertaken via the Town Council and may also include consultation with local historical societies and other relevant bodies and individuals as well as by leaflet drops to individual properties within the Conservation Area. Views of the local community are taken into account in the preparation of Conservation Area appraisals and recommendations for the future management of the area. If it is agreed to change the Conservation Area boundary, notice is given in the local press and the altered Conservation Area boundary registered in the local land charges register.] (Text reproduced from Abingdon Northcourt Conservation Area Appraisal – may require amendment.)

10. Management Plan

The District Council can initiate improvements and control development in the Conservation Area. However, the success of Conservation Area designation and its future management will depend upon the co-operation and enthusiasm of stakeholders including residents, statutory undertakers and business owners to work with the council in achieving common aims and objectives. These are listed below:

10.1 General

The council will aim to:

- Promote awareness of the special value of the Conservation Area and

encourage promotion of the special character and appearance through works of preservation or enhancement;

- Encourage statutory undertakers to retain, repair and reinstate historic street materials such as paving and kerbstones, grass verges and banks, street furniture, signage and lighting, and to reduce street clutter;
- Encourage high quality, energy efficient design which aims to fit in with the established character of the Conservation Area and be sympathetic to it. Heritage Appraisals and Impact Assessments along with Design and Access Statements will assist this process;
- Encourage the regular maintenance and repair of buildings and walls in the Conservation Area with appropriate traditional materials and finishes, including the removal of inappropriate and harmful cement renders and plasters and cement pointing;
- Seek to reinforce the special quality of historic buildings through the use of traditional materials and construction techniques, including the use of lime mortars, plasters and renders, and painted timber windows and doors;
- Encourage regular tree and shrub management, with re-planting where appropriate;
- Encourage proposals for development that enhance or better reveal the significance of the conservation area, including responding to views both in, out and around the conservation area and in its wider setting;
- Encourage the retention of porches, chimney stacks, timber doors and windows and cast iron rain water goods and other traditional features in the Conservation Area.;
- Encourage the retention of front gardens rather than their change to vehicle parking and bin storage areas which often leads to removal of front boundary walls, railings and hedges.

10.2 Development Proposals

Proposals for development including extensions should enhance or better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area by demonstrating an understanding of, and reflecting, the special character or appearance of the character area in which it is situated including the layout, siting and design of the distinctive traditional buildings, open spaces and views both in, out and around the Conservation Area and in its wider setting and the history of the character area as a planned suburb.

In particular:

- New buildings and extensions should reflect character of the immediate character area. Where they face the street should have an active street frontage. Important considerations will include the building lines, roof lines and bay rhythm of adjacent properties. The prevailing heights of residential properties are generally of two storeys, which will be considered the appropriate height for new residential development.
- Plot widths are also particularly important. Therefore, new development should preserve the visual distinction of existing plot widths and, wherever possible, reinstate the visual distinction of plot widths that characterise a particular street.
- Extensions should be subservient to the existing building but in a manner that normally reflects the style, form and design of the existing building;
- Exterior walls should normally be finished in materials that reflect the general character of the character area;
- Roofs should normally be pitched gabled or hipped and consideration should be given to incorporation of front gables and gablets;
- Roofs should be tiled with materials that reflect the character area, normally plain clay tiles or slates;
- Windows should be wooden casement or sash windows. Inclusion of bay windows or other appropriate windows could help reflect the building styles of the character area;
- Main entrance doors should normally be located on the front elevation and can be sited under porches or verandas. Front doors should be made into a feature through the use of surrounding detail and decoration;
- The front boundaries should be defined by either walls, railings and/or hedges to reflect the character area;
- Front gardens should be provided with lawns, tree planting, hedges and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street by either walls or hedge planting to reflect the character area;
- Driveways and parking should not be extensive or overly engineered but well landscaped. Boundary hedgerows and planting should be retained and/or provided. Street furniture and other streetscape features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation

Area should be retained.

10.3 *Specific*

Stakeholders should jointly aim to:

- Retain and repair historic street furniture, including street name plates, the highway gates and bollards in Conduit Road, Victoria Road, Park Road and Park Crescent and street materials such as paving and kerbstones for example in Park Road.
- Encourage the repair of stone and brick boundary walls and railings, replacing like for like, for example on Faringdon Road, Park Road, Park Crescent and Conduit Road. Particularly distinctive are the rat trap-bond walls examples of which can be found in Park Road, Conduit Road and Edward Street.
- Encourage the repair and maintenance of slate and clay tile roofs.
- Encourage the replacement of hard cement pointing with lime mortar.
- Maintain effective management of grass verges and trees in the Park and on the highway, in for example Park Road, Bostock Road, St Michael's Avenue and the southern end of Conduit Road.
- Continue the current high standard of maintenance of Albert Park.
- Preserve or enhance the key landmarks, views and vistas identified in Section 6.2.
- Encourage the removal of redundant satellites dishes which are particularly prominent on south facing properties on streets such as Bostock Road and Edward Street.

10.4 **Issues and Opportunities for Preservation and Enhancement**

Opportunities exist within the Conservation Area to enhance existing built development and enhance open spaces and landscape features which contribute to the architectural and historic interest of the area.

There are some specific features within the Conservation Area that would benefit from some preservation or enhancement in order to reinforce the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These include:

10.4.1 *Opportunities*

- Promote the significance of the architectural and historic value of the Conservation Area.
- Maintain boundary walls, railings and hedges in a good state of repair, as they contribute significantly to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Repairs and/or maintenance of walls should be in matching brick, stone and lime mortar with appropriate original capping and should follow the coursing and bonds used. Railings, including new railings

should reflect the design of railings in the Conservation Area. Opportunities should be taken to maintain and conserve existing hedges.

- Keep original features such as porches, windows and doors and chimneys and other traditional features such as stone lintels, eaves and bargeboards.
- Encourage the use of traditional building materials such as orange brick and stone for walls, and clay and slate roof tiles.
- Encourage the repair of brick and stone walls using lime mortar and discourage the use of render and paints.
- Encourage the use of traditional cast iron gutters and downpipes rather than plastic.
- The 'Net' building has an unsatisfactory relationship to Stratton Way. In any future proposals for this site, attention could be paid to creating a more coherent relationship between the site and Stratton Way. There might also be scope for better integration of the grounds with the rest of the Conservation Area. The historic grotto in the grounds is considered to be curtilage-listed (being in the former grounds of Stratton House). It, along with its setting, should be protected in any future changes to this site.
- The site on the north side of the junction of Spring Road and Edward Street is currently occupied by a utilitarian and modern-looking metal building. It is, however, a 19th century 'tin tabernacle' which has been reclad. Should any proposals be made to redevelop this site, the design should take full account of the characteristics of this character area, and of the importance of the site given its corner location.

10.4.2 Issues

Current or potential future issues include:

- Erosion of front gardens by removal of boundary walls, railings and hedges and the construction of hard-standings for car and cycle parking and bin storage.
- Infilling of plots and extensions to existing houses.
- The loss of traditional architectural features such as chimneys, porches, windows and doors.
- The covering of attractive brick and stone façades in render and paint.

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- The replacement of clay tiles and natural slates with concrete tiles and artificial slates.
- The replacement of original cast iron gutters and down pipes in uPVC.
- The erection of inappropriately proportioned modern railings and fences on boundaries.
- Satellite dishes and alarm boxes prominently positioned on the front elevations of buildings.
- Parked cars dominating narrow streets to the south of the Park.
- Continued development of Abingdon School. The school is evolving. As a result it is developing new facilities including substantial new buildings and sports facilities.
- The volume of traffic passing through the area, including the roads in the Park.
- Possible future development of some sites, such as the Net on Stratton Way and the site on the north corner of Edward Street and Spring Road.

The designation of a Conservation Area is intended to manage change, not to prevent it. Where policy permits development, it is important that any new development preserves or enhances the character of the area. As such, proposals should be of high quality, responding to the site context and ensuring that a holistic approach is taken to the site including landscaping, boundary treatments, together with enhancing the contribution of open space and enclosure. This Appraisal, the District Council's Design Guide, national guidance, and the District Council's Local Plan policies should be referred to when bringing forward sites for development within and in the setting of the Conservation Area.

11. References and useful information

G. Tyack, S. Bradley and N. Pevsner (2010), *The Buildings of England – Berkshire*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press

Conservation Appraisal in respect of Abingdon School Masterplan Proposals. Unpublished report by Asset Heritage Consulting (report number ND/9049). October 2011.

S. King (ed.) (2015), *Celebrating 150 Years of Albert Park, Abingdon-on-Thames*. Abingdon: Albert Park Residents' Association

Maps

Ordnance Survey

1:500 (125 inches to a mile), 1874

1: 2500 (25 inches to a miles) Berkshire Sheet X.6 - First edition, Surveyed in 1875

1:2500 (25 inches to a mile), Berkshire Sheet X.6 various editions

12. Albert Park: designated heritage assets (Registered Park and Garden and Listed Buildings)

(See **map 4**)

Registered Park & Garden: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001403>

St Michael's Church: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1048829>

Monument to Prince Albert: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1368287>

Conduit House: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1048828>

Waste Court: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1368292>

Wall and gate piers to Waste Court: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1284079>

APPENDIX 1 : (extract from the [official on-line listing](#) on 1 October 2020)

ALBERT PARK, ABINGDON

Overview

Heritage Category: Park and Garden

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1001403

Date first listed: 27-Oct-1998

For a copy of the full scale map, please see the [PDF](#) (NB The PDF will be generated from Historic England's live systems and may take a few minutes to download depending on how busy their servers are. They apologise for this delay).

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

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County: Oxfordshire

District: Vale of White Horse (District Authority)

Parish: Abingdon

National Grid Reference: SU 49210 97319, SU 49594 97217

Details

Mid C19 suburban park with formal and informal elements, laid out for the use of the residents of Abingdon as the centrepiece of an associated residential development.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The guild of the Holy Cross was refounded in 1533 as the charity Christ's Hospital of Abingdon. As a result of protracted proceedings in Chancery during the 1840s and 1850s a scheme was devised whereby the Governors would lay out a recreation ground and plots for surrounding houses (to be privately developed) on an open field known as Conduit Field, to the west of the town (VCH 1924). In April 1860 a competition with a 10 gns prize was announced to design the recreation ground, and following five entries the prize was given to Mr Chapman of Dulwich ('commune bonum'. The basic structure of his design was followed, although not all the details were adhered to. During 1861 the infrastructure of the park was laid out, including the roads, drainage and railings, and in 1862 the landscaping was carried out and a park keeper employed. In the 1920s various sports pitches were laid out on the central lawn. The park was renovated in the 1980s, when most of the sports facilities and remaining flower beds were removed, and the site continues (1997) in use as a facility for the people of Abingdon.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Albert Park lies in the western suburbs of Abingdon, 500m from the town centre. The park, situated on land which slopes gently from north to south, lies at the centre of a development of houses on plots laid out in the 1860s which were slowly built upon during the mid to late C19 and early C20. The 5.5ha, D-shaped park is bounded by an estate road, beyond which lie substantial, individually designed houses standing in their own spacious plots, together with, to the east Abingdon Grammar School (moved to this site 1870) standing within extensive playing fields, to the south-east Trinity church (Wesleyan Methodist, Woodman 1875) and to the south St Michael's church (C of E, G G Scott 1867, listed grade II). The park boundary, until the Second World War marked by iron railings and gates which had formed a significant part of the original financial outlay on the site, is now marked largely by clipped hawthorn hedges, the 1860s' railings, lanterns and gates having been removed for munitions during the war. The crescent-shaped central section of the south boundary is marked by a low stone wall with taller stone piers at intervals, outside which lie two small panels of lawn. The setting is suburban.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main pedestrian approach from the town centre

is via Park Road, which spurs west off Bath Street c 400m east of the centre of the park. At this point the entrance to Park Road is marked by a single-storey stone lodge with large gables with ornamental bargeboards, set in a small garden surrounded by a dwarf stone wall. This lodge, formerly one of a pair, is now separated from Park Road by the Stratton Way relief road, from which there is no vehicular access to Park Road. Park Road runs west flanked by a lime avenue set in lawn, itself flanked by stone walls, passing between open playing fields with views of Abingdon School to the north. At the south-east corner of the park, Park Road intersects with Conduit Road to the south, and to the north Park Crescent, which encloses the park to the west, north and east. Park Road continues west along the south side of the park, flanked by the lime avenue, passing the central main entrance to the park, set back off the road and lying opposite St Michael's church. A small, cuboid, stone conduit house (C16, listed grade II) with a pyramidal roof stands on the boundary with Park Crescent close to the south-east entrance. In addition to the main entrance on Park Road, four further, evenly spaced entrances to the park give access from Park Crescent. The north entrance is aligned with the north spur of Park Crescent (which connects with Faringdon Road to the north), the Albert Memorial, the main park entrance to the south and St Michael's church beyond. Victoria and Conduit Roads to the south, linked by Park Road and Bostock Road and all part of the same development, give vehicular access from Ock Street, now the main road into Abingdon from Oxford.

PARK Albert Park is of a compact, symmetrical design, laid out along a north/south axis, with a central open lawn enclosed by a perimeter shelter belt containing many mature deciduous and coniferous trees, probably part of the original 1860s' planting. A circuitous path system runs through the trees.

From the main, south entrance a broad, straight gravel walk extends to west and east, flanked by informal lawns planted with mature trees, including specimen Wellingtonias which may be the remains of an avenue. The ends of the walk are terminated by specimen Wellingtonias standing in circular panels of lawn and shrubs. The broad gravel walk narrows at both ends to encircle the circular panels, each circle linked to a spur path giving access from the entrances at the southern corners of the park. From the western circle two paths lead north, between them standing the work station/maintenance depot. Beyond this the paths cross and continue north to an open area, now an informal gravel car park situated between mature trees but formerly containing a further circular panel of lawn (OS 1875), at which point the spur path from the north-west entrance joins. The two paths continue from here as one, curving around the northern perimeter with views out to the houses and gardens in Park Crescent and views in over the central lawn to the far, south side of the park and the two churches. At the centre of its north section the path encircles the Albert Memorial (listed grade II), which stands on a circular panel of lawn, and is joined by the path giving access from the Park Crescent spur road to the north. The 15m high stone memorial consists of an ornamented hexagonal column supporting a statue of Prince Albert, the whole standing on a tall plinth with a frieze and carved medallions and four steps up to it. The Memorial, erected in 1865 to a design by John Gibbs of Oxford and paid for by public

subscription, is set on a small parcel of land bought from the charity for the purpose. The path continues east, flanked by specimen trees and shrub beds, opening out where the spur path from the north-east entrance joins it, this area formerly containing a circular panel of lawn mirroring that to the west. The path divides into two crossing paths to the south of this area in similar form to that on the west side of the park. The path terminates at the eastern circular panel with its *Wellingtonia* specimen. The cross path which leads south-east down the east side of the park towards the south-east entrance is aligned on the tall stone spire of Trinity Methodist church standing on Conduit Road.

The central lawn is encircled largely by a belt of shrubs, beyond which lies the shelter belt and path system. Entrance to the lawn is via four evenly spaced spurs to the north, south, west and east, giving access from the encircling path system and related to the park entrances. In the south-east corner lies a bowling green, pavilion (late C20, on the site of an earlier building) and tennis court, and in the west half of the lawn are visible the remains of c 1920s terracing for former sports facilities, including tennis and croquet, now removed. The lawn is dominated by the Albert Memorial overlooking it to the north.

Chapman's layout consisted of perimeter paths enclosing rondpoints amongst a perimeter belt of specimen trees and shrubs which in turn enclosed a central undulating grass area. This layout still largely exists today (although the central panels of the north-west, north-east and central southern rondpoints have been lost to small, informal open spaces).

REFERENCES

Victoria County History of Berkshire 1V, (1924), pp 437, 448 N Pevsner and J Sherwood, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (1966), p 60 J Carter and J Smith, *Give & Take, scenes from the history of Christ's Hospital of Abingdon, 1553(1900 (1981), pp 55-68 F Woodward, Oxfordshire Parks (1982), p 34*

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1875 OS 1:500: 1st edition published 1874

Description written: May 1998 Register Inspector: SR Edited: January 2000

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 4061

Legacy System: Parks and Gardens

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.

End of official listing

Appendix 2 - Non-designated heritage assets of particular interest

Possible candidates for national listing in **bold**.

‘[P]’ means mentioned in Pevsner’s Buildings of England – Berkshire (2nd edition, 2010)

17 Park Crescent [P]

1867-8 to a design by Edwin Dolby as the vicarage for St Helen’s. Polychromatic brick and stone under clay and concrete tiled roofs with decorative ridge tiles. Complex design with projecting gables, a projecting bay under a clay tile roof, and substantial brick chimneys. Stables attached to rear converted to dwelling.

Springfields, Faringdon Road [P]

Stone under a clay tile roof with pleasant fenestration in gothic style and decorative porch over central door. Single storey extension to west has projecting full height bay.

Lindfield, Faringdon Road [P]

An impressive building of stone with fine stone dressings to windows, gables, parapet and projecting bays. Distinctive and ornate gables one in Dutch style. Substantial stone chimneys.

Foremark, Faringdon Road

A substantial building of red brick under a clay tiled roof with full height projecting gabled bay. Distinctive windows with stone and brick dressings. Decorated bargeboards to gables.

Faringdon Road, Spring Road, Conduit Road and Victoria Road (gates)

Simple braced single bar barriers with scroll work and bollards all in iron to control access to the private roads of the Albert Park.

14 Park Crescent [P]

Designed by Edwin Dolby as his residence.

16 Park Crescent [P]

Red brick under shallow pitched slate roof. Contrasts with the other properties on Park Crescent with Pevsner succinctly describing it as “curiously Regency in its proportions”.

Whitefields, 18 Park Crescent [P]

Built 1871. Gothic style in random stone with dressed stone details to doors and windows. Distinctive bargeboard details to the gables and decorative ridge tiles. Random stone stacks with dressed stone dressings.

Cobban House, 19 Park Crescent [P]

Built in 1886 to a design perhaps by J.G.T. West. Red brick and dressed stone details in Gothic style. A distinctive building presenting gables to the road with substantial and well decorated chimney stacks.

Crescent House, 21 Park Crescent [P]

Built to a design by J.G.T. West. Red brick with yellow string courses and simply detailed stone dressings to windows and doors. Half hipped gable ends to tiled roof with plain chimney stacks.

Abingdon School – 1870 – 1902 block [P]

A range of substantial and imposing buildings in red brick with yellow brick and Bath stone dressings. The buildings are roofed mainly in clay tiles, with slate on the turret. The most westerly part (1868-1870) was designed by Edwin Dolby and has Gothic windows. An eastward extension by Dolby, added in 1878-80, is described in Pevsner as ‘Tudorising.. A further extension to the east, including the Chapel (1901-2) was designed by J.G.Y West.

Lacies Court [P]

This building dates back to the late 16th or 17th century. The original Lacies Cottage was extended in about 1902 to a design by Harry Redfern, with later work. Rendered finish with exposed timber framing to north elevation. Described by Pevsner as” a long gabled ramble.”

Abingdon School Lodge [P]

1897 to a design by Harry Redfern. Brick and render under a clay tile roof. Projecting two storey bay and intricate porch with balcony and a stone carving replica of cartouche on John Roysse’s tomb in St Helen’s church on west front.

Trinity Church and hall [P].

Built between 1873 and 1875 to a design by the Reading architect W H Woodman. Roughly coursed sandstone with spire and elaborate traceried windows in an early Gothic style.

Carswell Community School [P]

1865 by Edwin Dolby and Spencer. Gothic, with sharp-cusped window heads. There are modern flat roof extensions on the Bostock Road frontage.

Along Bostock Road is a long low range of 1902 by Harry Redfern. The hall is set transversely, with a Venetian window and a distinctive and very individual lantern on the roof. There are gables on the south side of the building with Tree-of-life motifs worked in dark brick.

Tesdale Terrace [P]

A block of 22 artisan’s dwellings for Christ’s Hospital, to a design by local architect J.G.T. West. Red brick with tile hanging to first floor under plain tiled roof. Central projecting gable with terracotta finials and date stone 1895 and subsidiary gables above shared porches.

Houses (Christ’s Hospital) on east side of Victoria Road and facing Ock Street [P]

A block of dwellings for Christ’s Hospital. Red brick with contrasting yellow brick string courses, decorative eaves and verges. Chimneys of red brick with dentil courses. Decorative porches and stone bay windows to three projecting gables.

Rose Cottage (west side of Victoria Road.)

House C19 in red brick with contrasting blue/grey brick for door and window dressings, string course, quoins and diaperwork. Stone window arches. Ornate cast iron porch. Shallow iron balconettes to the 1st-floor windows.

Royal British Legion, Spring Road (formerly Prince of Wales public house)

DRAFT Albert Park Conservation Area Appraisal – May 2026

19th Century of two stories of red brick under tiled roof. Windows with stone flat arches. Central door under rounded fanlight opening. Doors and windows all modern replacements. Stacks reduced

May 2026