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ADVICE NOTE

Warmley

CONSERVATION AREA

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

A Conservation Area is an area of "Special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."

Designation is a recognition of the group value of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect, not just the individual buildings, but the distinctive character of the area as a whole. The special character usually derives from a combination of many features, such as trees, hedgerows, walls, open spaces, groups of buildings, the degree of enclosure, the massing and detailing of buildings. Each area is unique.

WHAT CONTROLS APPLY?

Within the Conservation Areas a number of special controls apply. Planning policies seek to ensure that any development accords with the areas' special architectural or visual qualities. These are set out in the Local Plan and further details are given in **CONSERVATION AREA ADVICE NOTE** - available from the Council. The emphasis is on preserving those buildings, spaces and features which give each Conservation Area its special character. Where changes can be justified, great care must be exercised to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on this character.

PURPOSE OF THE LEAFLET

- 1 To provide a detailed appraisal of those buildings, features and spaces which characterise Warmley Conservation Area.
- 2 To set out a strategy for its preservation and enhancement.
- 3 To provide guidance for development proposals.

Warmley was designated as a Conservation Area on 31 July 1995 in recognition of its important historical and architectural connections with William Champion (1709-89) a prominent quaker, industrialist and innovator.



Warmley House - Champion's former home.

WHY WARMLEY IS IMPORTANT

It is a heritage site of national significance, as it was at Warmley that Champion first pioneered the commercial production of zinc in Europe. Today, the site is the only remaining 18th Century integrated industrial complex in the country to have encompassed a full range of industrial processes from the smelting of metal to the production of finished goods. In addition, to the zinc and brass mill (windmill tower, ranges and ice house) and clocktower, the estate also comprises Champion's former home - Warmley House and surrounding gardens. The garden is a rare example of an 18th century industrialist's garden and includes many unusual features, some of which were constructed with recycled waste from the works. These features include the grotto, echo pond, former 13 acre lake, statue of Neptune, the mound, chequered walled garden, boathouse and Summerhouse. There are 9 Listed Buildings, a registered Historic Garden and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Conservation Area has been designated to help protect the character and setting of these features and buildings which form an important part of our heritage.

SETTING AND LOCATION

Warmley Conservation Area is located on the eastern fringes of greater Bristol, south of Warmley village. The core of the Conservation Area lies to the east of Siston Brook and is centred on Warmley House, its gardens and the former industrial area to the south. Siston Brook, which is largely hidden from view, flows in a cutting north to south through the area with the land generally rising gently on either side. Today, the area consists of a mix of old and new development. The remains of Champion's legacy are partially hidden and largely surrounded by more recent development comprising a mix of residential properties, modern industrial units, school playing fields and educational uses.

THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The boundary to the Conservation Area is shown on the plan and has been drawn to include Champion's core industrial site, the important areas of archaeological remains and Warmley House together with its historic gardens. It also includes adjoining areas like the school playing fields which allow important views and contribute to the setting of the historic site.

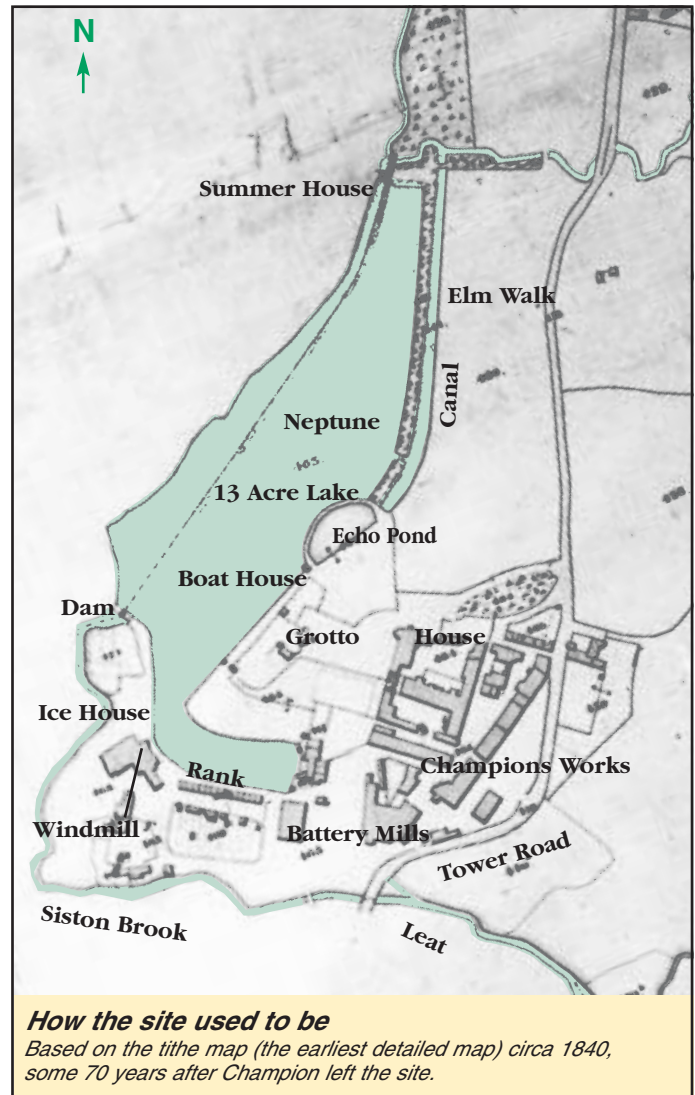
The Historic Context

It was at Warmley in the 1740's that William Champion first developed the commercial production of zinc metal. This was an important milestone in metal production at the beginning of the industrial revolution. He had moved his metal works from Old Market in Bristol to the then greenfield site at Warmley, following complaints of pollution. The Warmley site was ideally located adjoining Siston Brook, a source of water for power, and for the readily available supply of coal from the surrounding coalfields. Access to raw materials for his industrial processes (such as calamine from the Mendips and Copper from Cornwall) could also be gained via the navigable River Avon nearby.

William Champion was a well known Quaker and member of the Bristol business community. He would have been influenced by his many important business and social connections such as the industrialist Darby of Ironbridge and the well known gardener Norborne Berkeley and banker Thomas Goldney. Champion was keen to establish an 'industrial utopia' and the Warmley site comprised a unique integrated industrial complex of various industrial buildings, furnaces and even houses for key workers. A windmill was built to power his works. The nearby Siston Brook was dammed to form a lake to provide power and a water supply for his industrial processes. In its heyday, the Warmley zinc and brass works was the largest single producer of Zinc in Europe and employed hundreds of local people. It was also unique in having a full range of industrial processes from smelting to the production of finished goods all on the same site.

William Champion was able to supervise his works from his Georgian Mansion situated on a knoll which had a good view over the lake and surrounding area. Alongside his home and lake, which acted as a focal point, he created a rare example of an 18th Century industrialist's garden with its many plants, trees and unusual features. These included an echo pond, grotto, a giant statue of Neptune, a boathouse, a chequered walled garden, a castellated summerhouse a viewing mound, several walks and a canal. The gardens are an unusual and unique example of an 'art-industrial' landscape comprising the integration of a landscape and industrial process. Many of the buildings, walls and garden features were constructed using waste material such as slag and clinker from the industrial works giving them a distinctive appearance. The lake also had a dual use acting as a focal point in the garden and supplying water to the works which was then circulated back to the lake via the grotto. It is thought that the ornamental Summerhouse concealed a sluice by which the level of the lake was controlled.

William Champion's company collapsed in 1769 and was taken over by its rival the Bristol Brass Company. Over time the site has subsequently been used for other uses such as the manufacturing of earthenware drainage pipes. Today the site is split into different ownerships and many of the original buildings have been demolished and replaced by more modern development. This can make it difficult to comprehend the importance of the site and the relationship between the remaining historic features. The enhancement strategy will seek to protect and reinforce the special character and appearance of these remaining historic features as well as identifying sites where additional design / management guidance has been prepared.



How the site used to be

Based on the tithe map (the earliest detailed map) circa 1840, some 70 years after Champion left the site.

THE REMAINING HISTORIC FEATURES

Today, the 'special' character of the area is derived from two distinct but related historic areas:

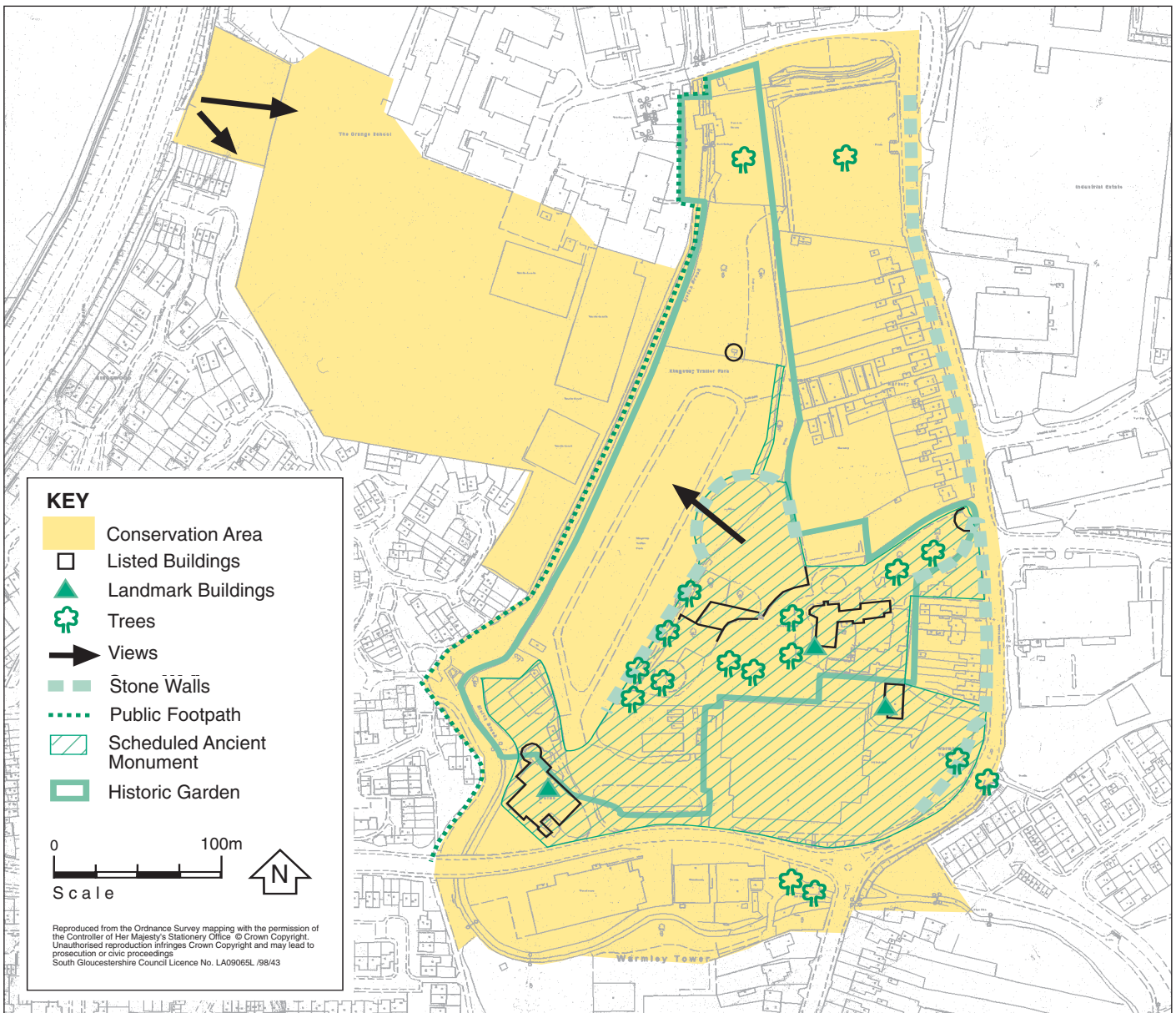
1) The Industrial Complex

The Windmill Tower and adjoining buildings, Ice House and Clocktower are the only buildings remaining of the former Champion industrial complex. The workers' houses (The Rank), the other industrial buildings and furnaces have, over time, been largely replaced by modern industrial buildings and associated parking areas. The remaining industrial buildings now provide interesting and unusual landmarks from a bygone era in contrast to the surrounding development.

2) Warmley House and Gardens

Warmley House, Champion's former home, is now a Nursing Home whilst the adjoining gardens which he created are used as public open space. Many of Champion's unusual garden features remain and provide a series of surprises and sense of mystery as one walks around the garden. The former lake however, has been drained and is now partially occupied by a caravan park. Apart from occasional glimpses of Warmley House (particularly from the west); the house and gardens are largely hidden and form a quiet and peaceful green oasis with numerous tall mature trees.

Warmley Conservation Area - the important features



The area contains a number of listed buildings, landscape features and upstanding remains attributed to the Champion period as set out below :

- Warmley House, stable block and grounds including steps and boundary walls and gate.
- The Grotto
- The GrottoThe Chequered Wall
- The GrottoThe Mound
- The GrottoThe Leat and Elm Walk
- The GrottoEcho Pond
- The GrottoThe Lake (edging walls and dam)
- Statue of Neptune
- The Summerhouse
- The Boathouse
- The Windmill Tower & parts of the associated building complex including the Ice House
- Clocktower

There are a number of other important elements within the conservation area that contribute to its character and appearance which may also provide further clues to Champion's legacy. These include:-

- **Trees** - the large mature trees within the gardens, some of which may have been planted in the 18th Century, are an important and prominent feature, providing enclosure and an attractive backdrop to many of the buildings.
- **Landscape features** - the enclosed river and open parkland add to the setting and with the changes in level allow important views and glimpses.
- **Building Materials** - the use of building materials made from by-products of industrial waste such as clinker and black slag blocks. Clinker has been used in many walls and particularly in the garden features, whilst the black slag blocks have been used in some of the walls and buildings from Champion's era.
- **Archaeological Remains** - below ground the archaeological remains of the former industrial complex are considered of significant historic importance leaving clues to how the site would have operated and developed. Part of the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The Industrial Complex

The National Evaluation of the Brass Industry has led to the site being identified as *** (3 star) - the highest category in the classification of the Monuments Protection Programme in recognition of the national historic significance of the site. The complex, founded by William Champion in 1743, was one of the largest brassworks of its kind in the 18th century.

WINDMILL TOWER, ICE HOUSE - ZINC & BRASSWORKS

This relatively compact and prominent group of mainly 18th century buildings is located adjoining the east side of Siston Brook and fronting the busy Tower Lane. They probably formed the basis of Champion's ore preparation processes using horse gin and wind powered stamps to crush and grind ore. The building group has an unusual appearance with its variety of building types and rooflines. The buildings have been altered and extended with later additions to accommodate the changing uses of the building from metal works to flock mill and soap works.

The Tower is a former windmill which literally towers approx 18 metres above the complex. It is a prominent landmark visible over a wide area and gives its name to the surrounding roads and local area of 'Warmley Tower'. It has long since lost its sails but is a rare survival of a windmill used to power industrial processes, and is one of the oldest remaining in Britain. The tower, like the rest of the complex, is constructed mainly of pennant stone but includes other materials such as slag blocks and redbrick, mainly used for arch detailing around the door openings.

The Ice House is largely underground and lies to the north of the Windmill Tower building adjacent to Siston Brook. It is a well built circular structure of local pennant sandstone and with a diameter of 10.6 metres is reputed to be the largest surviving ice house in the country. (See Design Guidance Note 3).



The Windmill Tower and associated buildings to be given a positive use.



The Ice House with Windmill Tower behind

Enhancement Strategy

- to secure the preservation of the Windmill Tower complex by finding an appropriate reuse eg. as a museum or community / workshop / business or other complementary uses.
- to secure environmental improvement works and landscaping to enhance the setting of the building and the adjoining riverside.

- to provide improved links to the rest of the conservation area.
- to encourage a more appropriate low-key use for the adjoining site which will complement the Tower complex and reduce traffic access problems.
- to address parking and access issues within and around the site.

THE CLOCKTOWER

Originally used for the manufacture of pins was an integral part of Champion's comprehensive production arrangements at Warmley in providing an end product for his output of brasswire. Following the demise of pin making in the mid 19th century, the building has been used in connection with Warmley Tower Potteries, as a boot factory and now it is in community use. The building is 3 stories high and constructed of random-coursed rubble sandstone with some of the characteristic slag block quoins and a hipped pantile roof. It has a typical traditional 'factory' appearance with its large cast iron windows, clock and tower. Part of the building was rebuilt externally, but originally it was sited at the centre of the industrial complex and surrounded by other buildings. Today, it stands isolated and is a prominent and attractive feature in the street scene set against a backdrop of trees. The surrounding land is of significant archaeological importance. Adjacent excavations have uncovered important historic furnaces. A narrow gauge rail line is also known to run from the front under Tower Road North to link to the former clay pits to the east.



The Clock Tower

Enhancement Strategy

- secure environmental improvements to enhance the setting of the building and carpark area. Encourage planting to screen the adjoining industrial car park and housing. A sensitive landscape scheme will need to carefully balance the buildings previous 'hidden' historic context with its current prominence.

- Secure repairs to the cast iron windows
- seek to provide pedestrian links to Warmley Gardens at the rear.
- ensure the building is retained in an appropriate use.

Warmley House & Gardens

WARMLEY HOUSE

Warmley House, is a grade II* listed building dating from the mid 18th Century. Originally the home of William Champion, it is now a private home for the elderly. It is an attractive and imposing 3 storey Palladian style building constructed of Bath stone with rusticated quoins. The original siting of the house was probably chosen for its elevated position on a knoll overlooking the adjoining works and surrounding rural area. Today, the house is largely hidden by the surrounding mature trees though good views of the house rising above the trees can be seen from higher ground to the west and north. It is essential that any alterations to this important building respects its character and setting. The scope for further extensions is severely limited.

THE GARDENS

The gardens adjoining the house are now surrounded by modern development which impinges on the historic setting. Most of the original planting has been lost and it has suffered from a subdivision of ownership. However it still retains a wealth of unusual features and vistas in line with the rococo style of garden design of the period. Many of the features are interesting as they incorporate the use of recycled material from the industrial works such as clinker and slag blocks.

The focal point of the garden was a large 13 acre **lake** which doubled as a reservoir for the works watermills. In the middle loomed the gigantic **statue of Neptune**. The lake now accommodates a caravan park, which impinges on the garden setting. Neptune stands 10 metres high, a giant and incongruous figure of concrete and clinker seemingly totally out of place on dry land. However, retaining the open green space in front of and around the statue is important to enable an appreciation of its size.

The Grotto was an essential feature of any self respecting 18th century garden. Champion's collection of vaulted chambers is one of the most extensive surviving man-made grottoes in England. A mysterious warren, composed almost entirely of the black zinc clinkers it once included a complex system of cascades and pools.

Adjoining the grotto is the **chequered wall**, another of Champion's eccentricities. The chequered wall was a decorative garden feature. It was built of clinker with arched openings infilled with bricks and slag blocks in a chequered design.

The Summerhouse, a castellated folly, is an unusual feature located over the Siston Brook at the head of the former lake. It is built incorporating the black copper slag blocks and is the best example in the Kingswood area of the use of this material. The modern extensions are unsympathetic to its historic character and would benefit from alterations resulting in a more sensitive design.

Within Warmley Gardens the large mature trees are an essential component of the garden layout created by William Champion which included the formation of avenues and vistas in the 'Dutch Style'. The former **Laurel Walk** which stretches from the Boathouse to the Mound still survives and is bordered by a massive row of mature trees which gives a strong sense of enclosure. Further to the north stretching from the elliptical **Echo Pond** to the side of the Summerhouse is the remains of the former **Elm Walk**.

This consisted of a walkway, bordered by Elm trees, located between the former **lake** and **leaf or canal**. The elms and the water features have disappeared but recently planted Lime trees now mark the course of the walkway. The trees as well as contributing to visual interest, help to provide a contrast between different parts of the garden. The area by the driveway and public car park for example, has a sense of enclosure and seclusion, as it is dominated by a group of large mature trees which cast a heavy shade. This contrasts sharply with the area immediately to the front of Warmley House and by the Echo Pond which has fewer trees and more of an open parkland character with views and a pleasant sunny aspect. Another unusual feature in the garden is a 10 metre high **Mound** on top of which are a group of Oak trees. These trees are prominent in views from the surrounding area.



The Summerhouse with its modern additions.



The Grotto



The Laurel Walk

Enhancement Strategy

- protect and maintain existing historic features, buildings, walls, paths, trees, important views, vistas and garden layout.
- seek to enhance the setting of the garden with landscaping to reduce the impact of obtrusive features and modern development
- seek to restore / reintroduce historic planting and other historic elements ie. water features.
- improve footpath links within and around the site with footpaths, bridges etc
- further investigation of water systems on site.

(See Management/Guidance Notes)

Trees & Landscape

Within the conservation area the large mature trees, features of open parkland and the river are important areas which need to be protected and enhanced. They make a valuable contribution to its character and appearance by providing an attractive setting for the buildings and a backdrop of greenery.

THE RIVER - SISTON BROOK

The river runs north to south through the conservation area and is important in the context of the development of the Champion site. It was dammed to form a lake which supplied water and power for the works and also acted as a focal point for the garden. It adjoins Warmley Gardens, the caravan park (former lake) and Grimsbury School and is mostly hidden from view with adjacent trees contributing to its enclosed and secluded character. The river is more visible by the Windmill Tower building where it is more open and also by the Summerhouse where it is crossed by a bridge. The level of the brook has been lowered in a cutting and would benefit from improvements to give it a more natural appearance. A public footpath runs along the west side of the brook however this has a neglected appearance. This area alongside the river and path would benefit from environmental improvements and landscaping to screen the school buildings and caravan park which detract from the riverside setting.



Siston Brook

Enhancement Strategy

- seek to increase the awareness of the river and provide better footpath links to Warmley Gardens (through bridges, signs and circular routes)
- seek to improve the appearance of the area alongside the river by landscaping and other improvements such as seats and providing better access down to the river level
- enhancements to give the river and its banks a more natural appearance
- investigation of sluice area, and river wall.

TREES

The large mature trees are an important and prominent feature in the Conservation Area providing an attractive diversity of colour, shape and visual interest. Many of the trees are located within Warmley Gardens where they provide an important setting for Warmley House and the garden features. They are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) in recognition of their amenity value. The trees are of a substantial size and form an attractive and highly visible green canopy island amidst the surrounding built up area. The trees located alongside Warmley House are particularly prominent and can even be seen from the rural high ground some 5 miles to the south east. The trees provide an important clue to the presence of the gardens by breaking the skyline and providing an attractive green backdrop to many of the buildings such as to the rear of the Clocktower. They also provide enclosure and partially hide and screen views of Warmley House allowing only occasional glimpses from Tower Road North and Tower Lane. However, in views from the west over the school playing fields the trees enhance and frame views of Warmley House which rises up above the trees.



Trees at Warmley House

Enhancement Strategy

- It is important to ensure that the trees within the Conservation Area are protected. New planting should recognise the historic context by using appropriate species, layout and scale. Many of the trees are nearing the end of their life and a replacement and management

THE SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS & GRIMSBURY PIT

To the west of Siston Brook lies the school playing fields and the overgrown remains of the former Grimsbury Coal Pit which probably supplied Champion's works. The open aspect of the greenfields make an important contribution to the setting of the conservation area and allows views from Warmley Gardens towards the distant skyline. The open aspect also enables views of the historic landmark buildings of Warmley House and the windmill tower and it is essential those views are protected and enhanced. (See Management Guidance 3)

Enhancement Strategy

- encourage the planting of large specimen trees around the playing fields to suggest a more 'parkland' setting
- encourage tree and shrub planting to the edges of the playing fields to reduce the impact of surrounding modern development
- restrict development which would encroach into the open setting and harm views
- seek the enhancements and interpretation of the Grimsbury Pit site



The 'parkland' view over the playing fields towards Warmley House

Other features

BUILDING MATERIALS

With the exception of Warmley House, most of the historic buildings and features are constructed of the local pennant rubble stone with a mix of some red brick, black slag blocks and clinker. The use of black slag blocks and clinker which were recycled into building material from the industrial processes are a distinctive and unusual feature of the conservation area.

The smooth black slag blocks were cast into shaped blocks for use in buildings and for wall copings. The black slag toppers to the boundary wall along Tower Road North is an important feature. The rough black clinker composed of nodules of waste material has an unusual texture unlike conventional building materials. It has been used mainly for a decorative effect in some boundary walls and the garden features, particularly in the Grotto and on Neptune.

Another distinctive feature is the mixing of the different materials to form patterns and emphasise detailing as in the chequered wall garden.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Below ground is of significant archaeological interest. These include areas associated with Champion's industrial processes such as the battery mills, the copper and brass furnaces, the zinc smelting, annealing and casting areas. The buried garden features, the water supply network and the workers housing (The Rank) are also of interest. It is important to ensure that archaeological remains are not needlessly destroyed as they can contain irreplaceable information about past activities on the site. Scheduled Monument Consent will be needed where nationally important archaeological remains and their setting are affected by proposed development including where works involve ground disturbance. There will generally be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation.

OTHER AREAS / FEATURES REQUIRING ENHANCEMENT

Within the Conservation area there are a number of modern buildings and other negative features which detract from the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the conservation area. It is proposed to encourage enhancements to minimise the impact of these features as listed below:

- **The modern industrial buildings and associated parking areas.** The scale of many of these buildings would benefit from landscaping improvements to screen and soften their impact. Any redevelopment proposals should seek to be of a scale and design more sympathetic to those of the traditional buildings.
- **The school buildings, security fence, caravan park and areas of modern residential development.** The harmful impact of these features would be reduced by landscaping and sensitive management.
- **The overhead wires and MEB substation on Tower Lane.** The removal of overhead wires and relocation or screening of the substation will be encouraged.
- **Highway improvements and traffic management.** The main roads of Tower Road North and Tower Lane are characterised by busy traffic, a clutter of signs and a lack of landscaping and enclosure. Traffic calming measures, a reduction / rationalisation of signs and appropriate landscaping would improve the appearance of these routes.



The Chequered Wall



Detail of Chequered Wall - showing a mix of brick, slag and clinker.



The vacant Mardons site adjoining the Summerhouse

- **Other specific areas (opportunity sites) requiring enhancement.** There are a number of specific sites / areas which detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area or where there is either pressure for change or a need for greater protection. Additional design or management guidance has been prepared for these areas as listed below in order to help achieve enhancement objectives. Copies are available from the Council.

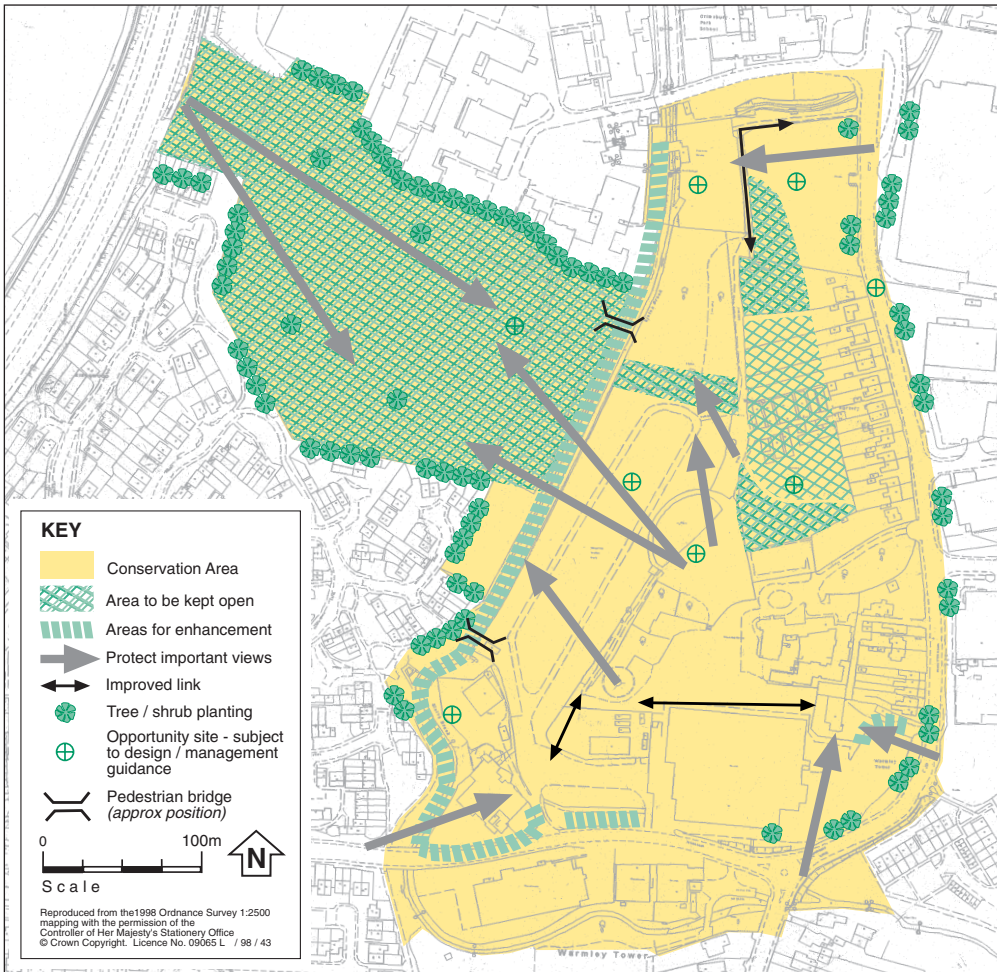
Design Guidance for specific sites:-

- DG 1) Mardons, Tower Road North
- DG 2) Nursery Site to rear of Tower Road North
- DG 3) ABA Transport site, Tower Lane

Management Guidance:-

- MG 1) Warmley House Gardens
- MG 2) Kingsway Trailer Park
- MG 3) The Grange School playing fields
- MG 4) Tower Road North
- MG 5) The Summerhouse

Preservation & Enhancement Strategy



The main objective is to preserve and enhance the historic character and appearance of the conservation area, its historic buildings, features and their setting as follows:

1 Preserve and reinforce the historic character.

By encouraging repairs and ensuring that any alterations or work to the listed buildings, features and surroundings are considered in relation to the historic context. The re-use of the Windmill Tower Building as a museum will safeguard the future of this building.

2 Increase the coherence of the site.

The site is currently fragmented without clear links between the various important buildings and features. The Council will look at the potential to achieve better links and enhancements by agreement or acquiring or leasing land.

3 Minimise the impact of modern development.

Warmley Gardens and the historic buildings are surrounded by modern development which impinges on the historic character and setting. Enhancement proposals will seek to reduce this impact by protecting important views and using landscaping to screen and soften the impact of obtrusive features.

4 Ensure any new development is sensitive to the historic context.

New development needs to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is important that it does not adversely affect the setting of the historic gardens, existing historic features or harm the underground archaeological resource.

These objectives will be secured through the guidance in this leaflet and the associated Design and Management Guidance Notes.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

The Friends of Kingswood Heritage Museum Trust and Warmley Gardens consist of a group of volunteers who hope to set up a museum in Champion's former Brass works and Windmill Tower and to improve the historic gardens. They would welcome help from volunteers and also assistance and sponsorship towards funding. Tel: 0117 9675711

GRANTS AND FURTHER ADVICE

Financial support (up to 50%) and other forms of assistance may be available to individuals and local organisations towards enhancement schemes. For information and advice please contact **The Director Planning, Transportation & Environmental Services, Environment & Conservation Section**, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire BS15 9TR. Tel: 01454 868004

This advice note was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 17 July 1997, following a period of public consultation. It supplements the policies of the Local Plan and the Council will take them into account bear when assessing the merits of planning applications.

This leaflet takes into account the Good Practice Guide on Conservation Areas from English Heritage & PPG 15. The leaflet should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Advice Note which gives general advice & details of special controls and policies which apply in Conservation Areas.