

## PART 4: SIGNIFICANCE of the HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### 4.1 Historic Buildings

The Proposed Conservation Area Boundary comprises 56 Listed Building entries.

The greatest concentration is in the upper High Street and Bristol Road which has been relatively undeveloped during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is the early mediaeval core of secular occupation by the Abbey in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

The upper High Street is dominated by the Parish Church of St John the Baptist of c1250 in origin with extensions of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Church was restored after the collapse of the tower in 1863. The tower now rises to three stages over the west entrance and is a focal point at the former Church Square. Built in Bath stone in contrast to much of the town's historic buildings which are constructed predominately in Blue Lias. railings around its front have gone.

At the west entry into Keynham Conservation Area; Freeland House and St Dunstan's Presbytery are rendered houses with clay tile roofs. St Dunstan's one of the few surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century houses in Keynsham Originally part of a larger group of historic buildings; demolished in the 1970's to form Old Vicarage Green.

A 1935 Red Telephone K6 Box by Old Manor House is a rare survival. Designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (famous for Battersea Power Station and Liverpool Anglican Cathedral).

Opposite the Church is an almost continuous group of 2 and 3 storey Georgian and earlier town houses with ground floor shops. Mostly politely rendered to imitate ashlar and hide the rough local Lias stone. No 6-8 has its rough Lias stone exposed by removing the render. A few good surviving traditional shopfronts. A very significant grouping of historic buildings forming a commanding street scene with the Church.



Freeland House.



Rare surviving traditional shopfront



Once a much more in intact Church Square



nos 2- 8 upper High Street

The lower High Street by contract is almost devoid of listed buildings except the fine Baptist Chapel built 1834 in set back from and above the shop frontages with a paved and landscaped courtyard. Again colour washed render to imitate stone ashlar. It has an Italianate style; but the pillars and globes to the entrance piers have disappeared.

At the opposite end of the lower High Street on the west side 64 and 66 pair of fine 2 storey Georgian houses of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rendered with original sash joinery to the first floor and pediment door cases with fanlights to the ground. Both have 20<sup>th</sup> century shop fronts masking some surviving original fascias and pilasters. The best surviving houses in the lower part of the High Street.

In Temple Street all that survives from the 1970's decimation is the Ship Inn and the Trout Tavern. Both listed grade 2. The Trout Tavern was converted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from a Georgian house; but nonetheless an imposing building with some good surviving joinery. The Ship Inn is earlier and from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with stone mullion windows and some iron casements.

Also in Temple Street a group of shops from nos 20 to 40. Mostly 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey houses converted to shops; and mostly altered and rendered without any original joinery. But a good range of clay roofs down the street; well weathered and attractive. They occupy mediaeval 14<sup>th</sup> century burgage plots and no doubt re-built many times over the past 600 years.

Dapps Hill contains older 17th Buildings, some with stone mullion windows; but mostly with Georgian sashes, blue lias walling and rendering. All with clay roofs.

Albert Mill is evidence is the industrial past. Built in 1830 blue lias stone and slate roof. It retains some machinery to interior which was used to extract dye from logwood imported from the West Indies. The site has a long history of Mill use from the 10th/11th century.



Couple of good High Street Georgian buildings



Baptist Church



Cottages in Dapps Hill



Albert Mill prior to conversion to housing in 1930

## 4.2 Archaeological Significance

The medieval core of Keynsham has been redeveloped to a great extent without any prior assessment or excavation being carried out.

The Tithe Map of 18402 is the best guide to the layout of the town and it indicates that the High Street and Temple Street were the main streets of the early medieval town and because of their straightness show a degree of planning the town by the Abbey.

The Abbey precincts would have predated the High Street laying out and would have stretched from St John the Baptist east to the Abbey Site. See Plan 2

The Augustinian Abbey is important in terms of history although 50% of its below ground value disturbed by the railway in 1840 and later by the by-pass in 1964-5. Its now protected by Scheduled Monument designation.

The Romano-British settlement, known as Traiectus, north of the Town is a nationally significant large settlement with a long history of occupation from the first to the fourth century. It is now protected by Scheduled Ancient Monument designation. Whilst important in the national context of Romano-British occupation there is no clear evidence of settlement continuity which laid the foundation for the present town of Keynsham.

The long period of presence of water mills along the River Chew have given the town prosperity for over 1000 years. The changing production from wool fulling through to malting and brass manufacturing is an important part of our industrial archaeology.

There is still much to be learnt about the history and planned layout of Keynsham; and substantial areas with archaeological potential remain within the Conservation Area and its immediate setting.

### 4.3 Settlement and Setting

Keynsham has long and complex history of settlement. Probably first occupied by the Romans as a bridging point south of the River Avon on the "Via Julia" Roman Road.

Later in 12<sup>th</sup> century as a Monastic Abbey Town. Much of the present towns layout in both the High Street and Temple Street derives from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century with some surviving rear Burgage plots having been rebuilt on many times up until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and which were still evident on the 1931 OS Edition

Many of the historic house burgage plots and former gardens have been built over in the 1970's which have obliterated archaeological evidence of the early construction. However, under car parks and rear gardens there is likely to remain preserved a considerable archaeological legacy which should be investigated as opportunities arise during development changes in the Town.

The steep river valley of the River Chew provides a striking landscape and today an attractive Memorial Park close to into the town centre and a focal point which benefits from good public usage and visually contrasting views from within to the town sitting above.

Both the river and the steep valley have influenced the form of the towns topography by it being mostly built from the 13<sup>th</sup> century above the river valley and its floods from. The River has also influenced the towns economic prosperity through its mills and river transport.

Former historic connections into the River Valley from both the High Street and Temple Street have been disrupted by modern late 20<sup>th</sup> century developments; and which also encroach into the top slopes of the valley. The junction between the top of the river valley on the east side and the park's landscaped corridor should be preserved and where possible enhance through future development changes.

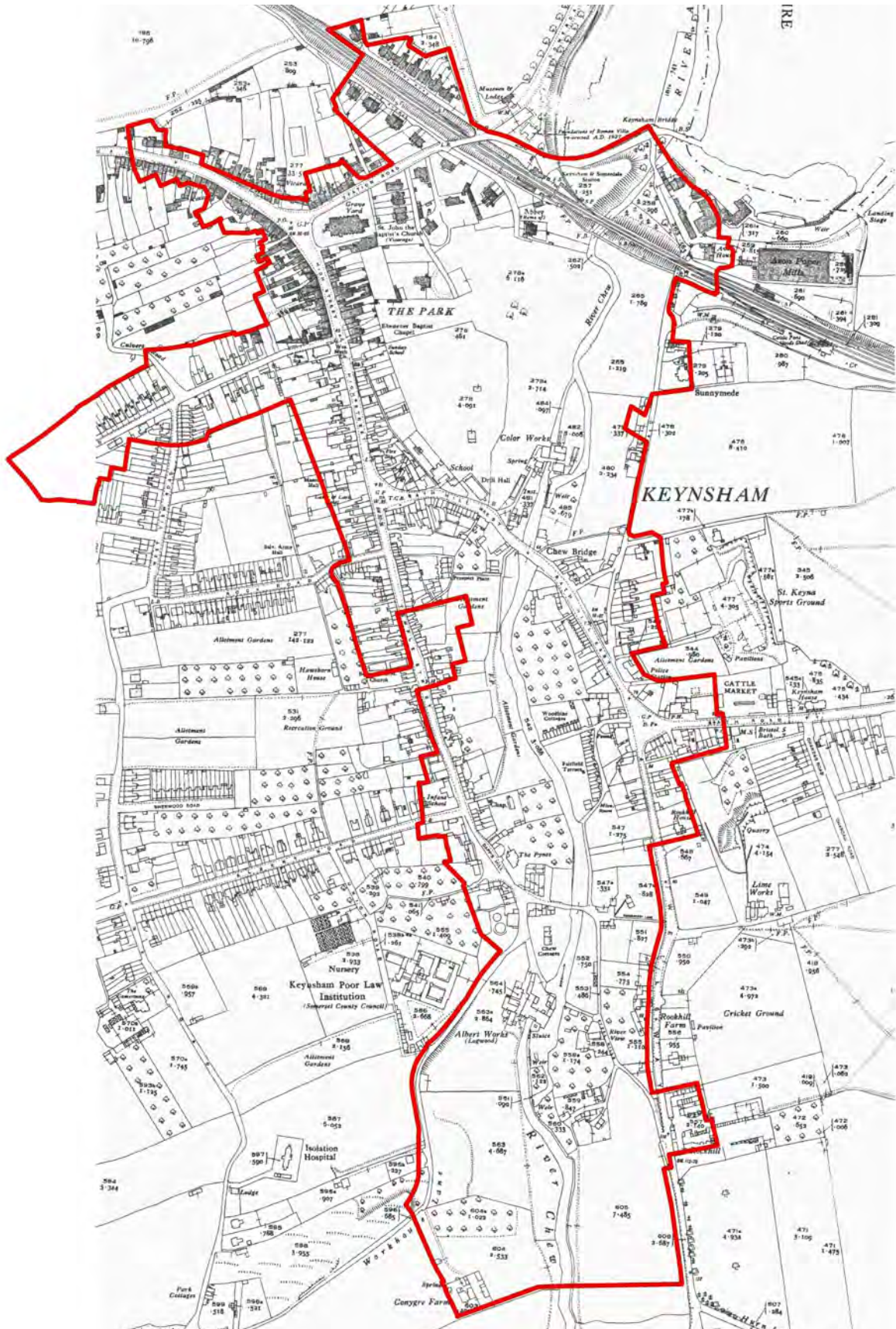
As the town grew as a commuting dormitory of Bristol and Bath it attracted a degree of re-development pressure; and during the 1960's and 1970's Keynsham has been savaged by indiscriminate modern redevelopment. The result has been a disruption of the historic plan form and removal of much of its architectural interest in the core Town Centre.

Despite unfortunate recent past changes and lack of intactness; Keynsham still appears as a small busy historic market town with a wide High Street and domestic scale commercial and retail buildings.

This report also testifies to the survival of significant elements of the medieval and later town together; and future archaeological research has much to offer a full understanding of Keynsham and its past.

There is sufficient remains and character to justify its conservation area status and indeed extensions to its boundary to include some good surviving examples of architecture in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The continued popularity of the Town means that there will always be a degree of development change. But with this comes an opportunity for managed heritage regeneration to replace poor architecture with sensitive enhancement.



**Plan 5:** 1931 OS showing in red line proposed revised Conservation Area Boundary. The expansion of the town to the west and east. The Town Centre is reasonably intact with long burgaje plots to rear of High Street and Temple Street.

#### 4.4 Economic Activity and Uses

Keynsham owes its early origins and economy to the Romano-British settlement of Traiectus. However this is some distance from the north edge of the current built up area of the Town and its unclear whether this gave rise to settlement continuity or not. If nothing else, its position on the route from *Aquae Sulis* (Bath) and *Corinium* (Cirencester) to *Abonae* (Sea Mills) and the crossing to Wales may have given the site a market or trade function.

The Domesday Book (1086) describes the rural agricultural economy of Keynsham Parish but mentions 6 mills along the Chew Valley; no doubt reflecting the importance of the water power of the River Chew. It is likely that the Keynsham mills were sited in places, which later gave rise to mills in the post-medieval period. A series of indentures from 1497 onwards mention grist or fulling mills called 'Avynmyll' (Avon Mill), 'Sowthemyll' (South Mill later Albert Mill) and 'Downmyll' (Down Mill). The mills in the town continued to prosper through until the 20<sup>th</sup> century; although changing production to cotton, dyes and most notably the brass industry from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The religious houses recorded in the Augustinian Abbey show that there were within the precinct a tannery, smithy, almonry, vineyard, guest and lodging houses. This would have supported local employment and growth of the Town.

In addition its recorded that there were trading fairs in operation from Saxon times. By the 14<sup>th</sup> Century there is evidence of a range of trades in the town and the expansion of the High Street south to create a Market Place.

Keynsham has 3 market areas in the town:

- Around the Church
- A livestock market at the junction of Wellsway, Bath Hill and Bath road.
- South area of High Street junction with Bath Hill.

All 3 areas are still preserved by modern property boundaries but no longer trading market places.

The survival of the medieval town plots in the Bristol Road, High Street and Temple Street depicts the past and present commercial core of the Town. Although Keynsham declined in prosperity after the Dissolution of The Monasteries in 1539; its evident that the Mill industry continued to flourish and the High Street retained various trades and numerous Inns and public houses.

In 1840 the arrival of the railway gave some impetus to housing growth but initially not associated with any industrial expansion. This came later with the Somerdale Fry's factory in 1920. The original Brunel rail buildings all have been demolished and removed and those in their place of no significance.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century housing expansion on the west, east and later south sides of Keynsham has increased the population from 3152 in 1901 to the present day of nearly 16,000. See Plan 5. The Somerdale factory secured local employment in 1924; until closure in 2011. The development of the Riverside complex in the mid 1970's brought in new office workers into the Town which continue in the new Civic Centre redevelopment with additional shops, restaurant and library.

#### 4.5 The Town Centre Environment

The shopping centre runs from Temple Street to St John's Church in upper High Street. It is a key area of activity and indicator of the towns prosperity. In the primary High Street (nos 36-89) there are a mix of multiple, regional and local retailers represented. In Temple Street and the High Street north of the junction with Charlton Road the uses become more mixed and secondary in nature; but the historic buildings are in greater concentration providing a highly significant presence.

There are around 115 retail units in the Town Centre. The key characteristics identified from both this character survey report and recent and past retail studies (DTZ Retail Strategy 2008 and GVA Retail Study 2014) are:

- Reasonable representation of service retail -such as bakers, hairdressers, take-aways;
- Significant number of charity shops which is a relatively high representation;
- Small number of specialist shops;
- Increasing number of vacancy rates-which during the survey identified 8 units empty (December 2014);
- Average spend per trip is low at £24 (data 2014);
- Average length of shoppers stay just over 1 hour;
- Leisure and evening visits are very low (8% of people);
- Many poorly altered shopfronts and advertisements;
- poor access connections to open space;
- Street light columns over-scaled and extend above roof heights;
- Only 2 bench seats for shoppers use;
- Street furniture poorly maintained;
- Pavement extensions on west side of High Street creates an uneven profile;
- High volume of traffic which cause poor air quality and uncomfortable shopper environment.

The Tesco Store (2010) and Sainsbury's (2014) has significantly increased the level of convenience food store offer in the Town and are the main attractors for shopping in the Town.

The visual appraisal backed by the recent retail report (GVA 2014) outline that the High Street has a lower than average trading and a high vacancy. This indicates that the shops are collectively trading below company average levels.

The GVA Study states “ *Overall, Keynsham is a reasonably healthy centre and the Civic Centre development will provide a boost for the centre. However...the centre is vulnerable to impacts from the larger surrounding centres of Bristol and Bath, particularly for comparison goods shopping*”

The Town Plan (2014) considers this is partly affected by the rather limited sizes of retail units on the High Street; which at present may deter interest. An improved range of size of units in the town, has the potential to stimulate interest from quality specialist retailers. The Town Plan also considers there is opportunity for a one-way semi pedestrianisation scheme which will improve the High Street viability.

The retail studies also state that there is little capacity in the short term for more convenience or comparison stores. This will limit opportunities for further redevelopment. The retail states that focus instead should be on the existing floorspace stock, protecting it from proposals elsewhere and also ensuring that it provides a quality which is attractive to existing and new occupiers. Although there has been progress towards improvement of the retail position with Tesco and the new Civic Centre there remains critical work preparing a public realm movement strategy; improving the centre's environment; enhance paving and crossings; and improve access to open spaces.

## **Part 5: LOCAL DETAILS**

### **5.1 General Design, Materials & Construction Features**

The detailed character analysis documents the inevitable range of styles and periods in which buildings in the Keynsham Conservation Area have been constructed. There may be some circumstances where emulating the style of existing historic buildings with a new addition may be an appropriate response – such as where one period and style predominates within a locality. However, such an approach is not always recommended. In the past buildings have always been of their time, and new buildings today should reflect current times. One key feature that can successfully link a building with its location or ‘place’ is the use of local materials for its external faces. In detailing the use of such material, lessons can be learned from the way it was detailed in the past and any particular ways such materials have been used within the locality.

Therefore, this section gives some examples of the use of local materials within the Conservation Area but does not prescribe adherence to the architectural style in which those materials may have been used during any particular period.

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Dapps Hill, Avon Mill Lane, Wellsway, Chew Park: Brick edging to rubble stonework is a noticeable feature around the Keynsham Conservation Area.



Dapps Hill: Brick chimney stacks emerge from rubble stone gables and rubble building walls.



Dapps Hill, Charlton Road: Rubble stone soldier course window heads and arches. Several building front facades have a feature ashlar stone inserted such as date stones or carved reliefs, particularly high within stone gables. Many windows have complete ashlar stone surrounds and a number of terraced buildings have raised ashlar stone pilasters at the plot boundary.



Temple Street: Pantile and double-roman tiled roofs with an absence of dormer windows. Non-projecting eaves with no soffit boards and usually without timber fascias. Front facades of terraces are usually in line rather than stepped forwards and backwards. Steps in roofs are achieved with a variety of simple verges and parapet gables. Very few hipped roofs are present.



High Street: Traditional shopfronts with signage that is not over-sized. Traditional hanging signs. A cornice runs below the parapet with overhanging coping, articulating the top of the walls. Subdivisions between properties punctuated with chimneys and some gable parapets, subdivisions also accentuated by subtle changes of paint colour.



High Street: Some plot widths are narrow, accentuating the vertical emphasis of building frontages. Low coped stone rubble front boundary walls are often terminated by dressed stone piers with sometimes elaborate capitals.



Vandyck Avenue: A few examples of the original format of Georgian windows survive around the Conservation Area.



High Street: Occasional gables facing the street occupy the whole plot width and give added stature to particular buildings. Window openings are generally of a vertical emphasis. In this example stone dressings around windows and stepped dressed stone to the gables now project because the original stucco coating has been removed and poor quality stonework has been exposed.



Rubble stone front boundary walls are generally mid-height. Some are taller and some are lower but rarely less than two-feet in height. In places the boundary walls have dressed stone copings but for most domestic properties they have a cock-and-hen capping. The quality of the wall cappings vary. They should be sizeable stones alternating in height with mortar joints similar to the wall itself. Unfortunately, as stones are lost, many have been repaired with small pieces of stone, often with wide spacings and a large amount of mortar between and below. Several also have incorrectly alternated stones on edge with coursed stones.



The local lias stone varies in the way it has been laid within building walls. In many earlier examples it has been irregularly worked and is laid in irregular courses, in some the courses become quite discontinuous and some examples have larger 'jumper' stones. In many other later examples the rough faced stone has been cut to form more regular courses. Ashlar stone quoins at corners are usually of differing course heights. Several new buildings have attempted to copy the stone detailing but the rubble stonework is far more regular and cast stone quoins are of equal size. Attention to detail is important where the detailing of new buildings is intended to emulate that of historic predecessors.



Common problems with maintenance of existing stonework is the use of modern strong mortars for repointing, and there are many examples around the town of raised 'ribbon' pointing which allows water to sit on ledges: As a consequence the erosion of the face of stonework has accelerated. Where local rubble stonework is to be repointed, a mortar should be used that is no stronger than the stones and the mortar surface should be 'bagged' flush or slightly recessed where arises are pronounced. The mortar mix should be flexible and should contain a range of angular stone sizes. Chard sand within the mix can provide a successful finish.

## 5.2 Detailing and Shopfronts



No.7 Bristol Road is one of few building frontages in the centre of Keynsham Conservation Area that has changed little over the past century. Note the loss of upper Georgian windows.



The Old Vicarage Green development, set back on the right, replaced an entire street frontage along the north side of Bristol Road. On the left No.3 was demolished to form a new road access.



One can still see the remnants of two traditional shopfronts at Nos.6 to 10 High Street. Note the low quality domestic door at the centre that has replaced the previous panelled door.





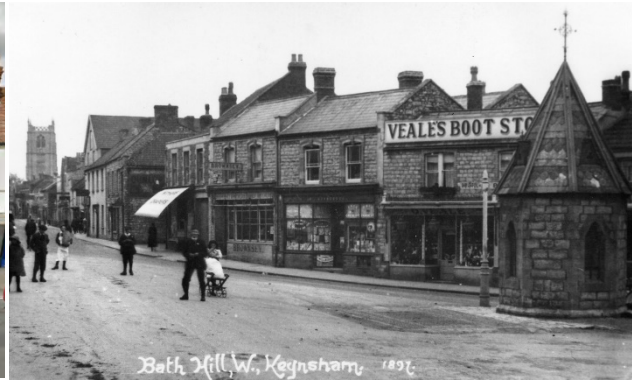
At Nos. 14 to 18 High Street further remnants of a linked series of traditional shopfronts are in evidence. The SNUK shopfront makes a particularly unappealing intervention into what is left.



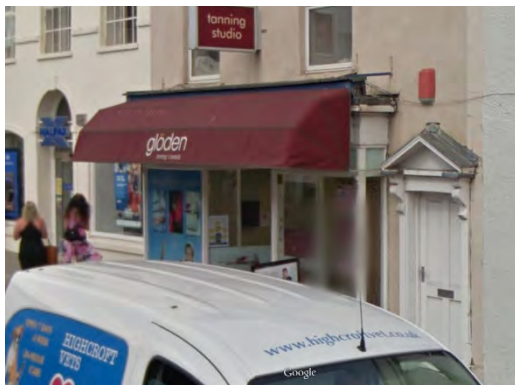
No. 58 is one of many remaining older buildings in the High Street that has lost all remnants of the traditional shopfronts and entrances that populated the frantages.



The huge bright fascia at No. 60 High Street has replaced the traditional signage of previous years.



Little now remains of any of the traditional shopfronts to Nos 1 to 9 Temple Street at the corner of High Street.



The upper parts of the traditional shopfront to No. 55 High Street are still in evidence.



The imposing façade of No. 53, the former eyelet factory, previously had both a front boundary wall and railings, and arched windows that related to the windows above.



The enormous fascia at No. 43 replaced another traditional shopfront.



High Street, Keynsham.

Although No. 39 has not lost a traditional shopfront, the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century shopfront is as out of place within the façade as many of the other wide fascias now along the High Street.



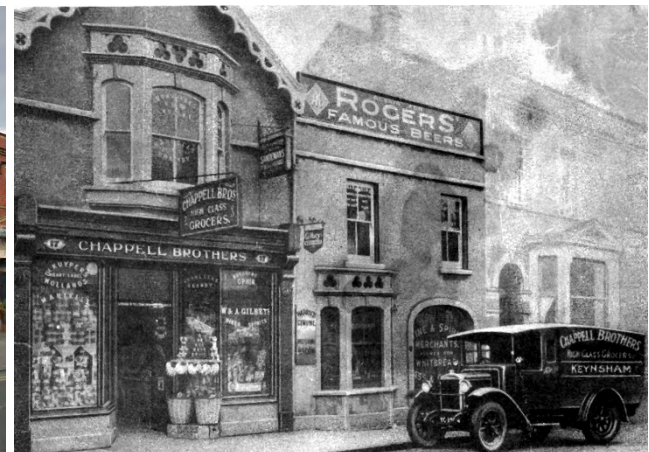
Parts of the piers remain at the front of Keynsham Baptist Church but the railings and entrance arch were, like many others in the High Street, removed for the war effort.



No. 37 High Street was the original location of the town's post office. The entire frontage was remodelled at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the lower half removed later.



Another traditional shopfront has been completely lost from the frontage of the listed No. 23 High Street.



The replacement building frontage at No. 17 High Street contains so much less craftsmanship and detail than its predecessor of much the same form.



Traditional shopfronts to Nos. 9 and 11 High Street are largely missing today.

## PART 6: GENERAL GUIDANCE

### 6.1 Planning Policy Context

Local planning authorities must: review their conservation areas from ‘*time to time*<sup>1</sup> and to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts’.<sup>2</sup> Also, the *National Planning Policy Framework 2012* and associated *Planning Practice Guidance* states “A conservation area appraisal can be used to help local planning authorities develop a management plan and appropriate policies for the Local Plan. A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection”<sup>3</sup>

English Heritage guidance published in March 2011 notes the benefits of an appraisal of a designated conservation area and which “...will lead to an understanding and articulation of its character which can be used to develop a robust policy framework for planning decisions.”<sup>4</sup>

Bath and North East Somerset Council has adopted its Core Strategy in July 2014. This sets out detailed development vision and design principles. The Core Policies include:

CP6 “*Environmental Quality*”; acknowledges the distinctive character of the historic environment and the District’s conservation areas; and that delivery of development schemes and public realm refurbishment will be in part through “*Conservation Area Appraisals*”.

CP12 “*Centres and Retailing*” identifies Keynham Town Centre as suitable for community and retail facilities and enhancement.<sup>6</sup> The potential for enhancement and development within Keynham is expanded in the Council’s Placemaking Plan; and which states “a *Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan*.. clearly identify what features of the Keynham Conservation Areas should be preserved or enhanced”.

The Council’s Placemaking Plan states that “*The Council will review its programme for conservation Area Appraisal to ensure they remain up to date and relevant....*”

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<sup>1</sup> Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<sup>2</sup> Section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<sup>3</sup> Planning Practice Guidance paragraph -25

<sup>4</sup> Understanding Place: Conservation Area designation, appraisal and management. English Heritage paragraph 1.6

## Glossary

**Listed Buildings:** Buildings on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Secretary of State under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**Conservation Area:** Defined by the 1990 Act as '*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument:** Monuments which are statutory protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

**Historic Environment Record (HER):** This is a database of heritage assets and archaeology maintained and administered by B&NES Council. The information is primarily used as a planning tool for desk top assessments for the historical and archaeological significance of sites

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO):** An order made by a Local Planning Authority in respect of trees or woodlands to prohibit works to trees without consent (part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999)

## Contact Details

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Further contact details can be found on B&NES Council's website:  
[www.bathnes.gov.uk](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk)

Contact for advice regarding:  
Listed Buildings and Listed Building Consent  
Archaeology  
Conservation Areas  
Works to trees within Conservation Areas  
Planning Permission  
Planning Policy  
Urban Design

All the above teams are located in Planning Services.