

# Pershore

Conservation Area



# Adoption Statement

The Pershore Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted by Wychavon District Council as a document for planning purposes on 24th April 2007. Minute 372 of the Executive Board meeting of 24th April 2007 refers.

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# What is this appraisal for?

## 1 Introduction

### What is this Appraisal for?

#### 1.1

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, usually the historic part of a town or village, where we wish to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Part of Pershore is a conservation area.

#### 1.2

Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 we must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This appraisal identifies the special interest and character of the Pershore Conservation Area, and provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of its character or appearance can be achieved. The first part of the appraisal identifies its special interest and character. The second part sets out management proposals for addressing the issues identified in the appraisal.

#### 1.3

The Pershore Conservation Area was designated in November 1968 and revised in 1989. The boundary was reviewed in 2006 during the preparation of this appraisal. The current conservation area boundary is shown in the appraisal.

### Planning Policy Framework

#### 1.4

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the national, regional and the local planning policy framework, particularly:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) which sets out Government policy on the protection of conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment;

- Policy QE5 of The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and Policies CTC19 and policy CTC20 of the adopted Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011, which seek to protect and enhance conservation areas; and

- Policy ENV12 of the Wychavon District Local Plan (June 2006) which is intended to ensure that development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas.

#### 1.5

Broadly, these policies seek to ensure that the conservation area is preserved by:

#### Refusing permission for:

- the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage its character or appearance
- the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage its character or appearance
- development which would be harmful to its setting or character or appearance
- development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of historic plots, layouts and street pattern, important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area
- signage which would be harmful to the character or appearance of the conservation area, and

#### and requiring new development to:

- respect its context in design, including scale, form, proportion and detailing
- Use materials in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the conservation area, and maintain a similar mix
- be located on their sites in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the conservation area
- Boundary walls, railings and hedges should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the conservation area, and these should use similar materials and detailing, or species, and
- Shop signs to respect the character of the buildings and quality of the historic environment in their siting, size, materials and design.

# Pershore Conservation Area

1.6

In accordance with the new planning system introduced in 2004 we are preparing a Local Development Framework. This will contain conservation area policies that will supersede the Structure and Local Plan from 2009.

1.7

This appraisal supplements Structure Plan and Local Plan Policies CTC19, CTC20 and ENV12 and was adopted by the Council on 24th April 2007.

## 2 Summary of Special Interest

2.1

Pershore has considerable historic, architectural and archaeological interest. As a significant monastic centre in the Saxon period, a prosperous market town in the early medieval period and a place of wealth and society in the Georgian period, it has more than a thousand years of settlement history. Each of these principal phases of development has left a wealth of historic buildings and structures overlaying an historic settlement form, with buried archaeological deposits and high potential for artefact recovery.

2.2

Pershore today is a thriving rural town with much evidence of its early origin and changing role in history. It has been described as a "miniature Cheltenham", and the most familiar image of the town is its gracious Georgian and Regency town houses lining the main street and market place, with the impressive Abbey tower dominating the skyline. It is, however, a conservation area of contrasts, with its conspicuous Georgian period buildings overlaying the earlier Saxon settlement and medieval market town.

2.3

Beyond the polite architecture of the larger houses flanking the main thoroughfares, more modest workers' cottages line the narrow streets, and behind the public face of the tightly packed buildings throughout there are quiet gardens and yards in well defined plots divided and defined by brick walls. Many of these plots retain historic

barns, workshops, storage buildings and stables, giving a clue to the history of the town. Glimpses of gardens & trees through carriage arches and over boundary walls, together with the presence of significant areas of open space in the heart of the town and views of the countryside, frequently give it a rural and tranquil feel despite its compact plan and the proximity of the concentration of activity in its commercial centre.

2.4

Notably, significant modern intrusion in the form of obtrusive street lighting, road markings and signage, which can undermine the character and appearance of an historic place, is largely absent from the conservation area.

2.5

With the survival of much of its historic plan and building fabric, the dominance of local businesses and lack of significant modern intrusion, Pershore is a town with a strong historic character and local identity.

**The special interest of Pershore that justifies its designation as a conservation area includes:**

**Its long history, still evident in its form, buildings and other structures**

**The strong survival of the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval street pattern, urban form and buildings, including burgage plots and rear ancillary buildings**

**Its significant archaeological potential**

**The survival of a clear demonstration of historic social hierarchy within the town, evident in the size, design and siting of buildings**

**Its architectural unity and coherence, derived from largely 18th century design and a restricted palette of materials**

**Its continuous street frontages with strong rhythm derived from a consistent use of common design elements**

# Pershore Conservation Area

**The number and quality of historic buildings**

**The consistency and high level of survival of historic fabric and architectural detailing**

**The strong visual and historic relationship between the town and its largely unspoiled riverside setting**

**The siting and prominence of the abbey as a landmark building**

**The significant contribution of trees, gardens, open spaces and views**

**Its vibrant commercial centre with its strong local identity**

The conservation area boundary is drawn to reflect this special interest.

## 3 Assessing Special Interest

### Location & Setting

#### Location

3.1

Pershore is situated in the rich agricultural land of the Vale of Evesham, roughly mid-way between the city of Worcester and the market town of Evesham. The River Avon flows to the east of the town, cutting into the gravel soils of the floodplain to create a series of low flat terraces. The historic core of the town stands immediately adjacent to the river on one of these terraces, between an ancient crossing point over the river and Allesborough Hill to the north-west.

#### Landscape Setting

3.2

The town sits low in the landscape just above the water meadows. The gently meandering river, with its tree-lined and wooded banks and flat open floodplain, form its immediate setting to the east and south, with views of the wooded and grazed slopes of Bredon Hill forming a distant backdrop. To the west and north the historic core of the town

is flanked by modern residential developments on former agricultural land. The land rises gently out of the town to the north and west from where the town is visible below in its vale setting, with distant views over the vale to the Cotswold Hills beyond.

Landscape setting



3.3

While the immediate agricultural setting to the west and north of the historic core of the town has been largely overlaid by modern residential expansion, its riverside setting to the east and south is preserved by the floodplain. Here there is very little intrusion by modern development, so that the relationship of the historic core of the town with the river, water meadows, countryside setting and the historic settlement edge, are still readily apparent. This setting is most obvious in views from the river and on approach from the south where the abrupt change from open fields and water meadows to urban development is one of the defining features of the town, providing a distinct sense of place. The preservation of this unspoiled setting is essential to the town's character.

3.4

Views between buildings, over open space to the surrounding countryside and the long street vista to Bredon Hill along its principal High Street/Bridge Street thoroughfare, provide frequent visual connections with the surrounding landscape, reinforcing the sense of its rural setting.

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## Historical Development & Archaeology

### The Origins & Development of Pershore

3.5

Pershore has a settlement history stretching back over 2000 years, with archaeological evidence of Roman occupation. The town we see today dates from the 7th century and has seen several distinct phases of development throughout the following centuries, each of which has left its mark on its plan and built form.

3.6

Pershore originated in the Saxon period with the foundation of a monastery in 689AD. This early monastery is thought to have been within the present abbey site, with a precinct extending to the line of Bridge Street and High Street. The earliest settlement development was to the north of this early monastic complex. The triangular area to the north of the abbey, defined by Church

Row, Lower Priest Lane and Little Priest Lane, is thought to be the area of a Saxon market place, with house plots of a rural settlement lying to its east and west.

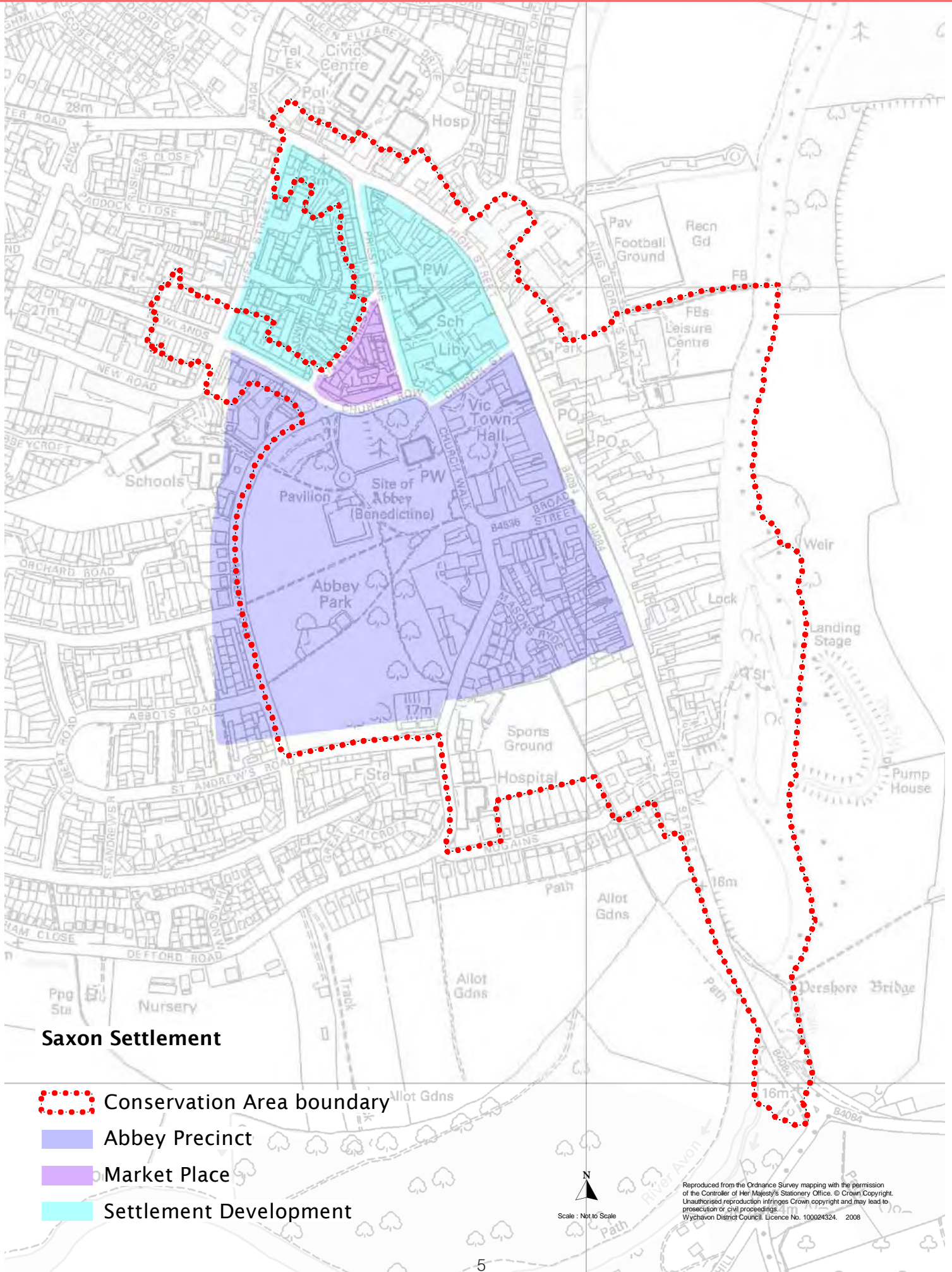
3.7

The monastery was re-founded as a Benedictine Abbey in 972 as part of King Ethelwold's monastic reform. Ownership of its lands was subsequently split in 1065 with appropriation by Edward the Confessor of half of Pershore Abbey's extensive estates with which to endow Westminster Abbey. The land area of the town was divided between the two abbeys along a line now defined by Broad Street. The southern part, including Bridge Street, was granted to Westminster, and much of the northern part, including the High Street, retained with Pershore. The lands granted to Westminster were bestowed with the right to establish a borough. This division in ownership and status between the two areas has had a lasting influence on the town's development and form that is still apparent today in the location of the medieval market place and differences in plot and building sizes.

Pershore Abbey



# Pershore Conservation Area



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3.8

The Domesday Book of 1086 gives a glimpse of the town as it existed towards the end of the 11th century. By now the earliest part of the present abbey church had been built, and the entry for Pershore records 114 farmers and burgesses with their families and dependants, which, including the monks and their servants, suggests a settlement of some 500 people. That part owned by Westminster is recorded as having 28 burgesses holding tenements, and having an income from tolls. Bridge Street, controlled by Westminster, was already developed by this time as a planned series of burgage plots along a pre-existing routeway leading to the river bridge.

3.9

That part retained with Pershore abbey seems to have retained only manorial status.

Archaeological evidence suggests occupation along the High Street commencing by the time of Domesday, or possibly later, in the 12th century. Although there is no mention of a market in Domesday, a shared market is thought to have been jointly held by this time by the two abbeys along the line dividing the two estates, within the area now defined by Broad Street.

3.10

By the time of Domesday Pershore was a well-established monastic centre and an embryo market town concerned with trade. The settlement would have comprised a huddle of timber buildings lining the main street and lanes, overshadowed by the large stone church of the monastery. Although there was by this time the beginnings of a market town, it was still essentially a monastic centre, dominated by Pershore Abbey and farming of the surrounding estates to provide for the abbey, its monks and workers.

3.11

By the late 12th century Pershore Abbey had been granted status similar to the borough status of Westminster, and by the end of the 13th century Pershore had expanded to become a well-established trading community. Strategically placed on one of the main routes between London and Worcester and close to the river crossing point, it was by now economically important and a moderately prosperous, medium sized, medieval country market town.

3.12

The main urban form of the town around Bridge Street, High Street, Broad Street, Newlands, Head Street, Priest Lane, Church Row and Church Street was well established by this time. Traffic travelling the main Worcester to London route would have passed along the High Street and Bridge Street to the river crossing, and the High Street and Bridge Street were both laid out by now as a series of burgage plots flanking both sides of this main thoroughfare. There are records of a range of trades and industries in the town at this time, including butchers, bakers, brewers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, candlemakers, blacksmiths, wool staplers, craters, inn-keepers and a tannery. Numerous inns would have provided refreshments and overnight accommodation for travellers on their journey to and from London. Shops, inns, houses, workshops and businesses would have lined this main thoroughfare, while workers' cottages and workshops would have lined the residential streets at Newlands, Priest Lane, Church Row, Church Street and Head Street.

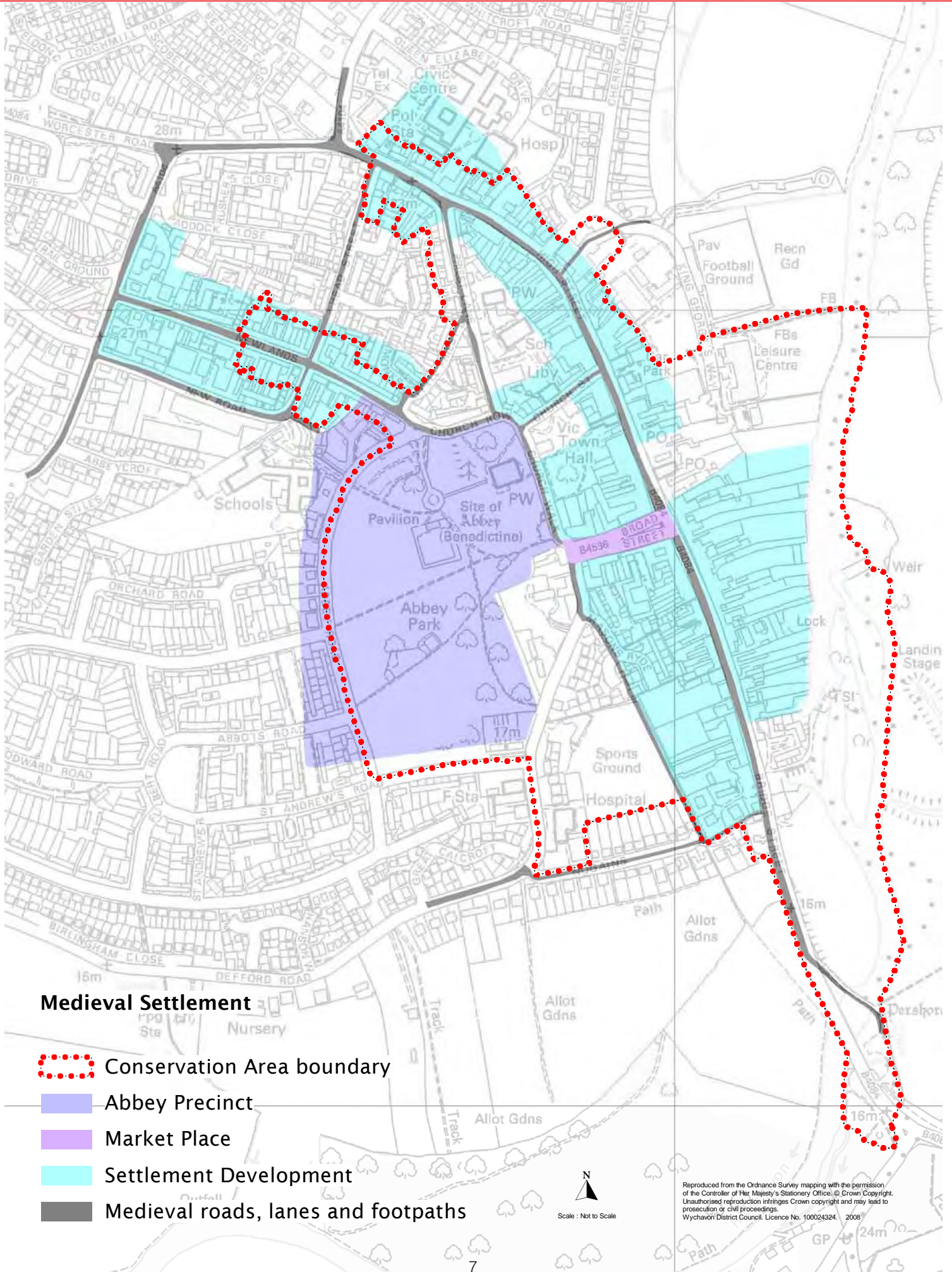
3.13

Buildings would have been tightly packed along the street frontages with defined plots at the rears containing workshops and storage buildings. The surrounding fertile land and meadows would have been intensively cultivated, mown for hay and grazed, with produce sold at the market and a constant stream of workers, animals, crops and supplies passing in and out of the town. By this time there was a weekly market in the town and the market place would have been its commercial heart.






3.14

The majority of buildings would have been timber framed constructions with thatched roofs. None of these are known to survive, but the more substantially stone constructed Abbey Church of the Holy Cross, St. Andrew's church, the river bridges and vaulted basement to nos. 21 & 23 High Street, are still present. The street plan, the siting of buildings and definition of building plots established in the Saxon and early medieval periods is, however, still present and readily identifiable today.

# Pershore Conservation Area



## Medieval Settlement

-  Conservation Area boundary
-  Abbey Precinct
-  Market Place
-  Settlement Development
-  Medieval roads, lanes and footpaths

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3.15

The town suffered two major fires in the 13th century. Reduced plot sizes on the west side of Bridge Street and the laying out of Broad Street in its present form are believed to date from subsequent re-planning of these areas following the fires.

3.16

Records show that the medieval market town had reached its peak of prosperity by the 13th century and was in decline in the 14th and 15th centuries. The fires, followed by plague and a series of poor harvests in the 14th century, may have contributed to its decline.

3.17

The 16th and 17th centuries were turbulent years in the town's history. Most of the abbey precinct became a private house and grounds upon dissolution of Pershore Abbey in 1539, and less than a year later the monastery was surrendered to the King, ending more than 500 years of presence in the town. The town was caught up in the struggle between Charles I and Parliament in the Civil War in the 17th century. With its strategic position at the river crossing point and its location on an important main road, it was repeatedly plundered by both sides and left impoverished.

3.18

Mid-16th century records show a population of some 216 families with Yeomen, husbandmen and labourers recorded, as well as occupations such as miller, baker, wool stapling, glove making, tanning, butcher and shopkeepers. It continued in its role as a medium sized rural market town

throughout the 16th and 17th centuries with no indication of much change or expansion beyond the limits of its Saxon and medieval form.

3.19

The 18th and early 19th centuries, however, saw significant change, with the arrival of new wealth and the transformation of the timber fabric of the old town into the Pershore of brick buildings we see today.

3.20

This new phase of prosperity and development was triggered by the development of the turnpike roads and the river. The improvement to roads brought about by the turnpike acts allowed a significant increase in haulage traffic and passenger coaches. With its strategic location on the main Worcester to London turnpike road this development marked a transformation for Pershore, from a settlement based on agriculture and related trade to one of a prominent coaching stop and a fashionable and convenient place to reside. At the same time investment in the River Avon to make it navigable expanded river trade and brought in new wealth, with sugar, oil, wine, tobacco, iron and lead transported upstream from Bristol to Warwick, Evesham and Stratford, and corn, cheese and wool travelling downstream. By the mid-18th century the river was open to all who paid a toll, and by the end of the century it was a primary route for the transfer of coal, corn and grain. This expansion of trade and prosperity in the 18th century was mirrored by a steady increase in population, from 1,434 persons in 1756 to 1,655 by 1777.

River Avon lock



# Pershore Conservation Area

3.21

This period of prosperity was a time of consolidation of Pershore into the built form we would recognise today. The appearance of the town was transformed as the accumulation of generations of old timber buildings was replaced with new brick buildings or re-modelled with fashionable new brick frontages.

3.22

Large fashionable houses were built in Bridge Street, with smaller houses and cottages lining the High Street, Broad Street, Priest Lane and Church Row. This development pattern reflects the social hierarchy of the town established in its initial planning and development from the Saxon and medieval periods and is a characteristic feature of the town.

3.23

Warehouses and storage barns were built at the rear of properties backing on the west-side of Bridge Street, with wharves, warehouses and

storage barns on the east side backing onto the river. Passages and goods entrances were incorporated into the redevelopment of the street frontages. These features and the several warehouses and barns still surviving at the rears of Bridge Street and High Street are tangible evidence of the role of the river in the development of the town we see today and are part of its special interest.

3.24

Several coaching inns lined the main High Street/Bridge Street thoroughfare. Many are still present as public houses. Surviving stables and coach houses at the rear are evidence of their former use and role in the town's development.

3.25

The limited extent of surviving timber framed structures suggests that the main streets of the town were substantially re-built, with renewed buildings overlaying the footprints of earlier structures. The street pattern established in the

Passages and goods entrances in Bridge Street



Fashionable houses in Bridge Street



High Street coaching Inn



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Saxon and medieval periods, however, continued in use throughout this period, with no new roads identified.

## 3.26

The arrival of the railway in the mid -19th century signalled the end of this era of river trade and road travel. The town retained its role as a local market town, primarily for horticultural and agricultural produce from the surrounding vale, and diversified into manufacture of farm machinery, jam making and cider making, but its heyday of the 18th and early 19th centuries had passed. There was little expansion of the town beyond its already well established form and little change to its built fabric other than the updating of features of some building facades to embrace new architectural fashions

## 3.27

Malting buildings are still present at the rear of Bridge Street, as are market and machinery works buildings in the High Street, illustrating the shift in the economic base of the town in its later years.

## 3.28

20th century development within the town has been limited. The most significant modern developments are the retail and leisure developments at the rear of the High Street, and the re-development of sites at Defford Road and Bridge Street. Pockets of new houses have replaced cottages in Lower Priest lane, Newlands and the northern end of the High Street and there has been limited residential redevelopment at the rear of Bridge Street.

## 3.29

Despite these more recent changes, Pershore is fortunate in retaining the majority of its historic buildings and the integrity of its early Saxon and medieval plan form. It has a wealth of historic buildings with much evidence in its form and fabric of its origins and changing role and fortunes throughout its history.

## Archaeology

### 3.30

There have been several archaeological

investigations and many finds in and around Pershore. Buried deposits containing Roman ceramics from the Roman period (43 to 409 AD) have been found close to the Abbey and at Newlands and Priest Lane, and Roman coins have been found at the site of the old mill, suggesting Roman settlement within the framework of the present town. Roman or Iron Age remains have been found in the immediate environs of the town to its west and south.

### 3.31

Anglo-Saxon remains, including pottery, a spearhead and censer cover, have been found at Priest Lane, at Newlands and immediately to the south of the town.

### 3.32

A number of excavations and finds in the town at Newlands, Little Priest Lane, Church Road, Abbey Road and to the east side of the High Street have produced evidence of medieval occupation. (1066 to 1539AD) Work at the Abbey has revealed the extent of the former abbey precinct and the location of its fishponds.

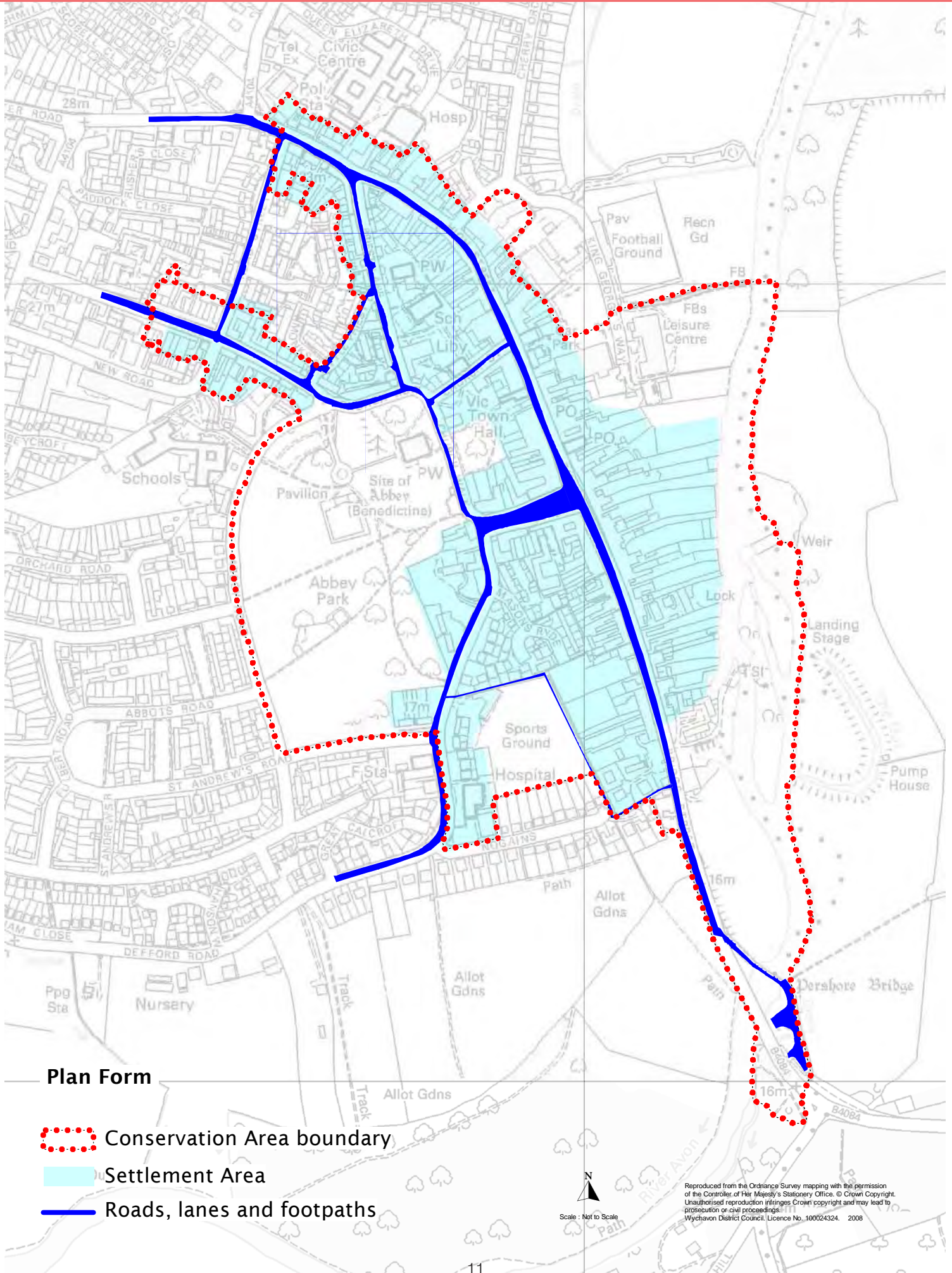
### 3.33

Pershore Bridge and the site of Pershore Abbey, including the Abbey church, are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These distinctive structures are prominent features of the town, clues to the origin of the town and tangible evidence of its long history.



Pershore old bridge

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3.34

Excavations and finds in and around Pershore are recorded in more detail in an archaeological assessment of the town produced by the County Archaeological Service in 1996. Investigation and finds recorded to date, however, suggest occupation within the framework of the present town since the Roman period, and establishment of the present town in the Saxon period. The assessment notes that the town has buried archaeological deposits with high potential for artefact recovery.

## Plan Form

3.35

Pershore has a simple linear form with a main street lined with long narrow burgage plots, remnants of a parallel back lane and a large, rectangular market place set to one side mid-way along its length. The road from Upton upon Severn meets the market place at its south-west corner, with Church Walk, leading to the Abbey, joining at the opposite north-west corner. Occasional footpaths link the main street with the former back lane and fields to the west. On the east side of the main street plots back on to the river and are serviced by passages between buildings. This framework of roads, plots, market place and thoroughfares is medieval in origin and is little changed.

3.36

To the west of the High Street lay the significant open spaces of the former abbey precinct and the remnants of the Saxon settlement. Here the medieval planned form of the town partly overlays the earlier Saxon settlement. A tight network of narrow lanes define the central triangular area of the former Saxon market place and converge at the abbey, flanked in most part by small, narrow, rectangular plots.

3.37

Plots throughout the town are well defined and characteristically rectilinear with narrow frontages. With very few exceptions, principal buildings are sited to the front of plots facing the road with their ridges carried in alignment. In many cases attached and detached barns and other ancillary

buildings stretch from the main building into the rears of the linear plots, with their roofs set at right angles to the frontage buildings and often defining a side boundary. These ancillary buildings are simple and subservient in form and design to the principal frontage building.



Narrow rectilinear plots

3.38

With only occasional exceptions principal buildings are set on consistent building lines, sited immediately behind the pavements to form continuous tightly packed lines of buildings flanking both sides and following the lines of the roads.

3.39

This tight urban grain and distinctive relationship of building to plot and building to road is a characteristic feature of a medieval town plan, a distinctive feature of the Pershore Conservation Area and a key element of its character and special interest.

3.40

Modern development has obscured some of the medieval plan in part. The supermarket development at the rear of the High Street and new development at the rear of Bridge Street have erased the distinctive plot definition of the medieval plan and the historic relationship of frontage building to rear plot and river. At the junction of Church Row with Newlands and Abbey Road the former narrow junction has been widened and re-modelled, and a wide road junction with visibility lines formed at the junction of Cherry Orchard with High Street, inconsistent

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with the narrow roads and junctions of the old street pattern. These instances, however, are exceptions, and the historic plan form of the early Saxon settlement and Medieval town is largely preserved and is a significant element of the character and special interest of the conservation area.

## Spaces

3.41

Despite its tight urban grain there are significant areas of open space within the conservation area that are key to its historic form, character and appearance.

3.42

The expansive green open space of Abbey Park and the smaller enclosed area of St Andrews Park provide the setting to the abbey church and St Andrews Parish Centre, and are historically important as the remnant of the Saxon and medieval abbey precincts. Both also provide vantage points for clear views into the rear of plots fronting the High Street and Broad Street from where the historic form and development of the town can be readily appreciated.

3.43

The open meadow at the southern fringe of the town is key to the quality of its immediate setting, providing the abrupt change from countryside to urban development that is such a defining feature of Pershore. This space is also historically significant as part of the extensive water meadows important to the farming system supporting the town in the medieval period.

3.44

The cricket ground in Defford Road provides the setting of the conservation area at the rear of Bridge Street and is a remnant of the open fields that would once have abutted the town to the west of Bridge Street. This space also provides a valuable buffer between the conservation area and more recent residential expansion to the south and west. The river meadows provide the immediate setting of the town from the south.

3.45

In contrast to the green of these spaces on the fringes of the developed areas is the wide square of the former market place in the heart of the town. Here the buildings of the square enclose the space on all sides. This space is historically important to the town as its central market square and is the setting of the buildings on its four sides.

3.46

Less apparent, but just as important to the special interest and character of the conservation area are private gardens and yards. These remain as largely undeveloped and enclosed spaces that continue in use as gardens and yards. While the full extent of these may not be entirely publicly visible, the lack of interruption by buildings and presence of planting contributes to an impression of space at the rear of the built up street frontages, appreciated from glimpses over boundaries, between buildings and from footpaths to the rear. These gardens also provide the setting of buildings and are historically important as the open space characteristically found behind frontage buildings on the plots of the medieval town plan.

Abbey Park



Private gardens



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## Key Views & Vistas

3.47

The abbey tower is a landmark feature in the landscape, signalling arrival at Pershore on approach roads from Defford and Evesham. It is also prominent in view over rooftops and along street vistas from many vantage points within the town. It forms the end stop and focal point of street vistas along Priest Lane, Newlands, Church Street and Broad Street, dwarfing surrounding buildings, and is prominent in view over rooftops in the upper High Street and Broad Street. The presence of the tower in views throughout the town and its approaches is a constant reminder of the long history of the town.

3.48

Notable views into the conservation area include those from the river, from the town's principal car park near the market, the view on approach across the meadows from the south, the views from the vicinity of Abbey Road and the approach from Newlands. On approach from the south and

from the Pershore bridges the open undeveloped areas of water meadows provide views of the unspoiled river setting of the town. From the vicinity of Abbey Road the Abbey Park is the foreground to views of the Abbey.

3.49

From the river there are frequent views into the rear of plots of buildings fronting Bridge Street and the High Street. This constant visual link with these rear plots, with views of their gardens, trees and ancillary buildings, and to the rear elevations of the main buildings fronting the street, makes a significant contribution to, and is an important component of, the character and appearance of the conservation area. In many cases these views are limited to glimpses, but nevertheless are part of the cumulative appreciation of the way in which the town has developed and how its buildings remain linked to their historic plots and the river. Similarly, from the car park there are view into rear plots and of the rear of buildings fronting the High Street from where the development of the town can be appreciated.

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Rear of Bridge Street



Glimpse between buildings in Bridge Street

## 3.50

The tight grain of the town limits views within it to short street vistas, unfolding views along gently curving streets and glimpses between buildings. Exceptionally, Bredon Hill to the south of the town is visible in the long street vista along the High Street and Bridge Street, over the Abbey Green and from the footpath to rear of Bridge Street. These views of the hill provide visual links to the countryside and are an essential element of the character of the conservation area.

## 3.51

There are numerous opportunities for glimpses between buildings through the many carriage entrances on street frontages and these are frequent along Bridge Street, with others in Newlands and the High Street. These entrances give views of the gardens and trees at the rear of frontage buildings. While these views are limited

they nevertheless are part of the cumulative appreciation of the way in which the town has developed and how the buildings remain linked to their historic plots, and are an important element of the character of the conservation area.

## 3.52

Street buildings at corners and junctions form focal points of several shorter street vistas. Examples include Nos. 1 to 11 Broad Street, 1 & 3 High Street and the Three Tuns which are prominent at junctions with Church Walk, Defford Road and High Street, the White Horse Hotel and adjacent shop at the corner of Church Street, Lower Priest Lane and Church Row, and the Manor House and Bridge House at the southern end of Bridge Street.



Glimpse between buildings in Bridge Street

# Pershore Conservation Area

## 4 Character Analysis

### General

#### 4.1

Pershore is a busy rural town with much evidence in its form and fabric of its early origin and changing role in history. It is a conservation area of contrasts, with its conspicuous Georgian buildings overlaying the earlier Saxon settlement and medieval market town, and continuous lines of tightly packed buildings flanking the streets belying the presence of significant areas of open space beyond. It is little spoiled by intrusive modern development and retains a strong sense of history and local identity.





## Character Areas

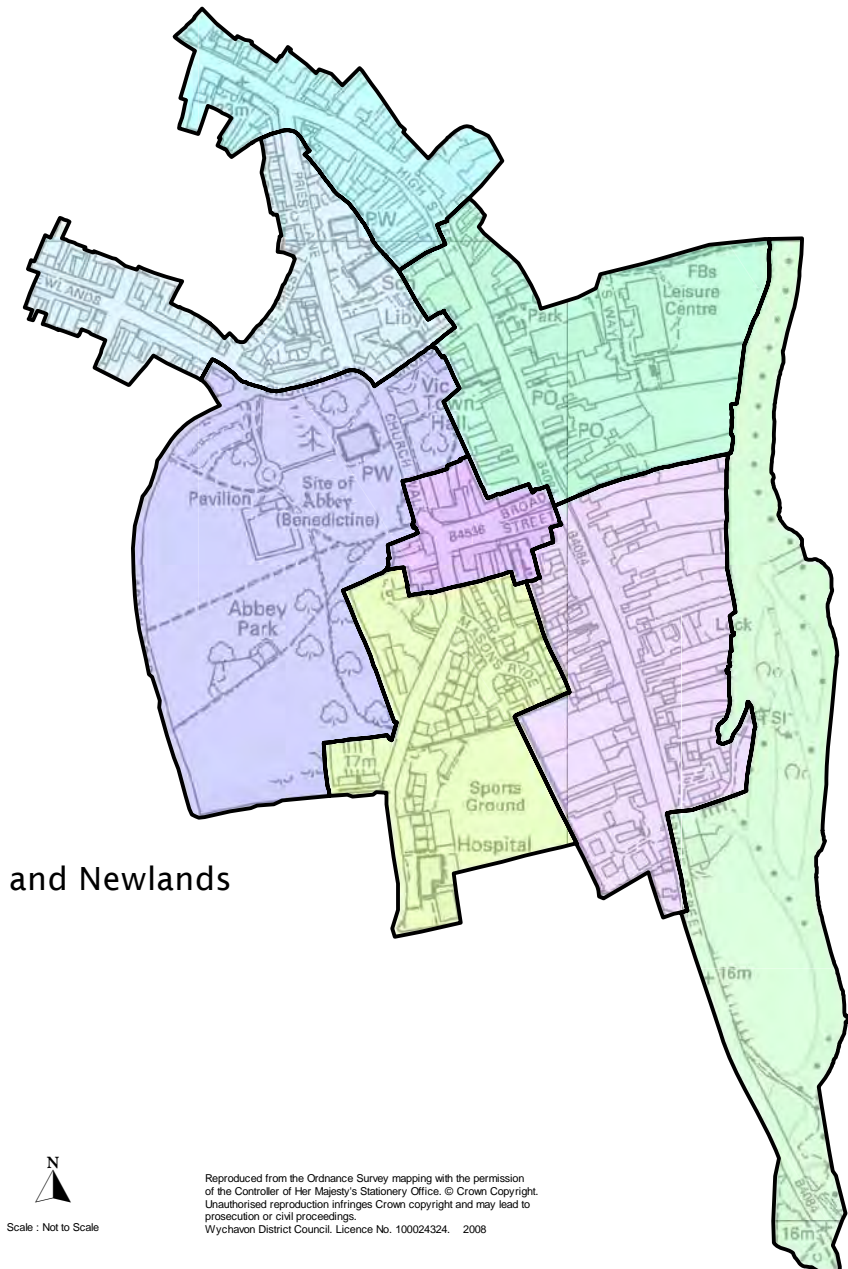
#### 4.2

There are distinct character areas within the conservation area:

- The Abbey Precinct
- The Saxon settlement area and Newlands
- Upper High Street
- Lower High Street
- Broad Street
- Bridge Street
- The River Avon
- Defford Road

### Character Areas

-  Abbey Precinct
-  Saxon settlement area and Newlands
-  Upper High Street
-  Lower High Street
-  Bridge Street
-  Broad Street
-  River Avon
-  Defford Road



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# Pershore Conservation Area

## The Abbey Precinct

4.3

This is the area of remnant open space of the Saxon and Medieval Abbey precincts, containing the Abbey Church of the Holy Cross, the Almonry, St Andrews Parish Centre and The Vicarage.

4.4

The landmark Abbey Church stands in isolation in the large green open space of the former abbey precinct, dominating the area from all viewpoints. The open spaces of the former precinct are complemented by the presence of mature trees and provide the settings to these principal buildings. A large house, known as The Monastery, or Abbey House, formerly stood on the site of the present bowling green. The visual presence of the spaces and trees and the tranquillity they lend to this area in contrast to the tightly packed buildings of surrounding residential areas and bustle of the nearby High Street, are key features of the conservation area. The surviving abbey building, the Almonry and the

surrounding spaces of the former precinct are also tangible evidence of the early monastic origins of the town.

4.5

This is a quiet area of space, used for primarily for recreation. The few buildings are all listed. The Abbey Church is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

## The Saxon Settlement Area and Newlands

4.6

This is the residential and former market area of the original Saxon settlement around Priest lane, Lower Priest Lane, Little Priest Lane and Church Row, and adjacent area of planned medieval residential expansion at Newlands. It was the area of workers' cottages, workshops and inns developed behind the main High Street/Bridge Street thoroughfare. Today's buildings date mainly from the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, replacing or re-modelling earlier buildings.



Church Row



Abbey Church: landmark building

17 Newlands

# Pershore Conservation Area



Carriageway entrance

Here narrow roads are lined mainly by terraces and small individual cottages sitting tight against each other and sited immediately to the rear of pavements, the continuous building lines broken by only an occasional garden and the open areas surrounding the church and school in Priest Lane. Buildings are mainly very modest in size and scale, at one and a half to two storeys in height, on a small footprint.

4.7

The earlier settlement origins of this area is still very much evident in the layout of narrow roads, the triangular shape of the former market area, the tight grain of small narrow linear plots, the small scale, tightly packed buildings sited immediately back of pavement and occasional vestige of visible timber frame. These key features of the Saxon and Medieval settlement area, together with the predominance of historic buildings, are essential elements of the historic character and special interest of this area.

4.8

Walls and buildings still define the narrow plots and some of the plots still retain former workshops, yards, storage buildings and stables, and former carriageway entrances are still present between buildings. These features are tangible evidence of the town's history and development and are part of its special interest and character.

4.9

This area is primarily residential. Its compact plan, prevalence of buildings of common scale and design characteristics, and the presence of local shops and public houses, give it a strong local community identity. With fewer commercial uses and light traffic this is a quiet area of the conservation area, in contrast to the traffic and bustle of commercial activity concentrated in the adjacent High Street.

4.10

Some of the buildings in this area are listed; most are unlisted. The unlisted buildings are primarily terraces of cottages and houses with common characteristics of scale, design and materials. Regrettably a number of them have been subject to incremental change, most commonly replacement of windows and doors. The size and form of these buildings reflects their role in the development of the town and they nevertheless make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

## Upper High Street

4.11

This is the north-west end of the High Street, where the medieval planned extension to the earlier core of the market town overlaps the Saxon settlement. This is primarily a residential area, giving way to commercial on approach to the town centre. It developed as an area of workers' cottages, workshops, farmhouses and inns on approach to the commercial heart of the town.



Upper High Street

# Pershore Conservation Area



Carriageway entrances

Today's buildings date mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries, mostly replacing or re-modelling earlier buildings

## 4.12

This area shares characteristics of building and settlement form with the Saxon settlement and Newlands area, but straddles the principal thoroughfare into the town and is busy with vehicles and pedestrians.

## 4.13

The linear road is lined with terraces and modest individual cottages and houses sited tight against each other and most sited immediately to the rear of pavements, the continuous building lines broken only by an occasional garden and gap. Buildings are primarily two storeys in height, although of varying scales, and broken by an occasional house of three storeys.

## 4.14

Although buildings in this part date mainly from the 18th and early 19th centuries, its earlier settlement origins is still very much evident in the tight grain of small narrow linear plots, the modest, tightly packed buildings sited immediately back of pavement and occasional vestige of visible timber frame. These key features of the early settlement area, together with the predominance of largely unspoiled historic buildings, are essential elements of the historic character and special interest of the area.

## 4.15

Walls and buildings still define the narrow plots and some of the plots still retain historic workshops, storage buildings and stables. There is a continued presence of local business in rear yards, and former carriageway entrances and pedestrian passages are still present between buildings. These features are tangible evidence of the town's history and development and are part of its special interest and character.

## 4.16

Some of the buildings in this area are listed; most are unlisted. The unlisted buildings are primarily terraces or Victorian villas with common characteristics of scale, design and materials. The size and form of these buildings reflects their role in the development of the town; many retain original architectural features and they make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

## Lower High Street

### 4.17

This is the planned medieval extension to the earlier core of the market town in Broad Street and Bridge Street, and the principal thoroughfare in the town. It was developed by Pershore Abbey as a commercial extension to Bridge Street and Broad Street. It has retained this role to the present day and is now the main commercial street, lined with shops, cafes, restaurants, banks, inns and public



Lower High Street

# Pershore Conservation Area

Lower High Street



houses and is busy with pedestrians and traffic. Today's buildings date mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries, replacing or re-modelling earlier buildings

#### 4.18

The linear road is lined with individual buildings that sit tight against each other and against the back of the pavements, the continuous building line broken only by an occasional gap between buildings. Buildings are a mix of two and three storeys, of various scales, increasing more frequently to three storey on approach to Broad Street and Bridge Street. Although buildings embody consistent design principles, a variety of scales gives a variety of ridge, eaves and window levels, resulting in a lively roofscape and streetscene.

#### 4.19

Although buildings date from a later period, the original medieval plan is still very much evident in this area, identifiable in the tight grain of small narrow linear plots defined by walls and buildings, and the tightly packed buildings sited immediately back of pavement. These key features of the medieval form of the High Street, together with the predominance of historic buildings, are essential elements of the historic character and special interest of the area.

#### 4.20

Some of the plots still retain historic barns, workshops, storage buildings, stables and coach houses and there is a continued presence of local

Local businesses  
in rear yards



Plots defined by brick walls

businesses in rear yards, and former carriageway entrances and pedestrian passages are still present between buildings. On the east side of the street extensive rear plots continue as gardens to the riverside. Most plots are still defined by brick walls and many contain orchard and tree planting. These gardens, trees, plots and the rear of the buildings fronting the High Street, are visible from the river and in glimpses through carriageway entrances off the High Street. These features are evidence of the town's development and are an integral part of its special interest and character. The gardens, plots and ancillary buildings are also the setting of the many listed buildings.

#### 4.21

Most of the buildings are listed and retain their original architectural features. Located in the main commercial area some have been subject to

# Pershore Conservation Area



Broad Street

Bridge Street



pressure for new or updated shopfronts and signage, a few of which detract from the quality of the streetscene.

## Broad Street

4.22

This is the former market place of the medieval planned town. Today it is a mix of residential and commercial uses, with commercial uses concentrated at its junction with the adjoining High Street and Bridge Street, quickly giving way to residential towards the western exits to Church Walk and Defford Road. Trees line the pavements and trees in Abbey Park are visible in the background, giving this part of the conservation area a green leafy feel despite it being within the heart of the town. Its function as a former market place is readily apparent in its location and in the size and shape of the space.

4.23

Buildings date mainly from the 18th and early 19th centuries and line the four sides of the large rectangular central open space. Individual buildings of various sizes and scales sit tight against each other and against the back of the pavements in continuous building lines. Buildings are two and three storeys, with larger three storey buildings dominating the western end of the place. Most are listed and retain original architectural features.

4.24

The original medieval plan of this area is still very much evident, identifiable in the open space of the

market place and the flanking tightly packed buildings sited immediately back of pavement in narrow linear plots defined by walls and buildings. These key features of the medieval form of Broad Street, together with the predominance of historic buildings, are essential elements of the character and special interest of the area.

4.25

Some of the plots still retain historic workshops, storage buildings, stables and coach houses. There is a continued presence of local businesses in rear yards, and former pedestrian passages are still present between buildings. These features are tangible evidence of the town's development and are part of its special interest and character.

4.26

Today much of the space of the market place is dedicated to car parking. While the use serves the town the presence of parked cars detracts from the quality of the space and the setting of its buildings.

## Bridge Street

4.27

This is the earliest part of the planned medieval town, developed by Westminster Abbey. It is primarily residential, giving way to commercial uses on approach to its junction with Broad Street and High Street. With the predominance of residential uses this is a lightly pedestrianed area in contrast to the bustling activity of the High Street.

# Pershore Conservation Area



Large individual houses



Large individual houses



Rear footpath

## 4.28

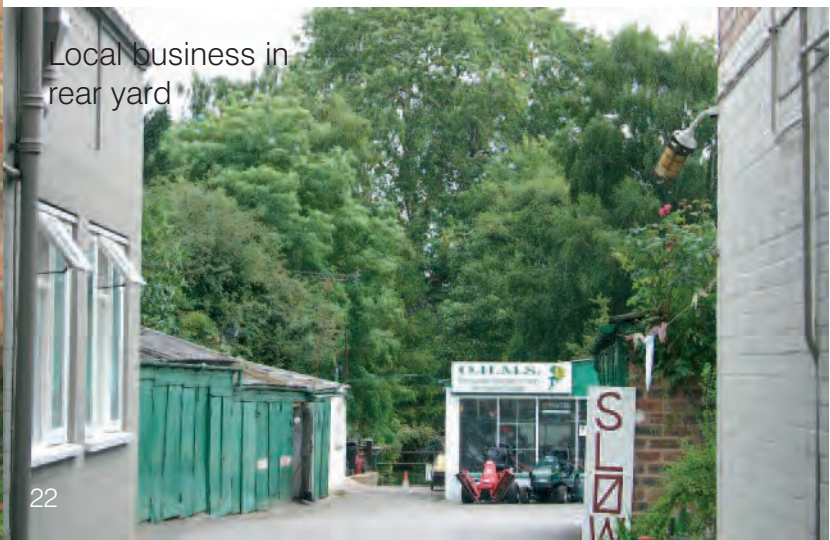
The linear road is lined by large, predominantly three storey, houses dating from the 18th and early 19th centuries. Individual houses sit tight against each other and against the back of the pavements in continuous lines, broken only by an occasional gap. The consistent architectural quality of these buildings is recognised by the listed status of all but a very few, some of which are listed Grade I and 11\*. Although embodying consistent design principles, the variety of scales results in a variety in ridge, eaves and window levels, giving a lively roofscape and streetscene.

## 4.29

As with the High Street the medieval plan of this part of the conservation area is still evident. The back lane is still present as a footpath at the rear of the west side of the street; walls and buildings define the medieval plots, buildings are sited tight against each other at the back of the footways and the points of access from the main street to the former fields and lands behind are still present as footpaths between buildings, in the characteristic manner of a medieval town plan. These key features of the medieval form of the town, together with the predominance of largely unspoiled historic buildings, are essential elements of the character and special interest of the area.

## 4.30

A particular feature of this area is the survival of barns, warehouses, stables, coach houses and other ancillary buildings in gardens and yards at the rear of frontage buildings, the continued presence of local businesses in rear yards, and the presence of carriageways and pedestrian



Local business in rear yard

# Pershore Conservation Area

Carriage entrances between buildings



Rear gardens



River Avon



passages between buildings. These features and uses are tangible evidence of the town's history and development and are essential elements of its character and special interest.

4.31

Extensive rear plots continue as gardens, extending to the riverside on the east side of the street. Most are still defined by brick walls and many contain orchard and tree planting. These gardens, trees, plots and the rear of the buildings fronting the High Street, are visible from the river and footpaths and in glimpses through carriageway entrances off Bridge Street. These features are evidence of the town's development and are an integral part of its special interest and character. The gardens, plots and ancillary buildings are also the setting of the many listed buildings.

## The River Avon

4.32

This is the area of water meadows between the river and Bridge Street, including Pershore bridges and the river itself. The river and the open undeveloped area of water meadows provide the immediate setting to the town from the southern road and footpath approaches and are key to the strong sense of arrival and place on approach from this direction.

4.33

A lock, weir and remains of a coal wharf at the rear of Bridge Street are evidence of the former role of the river in the development of the town, and part of the character and special interest of the conservation area. Elsewhere the river follows its natural course with tree-lined banks, and its natural environment contributes to the quality of the setting of the town.

4.34

The historic bridges are evidence of the town's long history and development and are an integral element of its character and special interest.

## Defford Road

4.35

This is the road from Upton Upon Severn that meets the south-west corner of Broad Street. It is a mixed area of 19th and 20th century residential developments, cottage hospital and cricket ground.