

2 THE BATH CONTEXT

TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

2.1 Bath is nestled in the Avon Valley and the surrounding hills and plateaux define its setting. The hilltops surrounding Bath offer spectacular views of the whole city. The topography is complex and varied comprising a combination of hills, plateaux, valleys and the River Avon along with its tributaries. The city grew up on a narrow flat site in a curve of the River Avon, where the limestone plateau provided a ford across the water and the hills were gentle enough to traverse. The encircling hills provide a dramatic backdrop to the city and are significant in defining the character of the city. The countryside stretches into the city in several places, creating large green tracts of land in the midst of the urban environment. The importance of the landscape and topography in the definition of Bath is evident in the boundary of the World Heritage Site which extends beyond just the built form to include large swathes of the countryside. The visually homogenous character of the built environment with the use of local Bath Stone, city designed primarily along contours and natural green fingers extending into the built fabric all contribute to making the city part of its landscape setting.

2.2 The city has expanded from its original location on the gravel beds of the valley floor in the bend of the River Avon in the centre of this landform hollow and has spread up the slopes of the hollow to the edge of the plateaux such as at Lansdown and Odd Down and in places onto the plateaux themselves. The containment of the city by the bowl form of the landscape has given it one of its distinct characteristics of being compact and inward looking, physically quite hidden from the wider countryside. (Bath World Heritage Site Setting Study, Information Paper October 2009). Large wooded areas to the east and south of the city such as Bathford Hill, Warleigh Wood and Bathampton Wood screen development further afield and enhance the impression of containment. These along with the hills also provide a green backdrop to the city. The compact urban area is surrounded on all sides by the Bath & Bristol Green Belt and on the north, east and south sides by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); a designation signifying the high quality of the landscape.

2.3 The Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset: A Landscape Character Assessment (2003) identifies four character areas around Bath: Hinton Blewett and Newton St Loe Plateau Lands, Avon Valley, Cotswolds Plateaux and Valleys.

2.4 To the north of the city lies the high Cotswold plateau incised by the steep sided River Avon tributaries such that there are three distinct plateau areas; Lansdown, Charmy Down and Bannerdown. A very small amount of development of housing, the Ministry of Defence complex at Ensleigh, and some urban fringe development of playing fields and a Park and Ride has extended up onto the plateau at Lansdown. To the east of the city the Bathampton and Claverton Downs contained partly

within the city boundary, and the wide, steep sided Limpley Stoke valley act as a constraint to development spreading in this direction. To the south, the city lies close to the southern outer edge of the Cotswold plateau, which includes Combe Down and Odd Down, effectively forming the sides or lip of the bowl. Progress any further south is prevented by the strong, steep sided Midford and Cam Brook valleys, which form an abrupt edge to the high plateau. To the west a steep sided tributary valley of the Newton Brook and the brook itself runs up against the western outer scarp slope of the Cotswold plateau and similarly prevents the city spreading over the lip of the bowl. There is an uncharacteristic example at Twerton where housing development has been allowed to spread down over the lip of the bowl to face the wider countryside with a strongly anomalous effect on character and views (Bath World Heritage Site Setting Study, Information Paper October 2009). The hills and plateaux around Bath range in height from 100 metres to 220 metres. The highest points are Kelston Round Hill (218m), Lansdown (231m), Bathampton Down (204m) and Little Solsbury Hill (191m).

2.5 To summarise, Bath is characterised by strong dramatic landforms. Its topographical setting has contributed to its compact urban form and is significant in defining its character. The high quality of the landscape around Bath is signified by the AONB status. The topography offers dramatic views into the city as well as providing a backdrop showcasing this Georgian townscape masterpiece.



Figure 2.1: Topography

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

ROMAN

2.6 The natural hot springs of Bath stimulated the development of the city. The first shrine at the site of the hot springs was built by Celts and was dedicated to the goddess Sulis. However, the Romans built the first baths in the 1st Century AD. The town of Aquae Sulis was a magnificent religious centre. The Romans built the Baths complex around the springs along with an adjoining temple. They built new infrastructure of roads, settlement and public buildings. The present day roads reflect the orientation of the Roman Roads. The Romans retreated from Britain in the 5th Century and the stone baths and temple fell into neglect and were eventually lost. The remains of the Roman baths and temple complex form some of the most impressive architectural remains of Roman Britain.

MEDIAEVAL

2.7 The baths were modified on several occasions including the King's Bath – the renovated Roman reservoir which was already in use in Norman times. Bath Abbey was founded in 1499 on the site of an earlier Norman Cathedral. Joseph Gilmore, a Bristol mathematician drew the famous map of Bath in 1694. There was a revival of interest in the hot springs and their healing properties and development took place based on Gilmore's plans to accommodate the growing number of visitors to Bath. The settlement was still very small with a battlemented wall surrounding the city within the meander of the River Avon. The city was centred on the Abbey and the site of the Roman settlement.

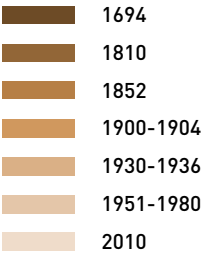
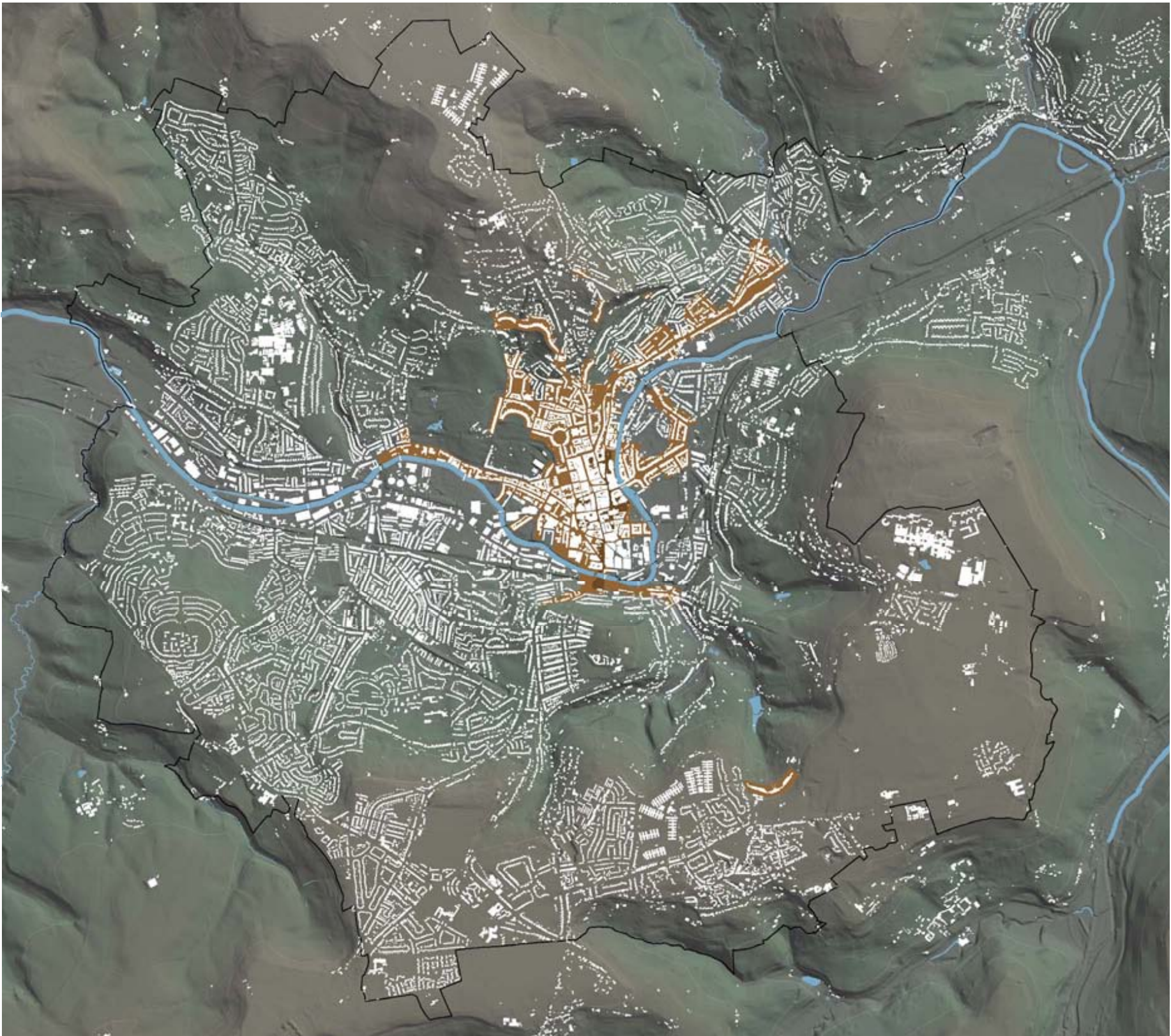


Figure 2.2 Historic plan 1694 – 1810



GEORGIAN (1714 – 1830)

- 2.8 It was in the Georgian period that Bath was completely transformed and its main structuring and recognisable elements to date built. Bath became a destination for the fashionable elite of the period following Queen Anne’s visits to Bath in 1702 and 1703. Richard ‘Beau’ Nash arrived in Bath in 1704 and envisioned Bath as a spa resort which needed to be more sophisticated and entertaining and not just a resort for the sick. Bath acquired a reputation as a seasonal resort for the gentry and nobility and fine new houses were built for them to stay in.
- 2.9 John Wood (1704-54) was the architect and townplanner who established the city’s architectural style. He designed the famous Bath landmarks – Queen Square and the King’s Circus. His son designed the Royal Crescent. These were pioneering designs at the time with the first crescent and the first terrace of individual houses successfully unified behind a “palace front”. The principles of Palladio’s classical architecture were successfully transposed to the whole city. John Wood Junior also brought a landscape aestheticism to his designs exemplified in the Royal Crescent.
- 2.10 The focus of the city was still within the river meander but some of the development stretched along historic approach roads, particularly London Road, Lansdown Road, Upper Bristol Road and eastwards along Great Pulteney Street. The topography played an important role in shaping development with the exception of the Royal Crescent, King’s Circus and Queen Square which did not follow the contours and land was levelled. In this period two important local spaces were opened – Sydney Gardens and Prior Park.
- 2.11 By the end of the 18th Century Bath became one of the most populous cities in Britain with a resident population of 33,000. Twerton, Weston and Bathampton continued to remain small hamlets.

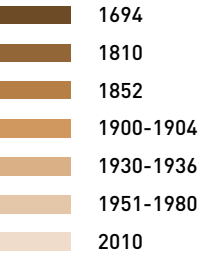


Figure 2.3 Historic plan 1810 – 1852





VICTORIAN (1837 – 1901)

- 2.12 As the city grew in size and popularity its clientele became less exclusive. After 1800 the seasonal visitors began to drift away to other resorts such as Brighton or Weymouth. Victorian Bath became a pleasant place to retire and live. However, with the wealthy clientele gone there was less money to spend on “improvement” to the historic city. Therefore the new buildings at this time were relatively modest.
- 2.13 The city developed further to the east and south of the River Avon. Linear development took place along Weston Lane, Sion Hill and Camden Road. A number of villas were constructed on the hills surrounding Bath. Weston and Twerton developed local High Streets. Royal Victoria Gardens opened in 1830. The Kennet and Avon canal was also constructed which helped with transporting construction material and other goods.
- 2.14 The Victorians built the railway which brought industry along the river and railway lines. Further development took place with the advent of industry to accommodate workers such as in East Twerton and Oldfield Park south of the River. The city particularly expanded to the south west and Twerton became subsumed within the Bath urban area. Lower Weston was further developed to the north of the River in the west of the city. This resulted in continuous linear development between Weston and Bath. Development took place up the slopes of Lansdown along Lansdown Road and Camden Road/St Saviour’s Road. Further linear development took place along Bathampton Lane.

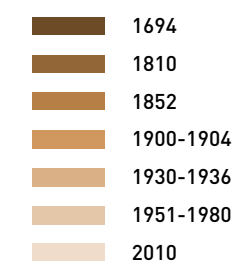


Figure 2.4 Historic plan 1852-1900

EARLY 20TH CENTURY (1900 – 1951)

- 2.15 The early 20th Century marked the development of terraces in Bear Flat. Some fine architecture was lost with the redevelopment of existing 18th and 19th Century residential suburbs. The first Council housing was developed at the Oval and Southdown as garden suburbs. Further infill development took place across the city.
- 2.16 In this short span of about 20 years there was a sudden expansion of the city. A major event during this period was the 1942 bombing of Bath. The Baedeker Blitz led to the destruction or damage of 19,000 buildings of which 1,100 were seriously damaged or destroyed.
- 2.17 Patrick Abercrombie's 1945 'A Plan for Bath' gave the city and its environs a new outlook on planning that reviewed air raid damage, urgent housing problems and traffic issues. Providing new housing alone was not enough. The Plan envisaged Bath being divided into a series of neighbourhoods each provided with its community centre, shopping areas, churches, schools, parks and playing fields. Much of Bath's postwar housing and communities are a direct result of this initiative.
- 2.18 Major residential development took place within the valley in north Weston and Bathampton to the east. Substantial residential development took place to the south at Twerton, Whiteway, Moorlands and Odd Down. The southern expansion led to development climbing out of the 'bowl' for the first time, creating a developed skyline to the south. Infill residential development took place in Newbridge and Combe Park. Besides residential development, the hospital was built at Combe Park and Ministry of Defence development took place at Lansdown and Foxhill on plateaux.

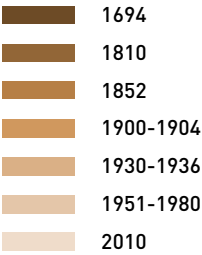


Figure 2.5 Historic plan 1900 - 1930





POST-WAR PERIOD AND EARLY 21ST CENTURY (1951-2010)

- 2.19 There is a noticeable loss of landscape influence on the city in this period as post war development continued. The postwar review of the city's C18 and C19 housing against C20 housing standards led to the wholesale clearance and redevelopment of large areas of the city. Snow Hill (1954-1961), Calton Gardens (1969-1970), Margaret's Hill and Balance Street (1969-1973) are key examples. Major residential development took place at Batheaston. Further development took place to the north at Fairfield Park and Larkhall.

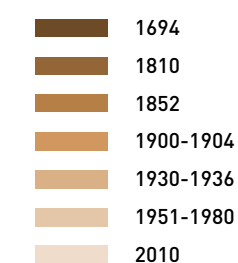


Figure 2.6 Historic plan 1930 - 1951

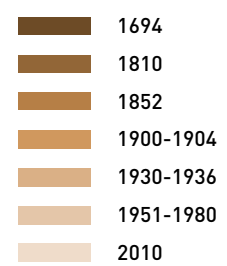
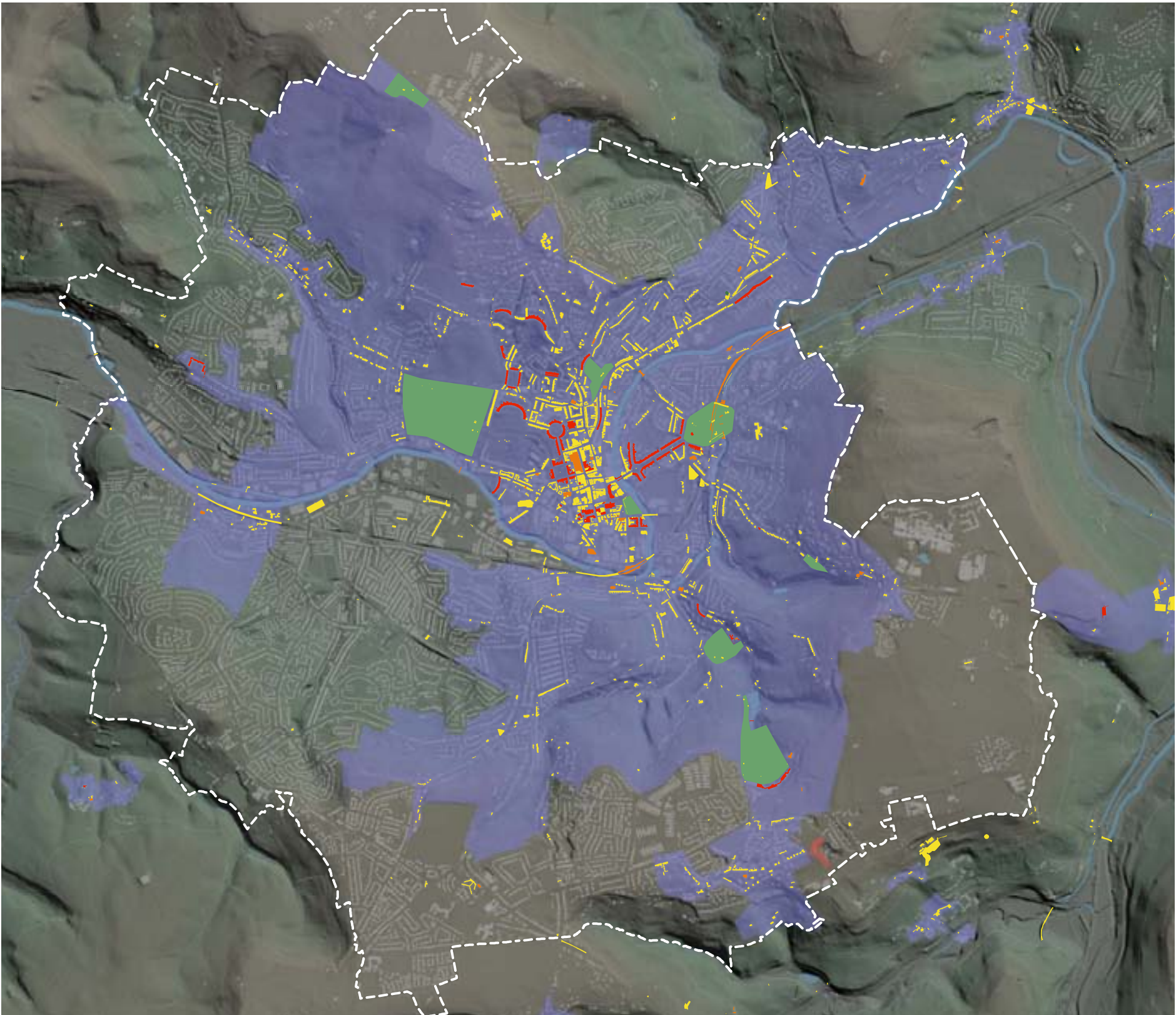


Figure 2.7 Historic plan 1951 - 2010



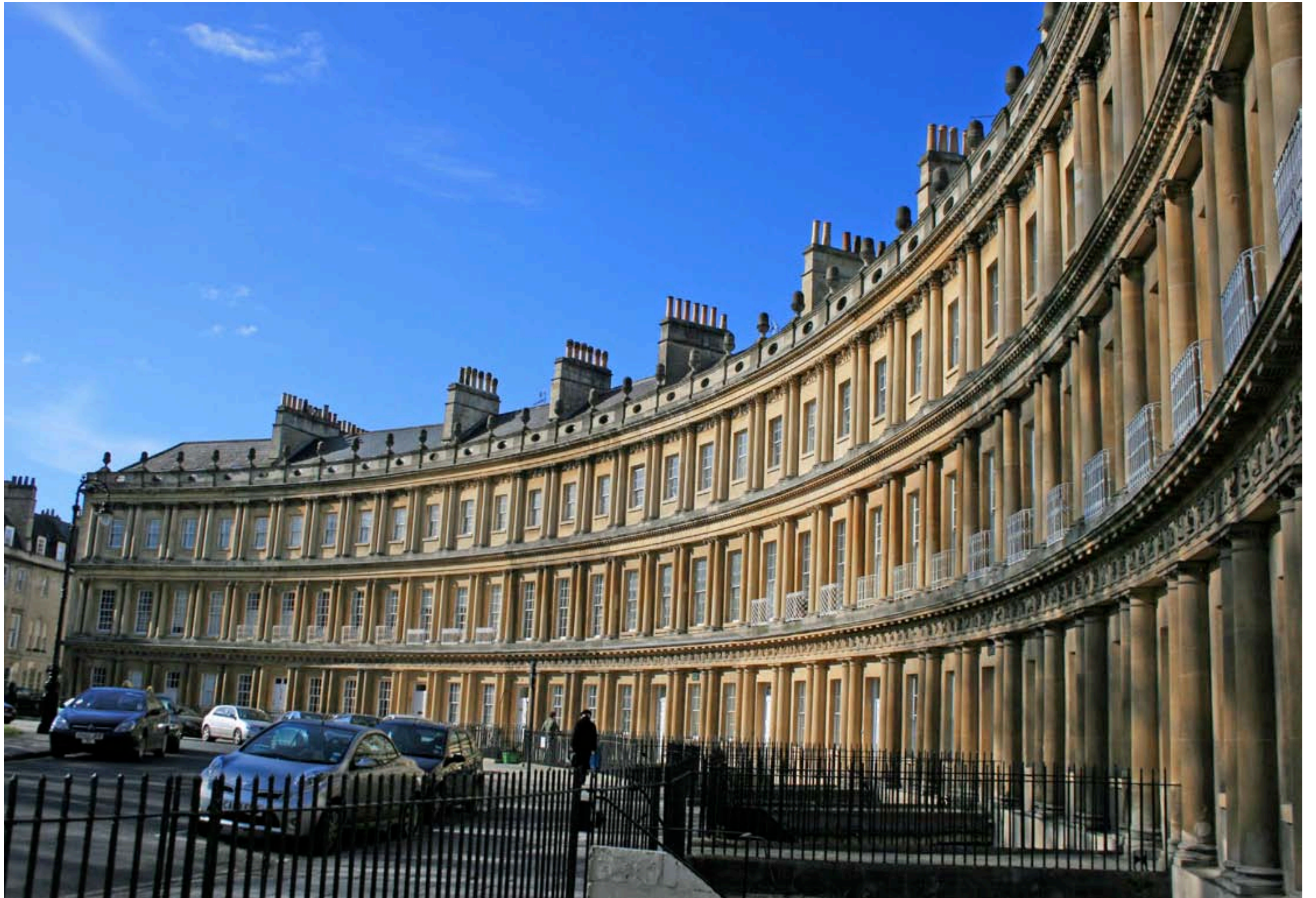
HERITAGE ASSETS



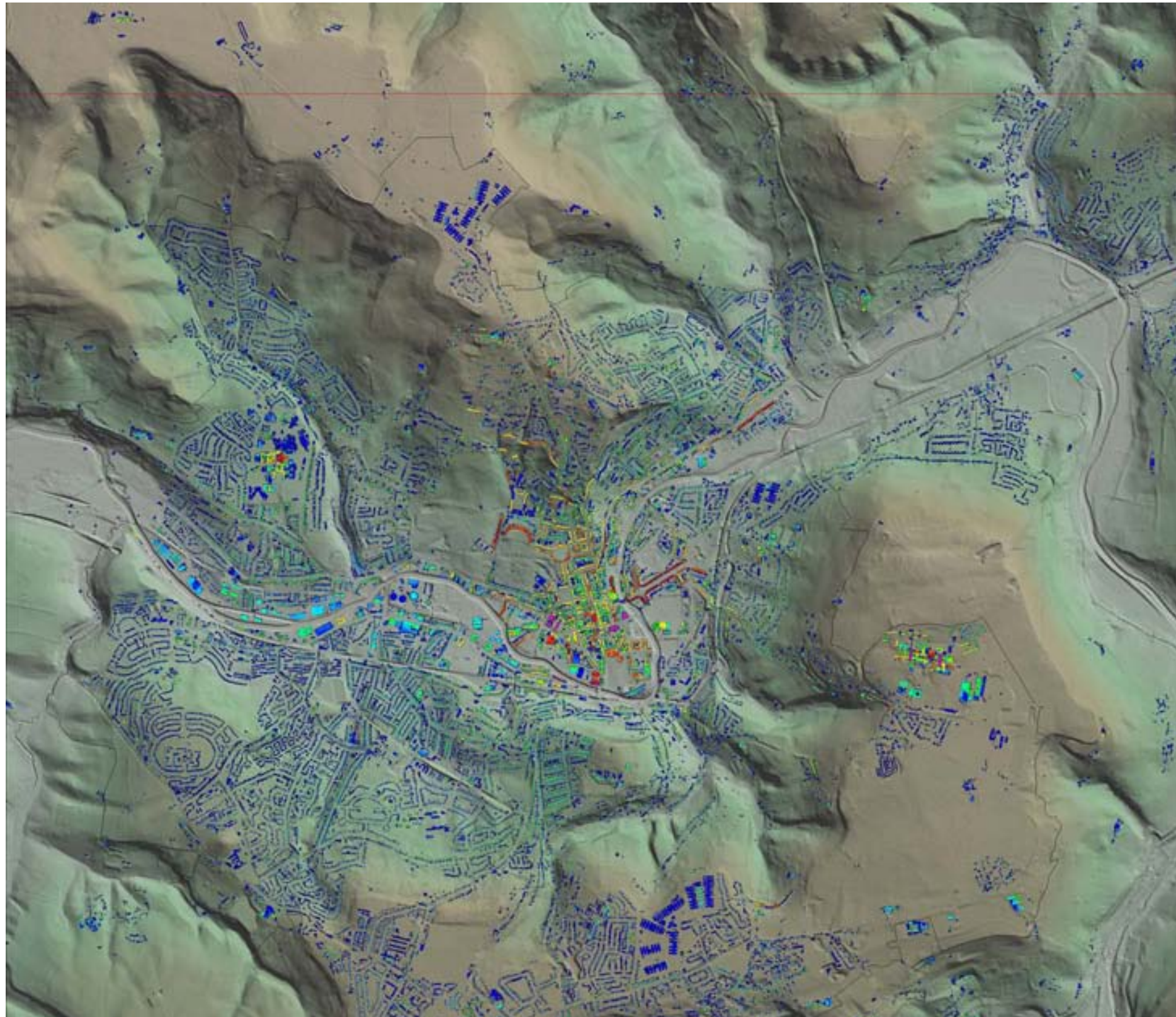
- 2.20 The extraordinary heritage assets of Bath are recognised internationally for the outstanding universal significance of its architecture, town planning, landscape, archaeological remains and its role as a setting for social history. The remains of the Roman baths complex, the exceptional and pioneering architecture and town planning of the 18th Century, the visually homogenous character of the city all are truly exceptional heritage assets and have led Bath to be designated as a World Heritage Site.
- 2.21 Bath has 95 Grade I listed buildings. This is one of the highest concentrations of Grade I listed buildings in the country. The Grade I buildings include landmarks such as Bath Abbey, Royal Crescent, the Assembly Rooms, Green Park Station and St Stephen’s Church. It has 54 Grade II* buildings including the Church of St Saviour and Bath Spa Station. It has 1512 Grade II listed buildings. There are also a large number of buildings that are of local architectural or historic importance. In total there are around 5000 buildings that are nationally or locally recognised for their architectural or historic interest. These international, national and local designations are testament to the heritage assets of the beautiful city of Bath.
- 2.22 Bath Conservation Area is the largest conservation area in B & NES Council and covers about 1486 hectares. Bath has nine historic parks and gardens including the Royal Victoria Park and Prior Park. There are also five Scheduled Ancient Monuments including the Roman Baths and site of Roman town and Bath City Walls.

Figure 2.8 Heritage assets

- World Heritage Site
- Conservation areas
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Listed parks
- Scheduled Ancient Monument Site



BUILDING HEIGHTS



- 2.23 To understand the building heights in Bath a building height 'heat map' was produced (Figure 2.9). The heat map involves mapping all the buildings according to their building heights to show the pattern and range of heights in Bath. It is colour coded so that the darker bold colours such as the reds and orange show the tallest buildings and the cooler shades such as the greens and the blues show the lowest building heights. The heat map is cross referenced with height information contained in the Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal SPD. Further information on building heights is set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.24 The building heights in Bath range from 3m to 22m+ with the tallest buildings focused within the river meander with the exception of London Road and Great Pulteney Street. Other exceptions to the central concentration of tall buildings are the relatively new additions of the university and the hospital. The arrangements of buildings is such that it is easy to pick out the Georgian set pieces of crescents, terraces, circuses and squares, namely Royal Crescent to The Circus, Great Pulteney Street, Green Park, Norfolk Crescent, Lansdown Crescent, North Parade and South Parade.
- 2.25 Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal SPD, August 2005 identifies that there can be considerable variation in height between buildings of the same number of storeys. This is due to different floor to ceiling heights. Also linked with the topography buildings of same heights and storeys appear to be of varying heights. In the major 18th Century developments there was often a hierarchy of scale between the grand frontage blocks and the smaller scale service blocks to the rear. Much of Bath's 18th Century and early 19th Century buildings are elevated on a series of 18th Century vaults approximately four to five metres above the natural ground level thus avoiding the need for otherwise costly and difficult ground excavation. Therefore many of the Georgian buildings are much taller than their number of stories would suggest such as Great Pulteney Street.

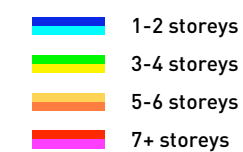


Figure 2.9 Building Heights Heat Map

HEIGHT, TOPOGRAPHY + BUILDINGS HEIGHTS

22M +

2.26 With the exception of Bath Abbey and Empire Hotel most of the tallest buildings in Bath are relatively recent insertions as follows:

- University of Bath
- Rosewell Court
- Kingsmead House
- Former telephone exchange
- Snow Hill Tower
- City College

2.27 Most of these are located within the city centre in the valley but some of the hospital and the university buildings are located on hilltop locations. It is notable that one of the tallest structures, Bath Abbey, is mediaeval in origin.

19 – 22M

2.28 The buildings in this range are few enough to be named individually and include Great Pulteney Street and The Podium Shopping Centre. The Royal United Hospital (RUH) and University of Bath are the only buildings of this height which are outside the city centre and located in hilltop locations. Most of the buildings in this range were built in Georgian times.

16 – 19M

2.29 The majority of buildings within this height range are concentrated within the city centre with the exception of the University and the RUH. A number of landmark Georgian buildings fall within this range:

- Royal Crescent
- Grosvenor Place
- Norfolk Crescent
- Assembly Rooms
- Marlborough Buildings
- Green Park

13 – 16M

2.30 It is evident from Figure 2.9 that buildings in this height range are concentrated within the river meander mainly comprising Georgian buildings. Notably The Circus is within this height range in the centre. Further afield some of the hospital buildings at Combe Park are in this range as are the 5-6 storey flat blocks in Twerton.

10 – 13M

2.31 A predominant number of buildings within this height range are in the city centre comprising mostly of Georgian buildings. Other notable buildings in this range are the majority of RUH and university complexes and the 4 storey blocks of flats in Moorlands.

7 – 10M

2.32 This range is mostly spread out of the city centre and Figure 2.9 shows a number of three storey Victorian terraces in the suburbs. Buildings in this category also include a number of the larger floorplate uses, such as supermarkets and industrial buildings.

4 – 7M

2.33 This is the pre-dominant building height of much of suburban Bath developed after 1900. It also includes some of the larger floorplate industrial uses to the west along the River. This range includes Victorian buildings such as the prominent industrial buildings and also residential development. A lot of development post 1952 also falls within this range.

0 – 4M

2.34 This range includes the Ministry of Defence buildings, primary schools and suburban development primarily comprising extensions and garages rather than bungalows.



Top: Bath Abbey, one of the tallest buildings in the city

Bottom: Royal Crescent, a Georgian landmark building

LANDMARKS

2.35 The natural landscape around Bath comprises dramatic landforms that are landmark features in their own right. The most prominent features are Little Solsbury Hill, Bathampton Down, Widcombe/Prior Park and Beechen Cliff. Little Solsbury Hill forms a prominent feature when viewed from the city due to its height and reinforces the impression of the compact, contained city within the bowl. Bathampton Down provides a green backdrop to the city and terminates linear views from North Parade, South Parade and Henry Street, amongst others. Beechen Cliff provides a dramatic end to the linear views from Gay Street, Milsom Street, Broad Street and Southgate, amongst others. Detailed analysis of views is presented in Appendix C.

2.36 Landmark buildings are concentrated mainly within the Georgian city. The tower of Bath Abbey is a prominent feature on the skyline of Bath and signifies its mediaeval history and evolution through to Georgian times. Subsequent Georgian buildings appear subservient to the dominating role of the Abbey. Other landmarks are sub-ordinate to the Abbey and comprise spires of churches or decorative towers of schools providing slender accentuation of the skyline.

2.37 The Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal SPD August 2005 sets out the landmarks for each of the 22 character areas identified in the appraisal. From the detailed assessment of each of the character areas within the SPD the following landmarks were identified as positively contributing to the skyline of Bath:

- St Stephen's Church
- Bath Abbey
- Royal Crescent
- Green Park Station
- Assembly Rooms
- Beckford's Tower
- St John the Baptist Church
- Prior Park
- St Matthew's Church
- St Michael's Church
- Widcombe Manor
- Widcombe cemetery
- Sham Castle
- Bloomfield Crescent
- St Saviour's Church

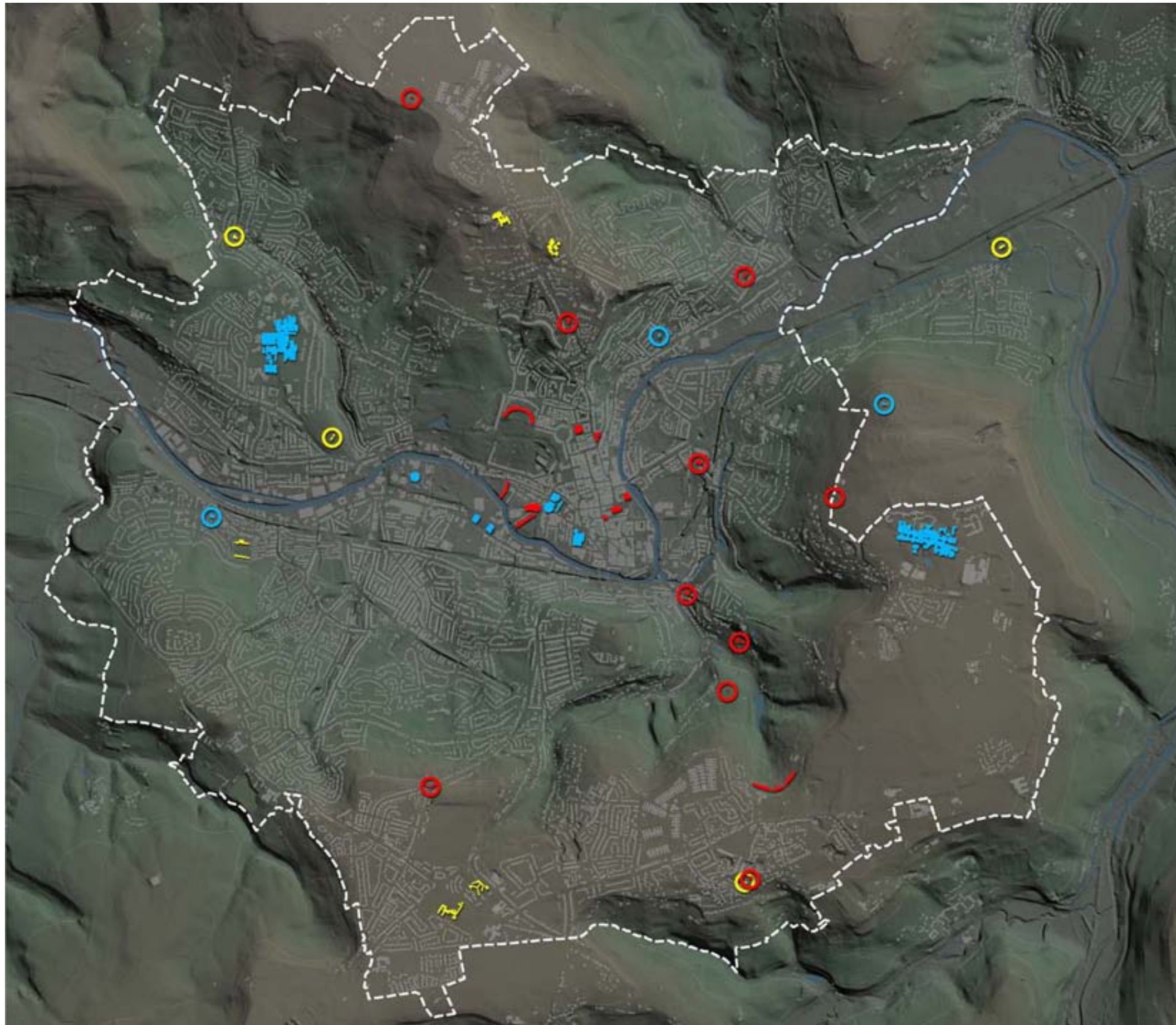
2.38 The Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal SPD, August 2005 also identifies some modern 20th Century buildings that harm the skyline. The SPD states "The integrity of Bath's skyline and roofscape and the balance of views within, to and across the city were harmed by the introduction of a series of C20 buildings, which are as follows:

- Former Empire Hotel (1899-1901)
- Snow Hill tower block (1955-57)
- The City of Bath College (1957-63)
- Rosewell Court (1961), Kingsmead House (1964-65)
- The University of Bath (1966)
- Former Telephone Exchange (1966-67) with a taller slate-hung extension (1971-72) and
- Pines Way building (early 1980s).

2.39 These buildings also fail to relate sensitively to their immediate neighbours and the public realm. Another notable landmark outside the Georgian city is the gasholder on Western Riverside."

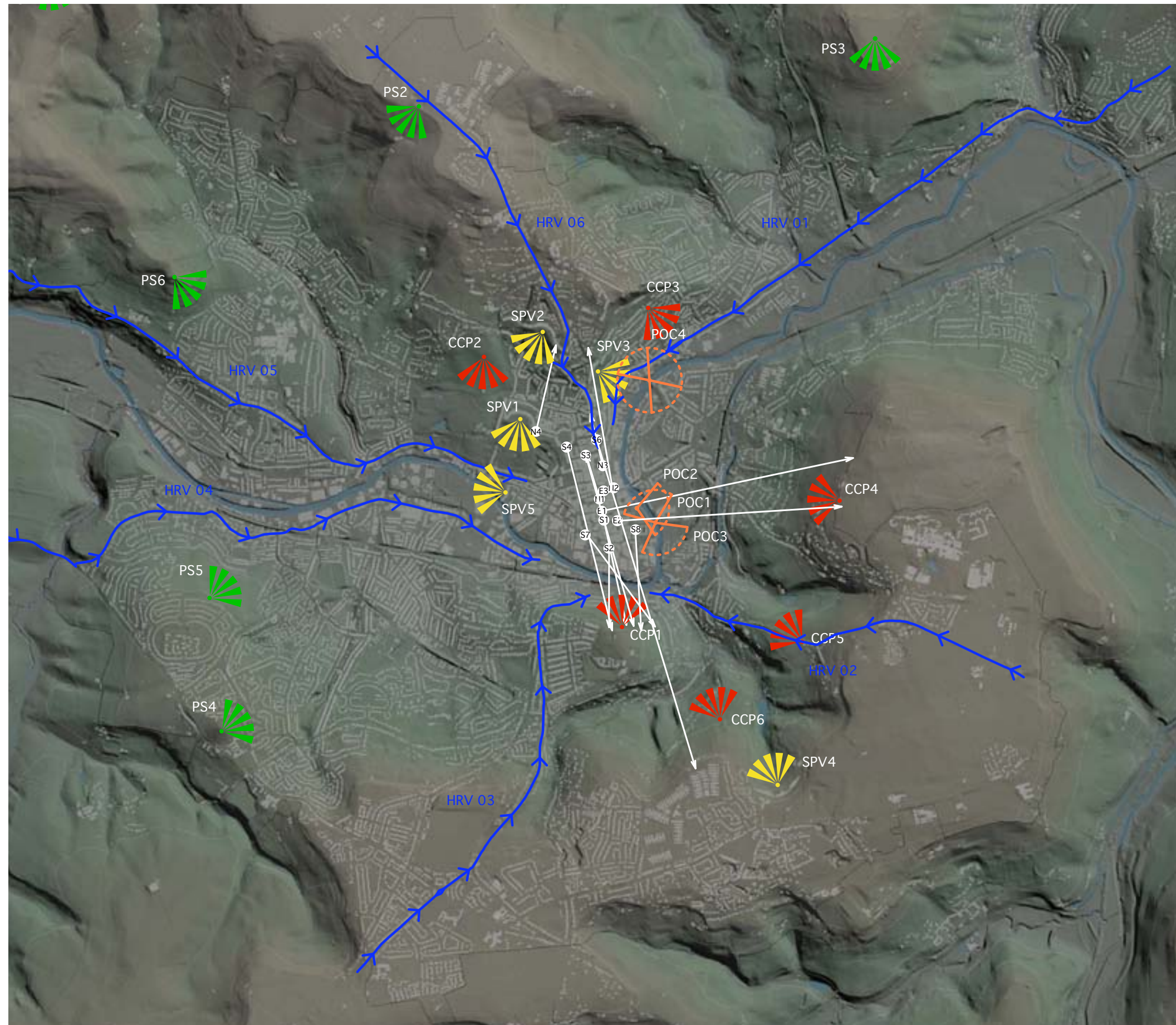


Beckford's Tower, a prominent landmark on the hilltop



- Local landmarks
- Strategic landmarks
- Negative landmarks

Figure 2.10 Landmarks



- Panoramic setting views
- City centre panoramas
- Set piece views
- Panoramas out of the city centre
- ② Linear views out of the city centre
- Historic road views

Figure 2.11: Identification of views

VIEWS

- 2.40

The views of the city from the surrounding landscape and views out from the city of the landscape are considered essential in understanding the qualities of the exceptional townscape and landscape and are vital to the setting of the World Heritage Site according to the World Heritage Site Setting Study (WHSSS). The WHSSS researched how the city was experienced and perceived by residents and visitors during the Georgian period.
- 2.41

The WHSSS identifies that ‘viewpoints which are significant in defining and understanding the setting of the WHS will generally include one or more of the following characteristics.

 - Views from key Georgian buildings and landmarks;
 - Views to Georgian buildings and landmarks;
 - Views from walks, rides and places of interest which were significant in the Georgian period known from literature and illustrations;
 - Public viewpoints which provide a good vantage point for viewing the Georgian town and key buildings in their own right; and
 - Public viewpoints which provide a good vantage point for viewing the Georgian town and key buildings in their landscape setting.’
- 2.42

The analysis undertaken in the WHSSS was further refined and a number of view points from prominent sensitive public locations were identified, these are grouped under four headings below. These view points were analysed and further details are presented in Appendix 3. This analysis was extremely useful in understanding the city of Bath. However it revealed similar conclusions to those in the WHSSS that the impact of new development on views needs to be undertaken on a case-by-case basis due to the sheer number and variety of views within the setting of the World Heritage Site. Furthermore the recommendations are based on preserving the character of the built environment which will in turn ensure that these important views remain unchanged.

CLOSE RANGE CITY CENTRE VIEWS (CCV)

- 2.43

These were taken from surrounding view points, notably Alexandra Park. These views are generally located on higher ground to south and south east of the City Centre. They typically have open green space in foreground, the Georgian City in middle ground and northern and north western character areas as back drop. Other close range CCV from the north show the setting of city opposite wooded and natural green slopes, but lack focus of the Georgian City itself.
- 2.44

These views allow the study of the entirety of the Georgian City, its setting and landmarks. They also provide an understanding of the impact of negative landmark developments on the homogeneity and beauty of the Georgian City perceived through these views.

PANORAMIC SETTING VIEWS (PS)

- 2.45

These are long distance panoramic views from the countryside or the edge of the urban area into the valley. They emphasise the setting of the City in a valley surrounded by nature. The Georgian City is a long distance away, stays in the background and its extent and detail are difficult to identify. The middleground areas in some of these views lack distinctive-ness, and, apart from the gasholder in Western Riverside, lack identifiable landmarks that help orientation.

LINEAR AND PANORAMIC VIEWS OUT OF THE GEORGIAN CITY (LOC & POC)

- 2.46

These views are located to the south, east and north and focus on largely green hill sides. These give the impression that the city is situated in a valley surrounded by nature. These views help illustrate the extent and setting of the city during the Georgian period, and retain the aesthetic idea of harmoniously combining architecture and landscape. The development on the plateaux to south and north are largely hidden by tree-cover, and the views demonstrate that the development does not affect the impression of compactness.

HISTORIC ROAD VIEWS (HR)

- 2.47

These views allow the understanding of the Georgian City and its setting in the landscape. The sequence of views that unfold as one travels along London Road emphasises the contrast between the open countryside and the urban scale Georgian Development. From the northern and southern approaches the interplay between solitary or village like development with landscape can be observed. Along the routes there are incidental views onto the Georgian City, and at some points on the hill slopes the relative sudden start of the urban area can be appreciated. In contrast the approach routes from the west lack these features and are indistinctive.

FABRIC AND FUNCTION

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

- 2.48 The road network in Bath is determined by the topography and is focused on the city centre. The primary roads follow valleys. The A46 forms one of the primary routes coming in from London and linking to the M4. The A4 connects to Bristol in the west, the A39, A367 and the A36 are the main routes from south west and south. The topography leading all major routes to pass through the city centre creates a bottleneck within the city. The topography also leads to a lower accessibility of the slopes and plateaux.
- 2.49 The city centre street grid established during the Georgian era with remnants from its Roman past makes the city very walkable with small urban blocks. The architectural splendour and setting of the city makes walking a pleasurable experience.
- 2.50 Bath is well served by public transport with the railway station in the city centre. It has a convenient bus interchange. There is a dense bus network with good accessibility to residential areas.
- 2.51 The most accessible areas in Bath by individual and public transport are the city centre and the valley floor.

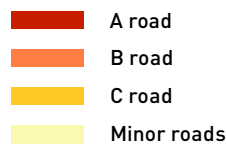
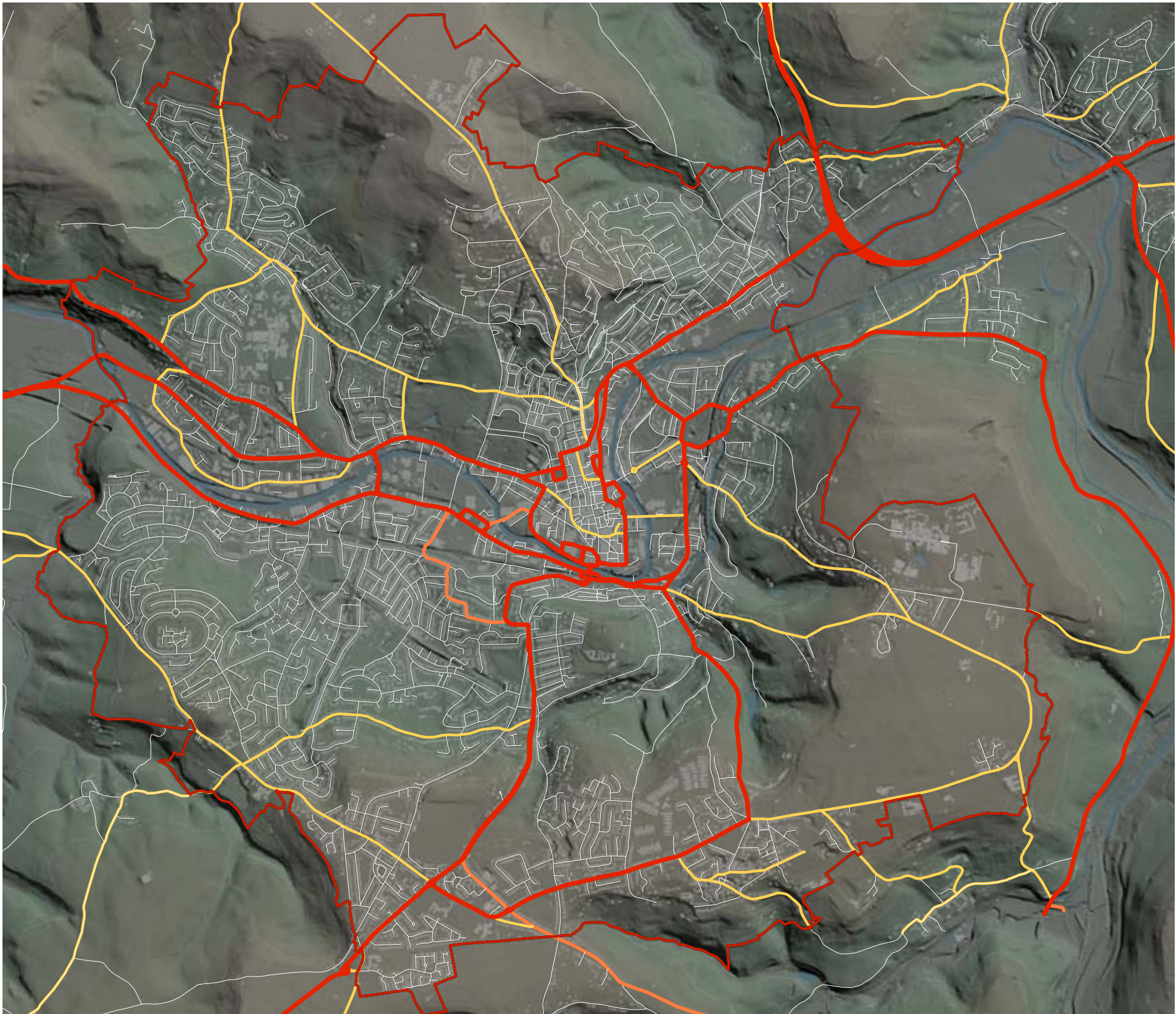


Figure 2.12: Transport Network



GREEN SPACES

2.52 Bath has a number of parks and open spaces including historic parks. Royal Victoria Park, Alexandra Park, Green Park, Sydney Gardens and Pulteney Weir Park are well known parks of the city. There is a clear hierarchy of open spaces with swathes of informal open spaces on the periphery of the city, formal parks and gardens, garden squares, circus and crescents. There are a number of cemeteries which though not open to public have mature trees which add to the green character of the city. Areas to north, east, south and immediately to west of the Georgian City provide an important landscape setting. The green areas are in contrast and interact with the urban form with fingers and pockets of natural landscape, large parks and undeveloped lands. The degree of green generally intensifies up the slopes and for instance around Bathampton have intensively tree covered horizon lines.

- Historic Parks and Gardens
- General green areas
- Shrubs and woodland
- Areas of intense tree cover
- Private gardens

Figure 2.13: Green Spaces

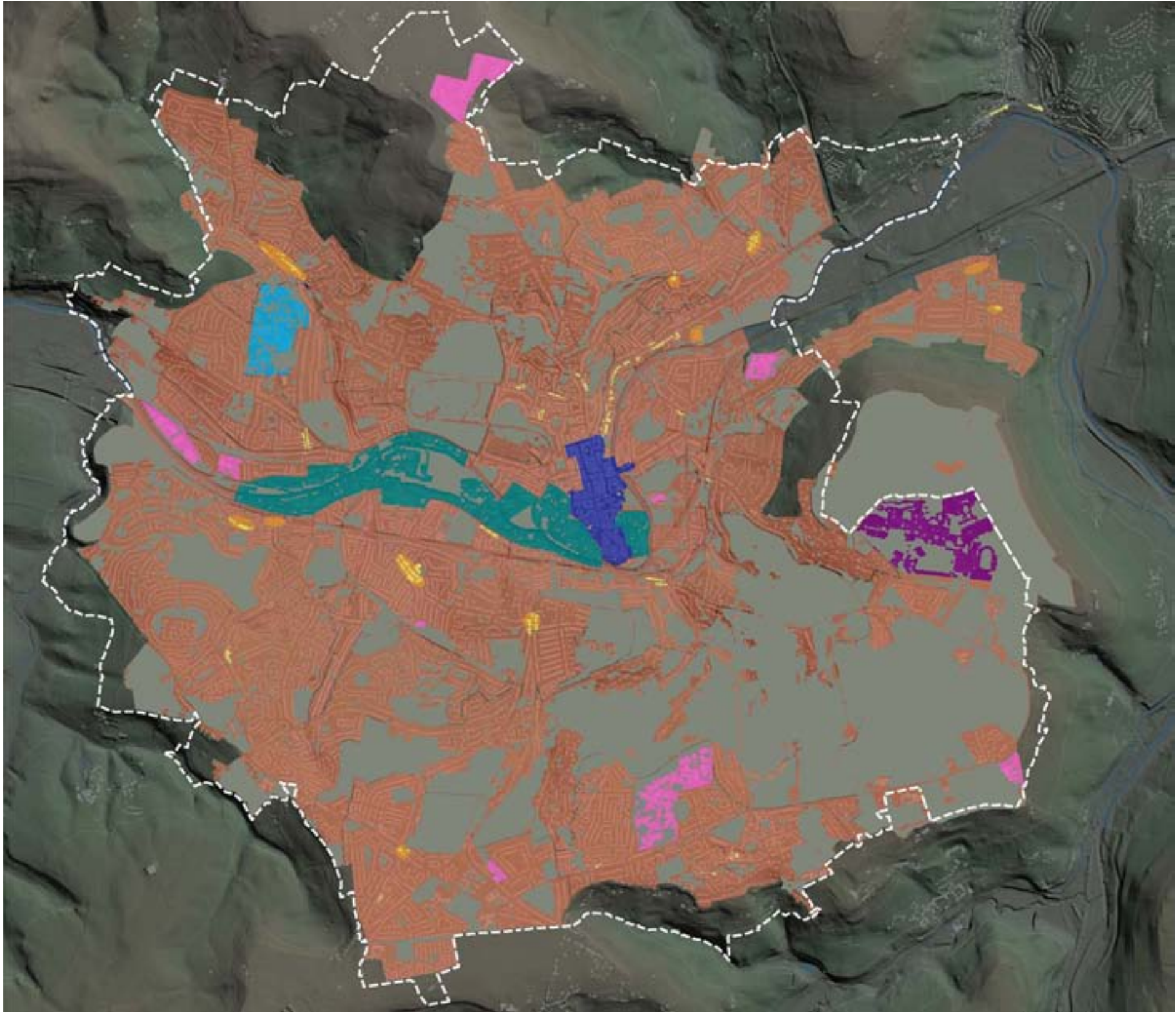


FUNCTIONAL AREAS

2.53 Bath is a single centred city with its retail core and major tourist attractions in the centre. There are a number of small local centres most of which are historic. A mixed use corridor with a dominance of industrial uses lies between the River Avon to the west of the city centre and the Lower Bristol Road. Bath Western Riverside area will emerge as a new city quarter with mixed uses and a distinct urban form. There are further employment sites west of Twerton. Ministry of Defence has a significant presence in the city with three office sites, the largest of which is located in Fox Hill. The city also has two major institutions within their own campuses: the Royal Hospital in Combe Park and the University of Bath at Bathampton Down. Other than these uses most of the area within the World Heritage Site are residential.

- Town centre
- Employment
- Retail
- Local centres
- Health
- University
- Mixed use

Bottom: Figure 2.14: Functional Areas as defined by the Local Plan



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- 2.54 The population of Bath & North East Somerset is growing, becoming older, and generally becoming more prosperous. The rising population means that more people have to be housed. There is an increasing trend towards smaller households which again creates more demand for housing. Increased prosperity also means that more people want to own their own home. Therefore there is increasing demand for significant additional housing in Bath. There is also a need to provide office space for a significant projected increase in jobs.
- 2.55 The Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation October 2009 identifies three broad locations to accommodate these growth pressures:
- “ River Corridor as a single broad location and strategic site to include the Central Area, Western Riverside, Lower Bristol Road and the Newbridge light industrial area.
 - “ The New Neighbourhood – retaining Green Belt around the city but release some land within it to the south/south west to develop a new neighbourhood as part of an urban extension. Two locations are identified as potential either or options – West of Twerton and Odd Down/South Stoke Plateau.
 - “ Existing Residential Neighbourhoods – realising potential of public sector land along with smaller scale densification of existing urban areas.
- 2.56 Developer pressure in Bath is focused on the Western riverside where there are large floorplate industrial uses. The following development opportunities have been identified by the council in various policy documents:
- “ Bath Western Riverside
 - “ City Centre Sites
 - “ University of Bath
 - “ MOD site(s)
 - “ Greenbelt School sites
 - “ Housing infill
 - “ Potential urban extension

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- 2.57 Alongside these development pressures Bath is highly constrained as a result of its location and heritage assets. The following policy constraints particularly impact on potential development of Bath:

FLOOD RISK

- 2.58 Bath and North East Somerset Council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment June 2009 states that the dominant sources of flood risk in Bath are rivers and sewers, although there is some risk from surface water, artificial sources and groundwater. Figure 2.15 shows the extent of the flood plain. The River Corridor is identified as a strategic site in the Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation, October 2009 which states at para 3.35 that the “risk of flooding is a common threat across all the river corridor zones and measures to mitigate against this on site could have knock-on effects on others. It is therefore necessary to have a common flood mitigation strategy for the river corridor.” The West of Twerton New Neighbourhood Site is also bordered by the River Avon to the north and Newton Brook to the east. The Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation, October 2009 states at para 3.118 that “any development will need to avoid the floodplains and must not increase flood risk elsewhere. There may be potential for development at this location to be related to a strategic flood mitigation solution for the city.”

Floodplain
Flood zone 3

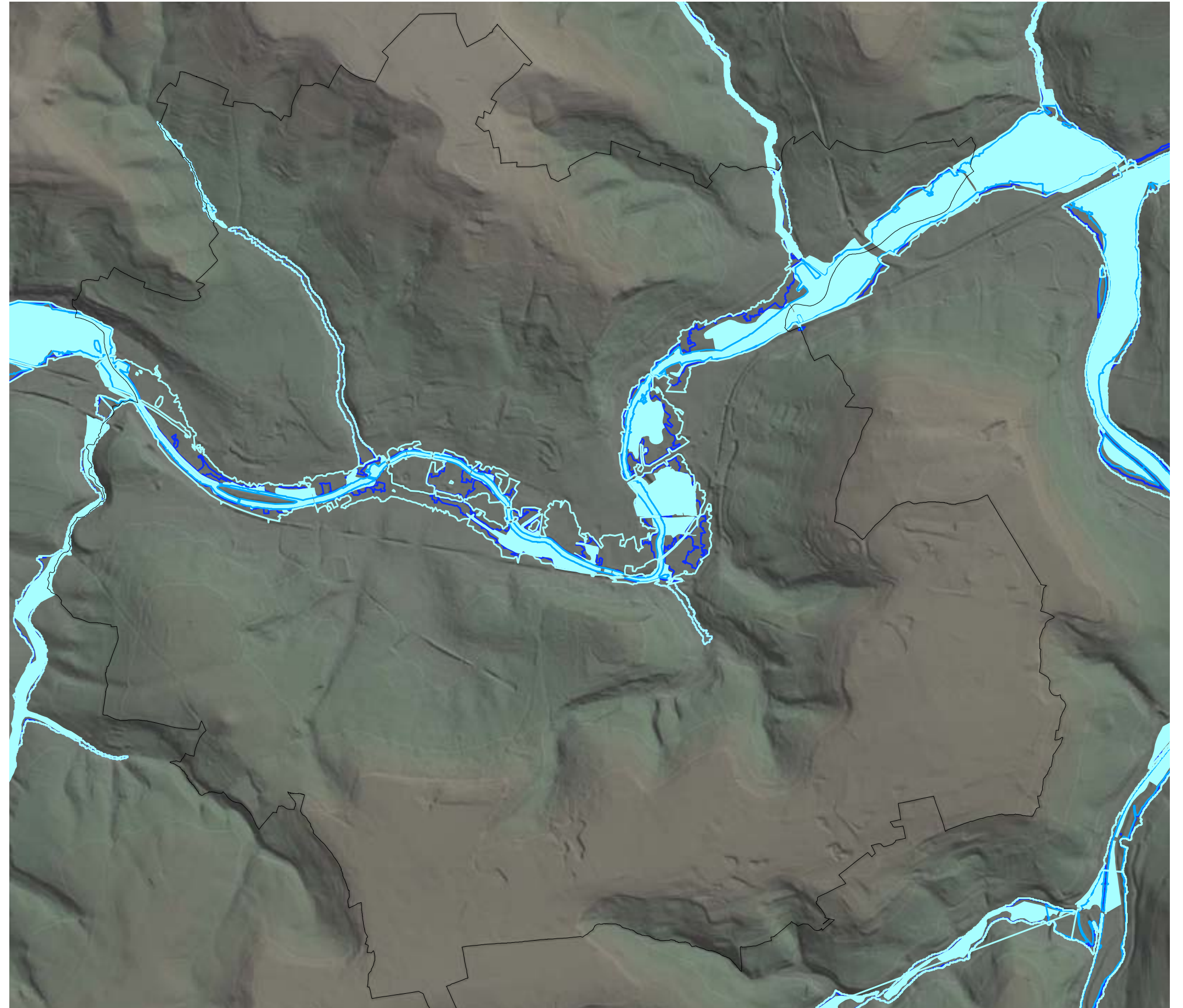
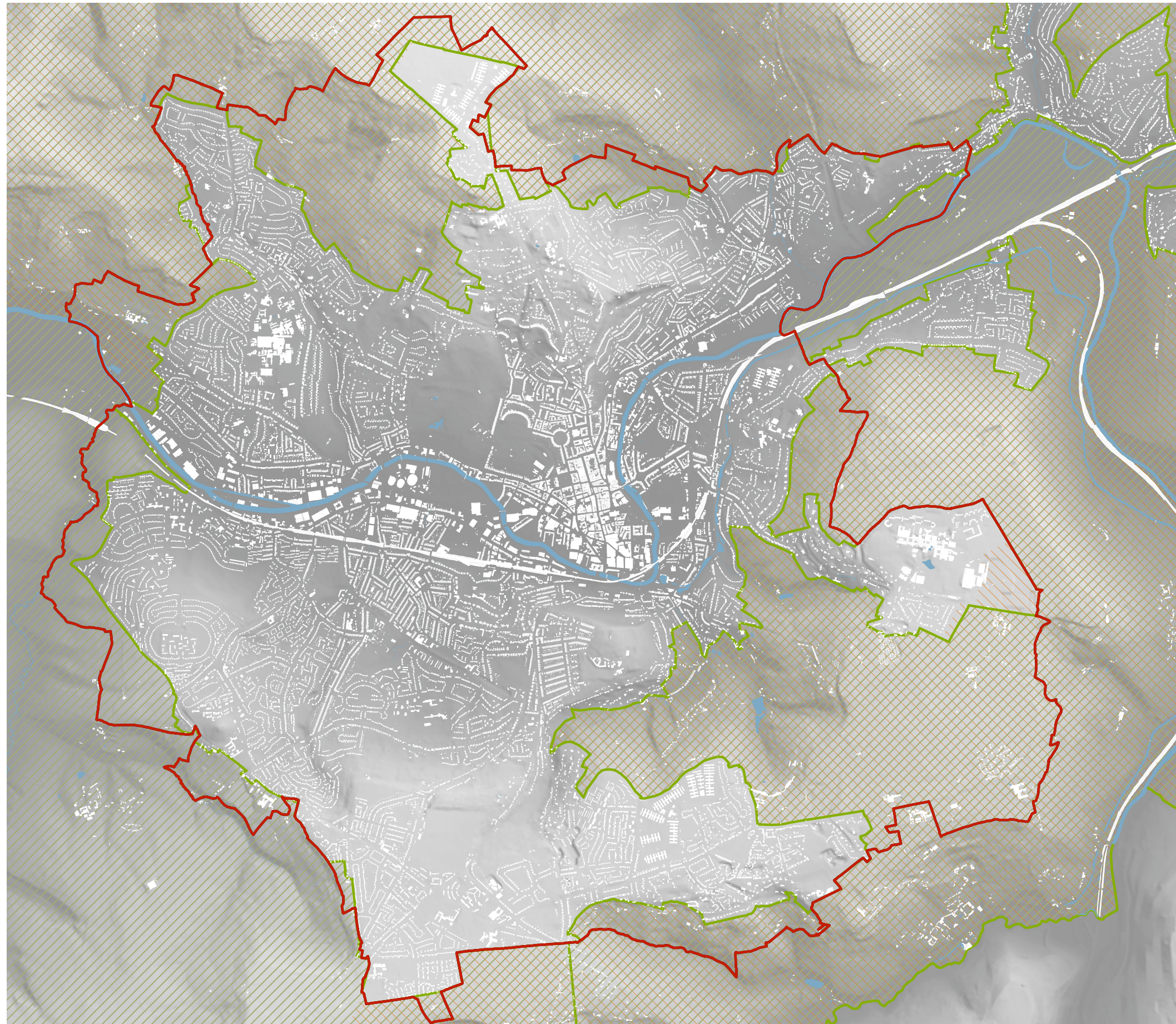


Figure 2.15: Flood Risk Areas



Greenbelt
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Figure 2.16: Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

BUILT HERITAGE

- 2.59 The extraordinary built heritage of Bath necessitates strong planning policies to protect and/or enhance these assets. The following heritage planning designations are of particular relevance.

WORLD HERITAGE SITE

- 2.60 Policy BH.1 of the Local Plan 2007 seeks to protect the qualities which justified the inscription of Bath as a World Heritage Site and the setting of the World Heritage Site by not permitting developments which would harm the qualities and the setting.

CONSERVATION AREAS

- 2.61 B & NES Council has designated 37 Conservation Areas in the District with the largest being in Bath (Figure 2.8). The Bath Conservation Area covers most of Bath and policy BH.6 of the Local Plan 2007 seeks new development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. The policy requires new development to pay particular attention to a range of townscape and architectural elements such as historic grain, spaces, building lines, retention of boundary walls etc. that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. It also seeks to protect the existing trees and landscape which contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

LISTED BUILDINGS

- 2.62 Bath has a very high concentration of listed buildings. Policy BH.2 of the Local Plan 2007 sets out a number of criteria for permitting a development affecting a listed building or its setting. The criteria includes preserving the building's special architectural or historic interest and respecting the character of the building in terms of scale, style, design and materials.

SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS

- 2.63 There are five Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Bath. Policy BH.11 of the Local Plan 2007 seeks to preserve Scheduled Ancient Monuments from adverse affects of development and preserve such sites in situ.

GREENBELT

- 2.64 Bath is surrounded on all sides by the Green Belt as shown in Figure 2.16 which plays an important role in maintaining the setting of the World Heritage Site. It is also important in preventing the coalescence of surrounding villages with the City. The possible locations for urban extension proposed in the Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation, are within the Green Belt.

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

- 2.65 The areas to the north, east and south of Bath are designated as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONBs have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The majority of the Odd Down/South Stoke Plateau potential site for the urban extension is within the AONB. The Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation has included this site as it considers that this location would have less impact on the landscape and the World Heritage Site setting than other parts of the "area of search". In light of this there may be exceptional reasons to consider this area (as required in national planning policy set out within Planning Policy Statement 7).



Top: View to Kelston Round Hill

Bottom: City Centre

