

## 5.9 R. Curzon Park

### Character Area Assessment

#### Location

This Character Area consists of the Curzon Park conservation area, with the exception of the riverside part of Curzon Park North which is included within the Riverside Character Area (M). The Curzon Park area includes the key southern approaches to the City Centre of Hough Green, Lache Lane and Grosvenor Road and also includes Overleigh Cemetery and adjoining areas of open space.

The Character Area is comprised of the following sub-areas.

- **R1: Hough Green** – this key approach road to the City Centre, from the edge of the conservation area to the roundabout.
- **R2: Grosvenor Road** – a green corridor either side of Grosvenor Road and Wrexham Road, taking in the Dingle and the parts of Overleigh Cemetery closest to the main roads.
- **R3: Overleigh Road Cemetery** – the cemetery grounds north and south of Overleigh Road.
- **R4: Curzon Park North** - the southern side of this road, and Dingle Bank.
- **R5: Westminster Avenue/ Cavendish Road** - these two roads lie between Hough Green and Lache Lane.
- **R6: Curzon Park South** - the road extending south-west from Curzon Park North.

- **R7: Lache Lane** - this key approach road to the City Centre, from the edge of the conservation area to the roundabout.



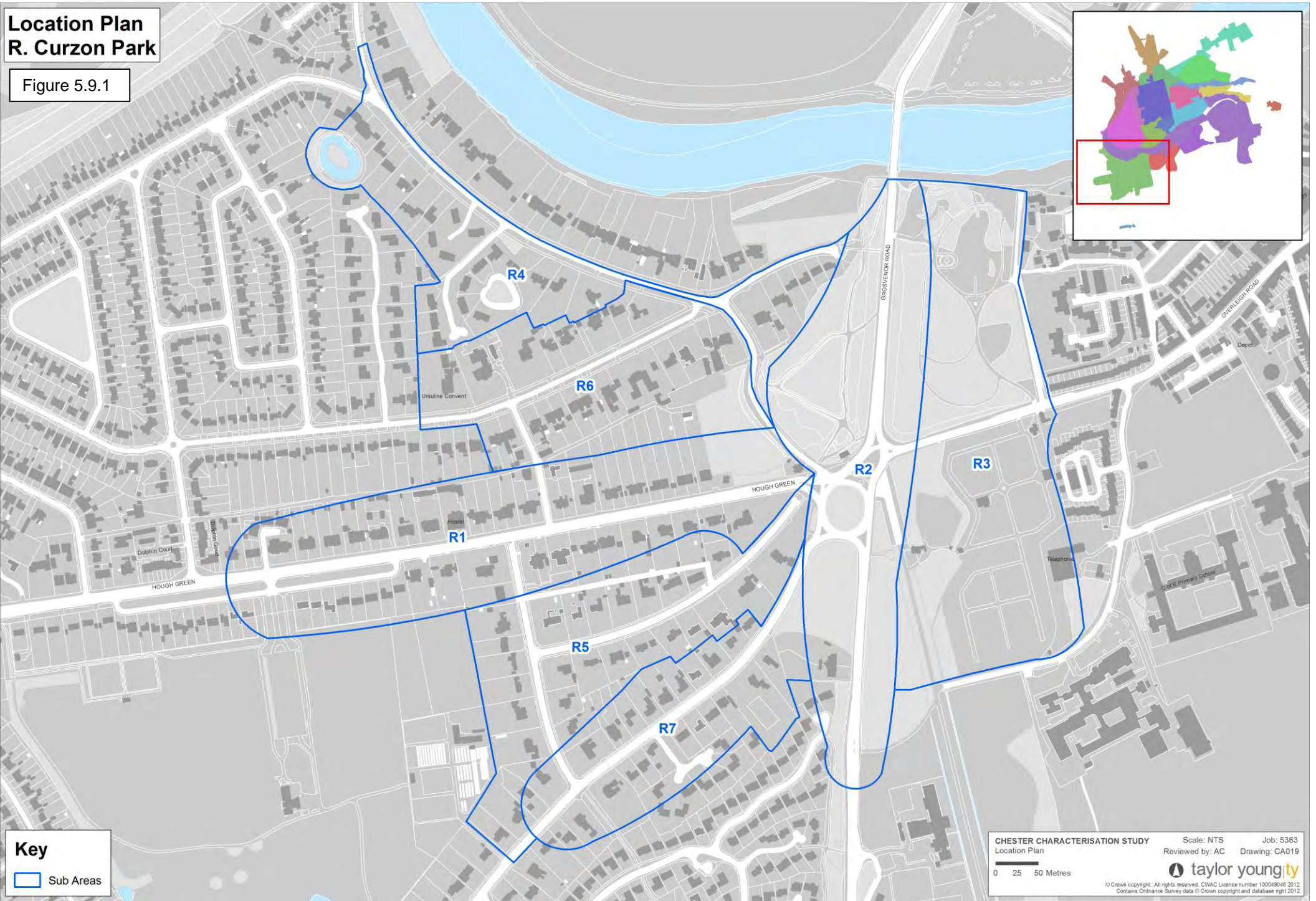
*Hough Green (N1)*



*Overleigh Cemetery (N3)*

# Location Plan R. Curzon Park

Figure 5.9.1



## Historical Development

**Overleigh Road Cemetery** - By the 1830s, Chester's ancient churchyards were full and the Bishop of Chester had complained of the poor state of these burial grounds and the need for a new cemetery. In 1847, Canon Blomfield suggested a site on the other side of the river instead and thus was commenced what is now known as the Overleigh Cemetery. It was designed by local architect Thomas Wainwaring Penson (1818-64) and elegantly laid out in 1848-50 including two chapels and two lodges. The Cemetery opened in 1850. All of the buildings have since been demolished- including, a 'Greek temple' style structure (on the far right of the photograph below). Nonetheless, the cemetery still contains a remarkable variety of Victorian monuments.



*Overleigh Cemetery, late 19th century*

**Curzon Park** - In the middle of the 19th Century, Chester's mid-century prosperity encouraged the promotion of two exclusive suburbs south of the River: Curzon Park and Queen's Park.

Although access had been improved by the opening of Grosvenor Bridge in 1832, it was the advent of the Chester-Saltney railway which prompted Earl Howe to develop Curzon Park in the mid 1840s on land formerly farmed from Brewer's Hall between Hough Green and the River.

The original intention was to attract Liverpool's wealthy merchants to these houses but in reality they became occupied by Chester's own merchants and professionals. The first house was built in 1847 and early development was rapid along the top of the river cliff. South of Curzon Park a strip of land in corporation ownership ran along the north side of Hough Green from the Curzon Park entrance to Saltney, and after 1850 it was auctioned in individual plots. Building was rapid, and by 1861 a line of thirty smaller detached and semi-detached villas stretched for half a mile along the road.

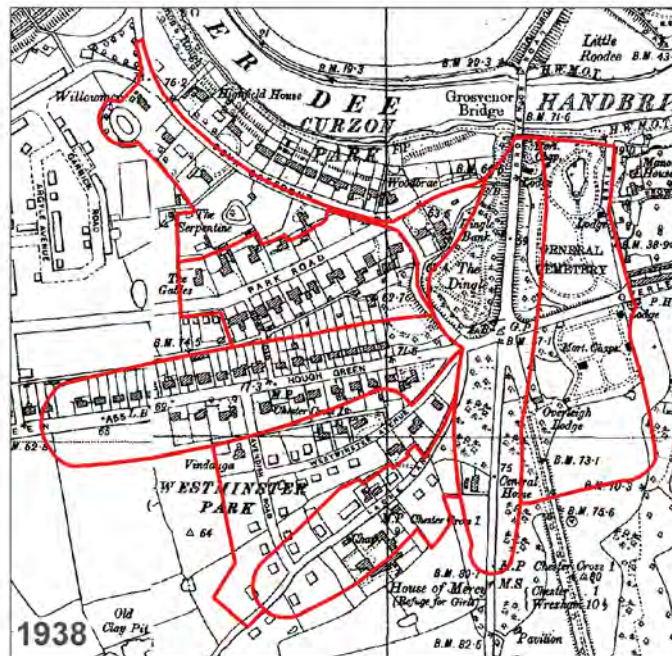
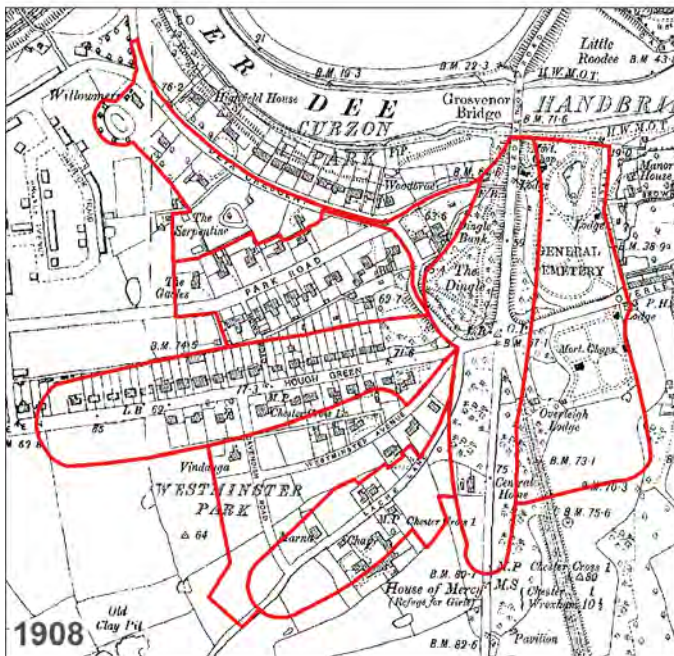
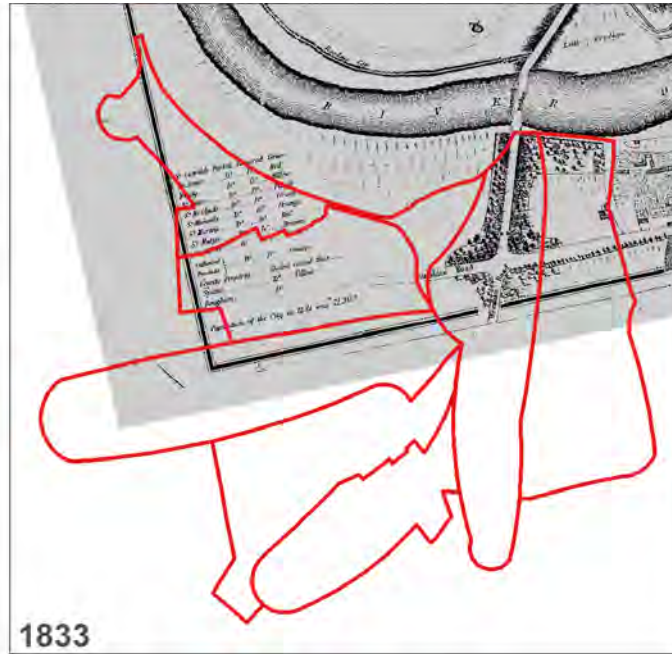
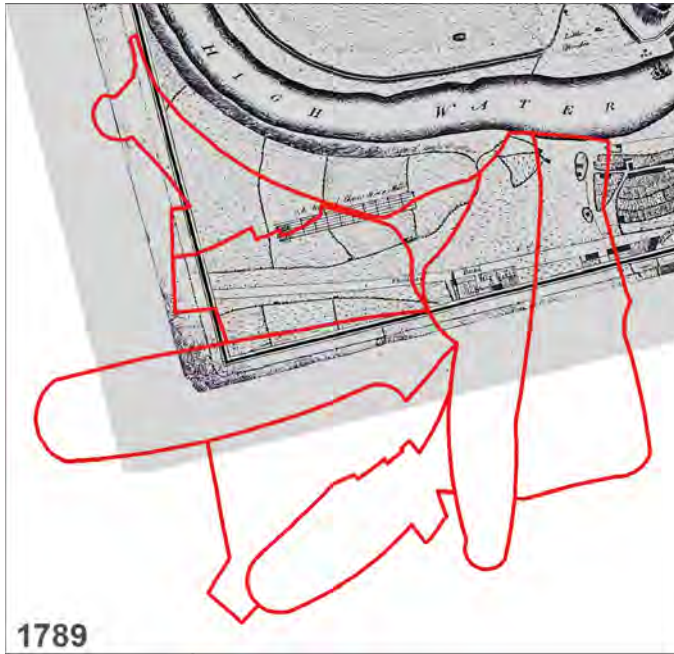
Development of the intervening wedge of land in Curzon Park was much slower. Some houses were built on Park Road (later Curzon Park South) after 1870, and by 1914 the eastern end of the wedge was largely developed. The early years of the 20th century saw the building of large detached houses south of Hough Green, along the tree-lined Westminster Avenue, and of terraced housing on the southern edge of Handbridge. In 1913 the Council appointed Patrick Abercrombie as planner for its first large estate of working-class housing, south of Hough Green on an estate initially named Buddicom Park (after its previous owner). This led to the next wave of suburban expansion, with the garden suburbs of Buddicom Park, Handbridge estate and Lache estate extending toward the west, south and east of this character area - leaving Curzon Park as an inner suburbs of Chester with a more organic form in comparison.



*Saltney Tram on Hough Green, c.1900*

# Historical Development R. Curzon Park

Figure 5.9.2



## Land-uses

This character area is predominantly residential in use. However, it also contains two areas of open space (Overleigh Cemetery and the Dingle) that act as a green buffer between the built up areas. Hough Green (N1) supports a number of guesthouses and hotels which tend to be focussed principally along the northern side of the street.

## Urban Form

The urban form of this area is largely consistent throughout and results from the planned origin of Curzon Park.

Hough Green is characterised by large semi detached and detached properties, set well back from the edge of the street in large plots. It has a strong linear form, softened with extensive planting in the form of trees within gardens and hedgerow boundary treatments. Some infill development has taken place in the rear of gardens, particularly along the northern side - Cavendish Mews, to the rear of numbers 50 and 52, is a prime example. Properties along the northern side, which tend to be mainly semi-detached, follow a consistent building line, providing a strong sense of rhythm to the street. Properties on the southern side tend to be larger, detached houses and the building line is more varied. Hough Green is a busy road and this has a detrimental impact on the area.

Lache Lane is also generously landscaped and spacious but has a different character to Hough Green. Properties are generally more recent and mostly detached with generous spacing between them providing a more open feel with less rhythm to the streetscene. The street bends gently, is narrower and traffic flow is less; creating a quieter and more intimate residential environment.

Grosvenor Road and Wrexham Road (N2) have an open character and strong landscape setting, being flanked by areas of green space and

mature landscaping on either side. The view north is of Grosvenor Bridge which provides an attractive gateway into the City. There is an attractive view from here looking west along the river towards the villas of Curzon Park.

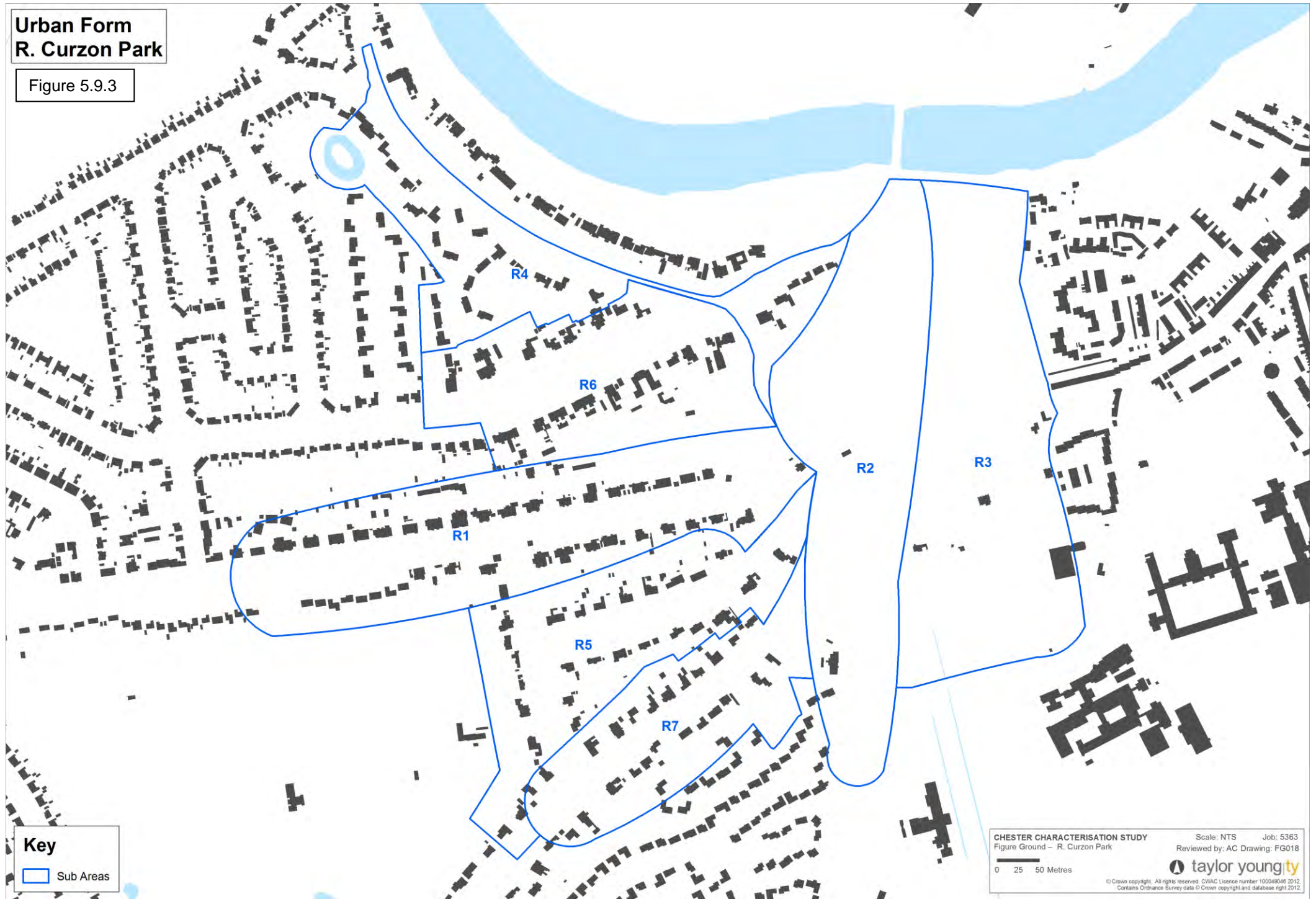


*View of Grosvenor Bridge looking north towards the City*

The other streets within Curzon Park are all characterised by large detached properties set well back from the building line within generous plots. This allows plenty of space for landscaping within front gardens. Tall boundary treatments and planting create a private feel with a green street environment. In fact the buildings are often barely visible from the street. Roads are generally gently sweeping and the houses are 2 to 3 storeys in height. All of this has been very carefully planned and helps create a unified feel to the area, within which house styles vary considerably and are individual and separate in feel.

**Urban Form  
R. Curzon Park**

Figure 5.9.3



## Townscape Character

Architectural style within the area is varied, reflecting the slow development of Curzon Park. This includes early Victorian, Italianate, Arts & Crafts and Edwardian buildings, generally with later properties predominating as one travels further southward. There are many excellent examples of each period, especially the Arts & Crafts style. Houses are individually designed and there are few uniform features in the area. There is also some later Inter-War and Post-war infill. In general all of the houses in this area are large, detached and high value.

Most properties along Hough Green are Victorian detached houses, although there is an area of post-war housing along the southern side, backing onto Westminster Park. The houses are of individual designs, with several of townscape merit identified, but early Victorian (neo-Georgian) and Italianate stylings are common. They are typically two-storey and built in brick with white stone window surrounds and parapets and traditionally pitched roofs. There is also use of white render and traditional black-and-white gable detailing. Individual buildings also show examples of Gothic Revival and Arts & Crafts styles.

Lache Lane has a different townscape, with later Victorian properties and Edwardian properties in typical Arts & Crafts and garden suburb styles, particularly on the northern side. These use gable fronts alongside traditional pitches with black-and-white detailing, white rendered upper storeys above brick, horizontally proportioned windows and tall chimney stacks. There are also a large number of post-war houses of standard suburban design, especially on the southern side. The extent of landscaping in front gardens on Lache Lane (and on the southern side of Hough Green) means that most of these properties are well hidden for most of the year and so their contribution to the streetscene is limited.



*House on Hough Green with distinctive detailing*

Curzon Park North consists of a wide variety of houses, from Victorian to post-war development. The most impressive houses on this street are on the northside, backing onto the river, outside of this Character Area. Curzon Park South has many fine individual Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

Westminster Avenue and Cavendish Road have later properties, generally Edwardian, Arts & Crafts and Inter-War in style. These all have features typical of the era of their construction and are individual in nature.

R. Curzon Park: Typical Materials and Details





# Townscape & Landscape Analysis R. Curzon Park

Figure 5.9.4

- Key**
- Sub Areas
  - Public Open Space
  - Negative Environment
  - Positive Environment
  - Strong Frontage
  - Weak Frontage
  - Strong Node
  - Weak Node
  - ↔ Pedestrian Linkage
  - Key View
  - Key Vista
  - Negative Vista
  - ▶ Gradient (Downhill)
  - Strong Gateway
  - Weak Gateway



## Landscape Character

This is a Character Area in which open space and landscaping (formal and informal) plays a large role in defining character, especially as architectural character is so varied.

The main area of formal open space is Overleigh Cemetery, consecrated in 1850, which acts as a green buffer separating Handbridge from the built up area west of Grosvenor Road. It follows the original plan form and provides a series of picturesque walks within attractively landscaped grounds. There are views looking north from the Cemetery across the river towards The Little Roodee.

The formal setting of the Cemetery contrasts with the wilder surroundings of the Dingle, a small wooded area running along the western side of Grosvenor Road which links with a riverside walk. Traffic noise from Grosvenor Road has a detrimental impact on both spaces although this is partly mitigated by the heavy tree cover and a difference in levels.

Changing levels play a key role in the character of Grosvenor Road with land falling steeply on either side, providing views down into both the Dingle and Cemetery grounds, as the road rises to cross the River. There is a pedestrian footbridge dating from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century across the Dingle, linking Curzon Park to Grosvenor Road. Pedestrian access into the Cemetery from Grosvenor Road is restricted, limiting east-west movement.

All of the streets in Curzon Park have a strong 'green feel' with properties set well back within landscaped front gardens that provide tree cover to the street. Boundary treatments typically consist of low boundary walls fences or hedges and are reinforced with mature planting behind. Several properties, have very high fences (especially on Curzon Park South and Cavendish Road) which combined with mature tree cover obscures views of the properties themselves. There are also extensive mature street

trees and grass verges throughout the area, formally arranged to create boulevards, which creates a pleasant street environment. A fairly wide pedestrian route exists linking Cavendish Road to Westminster Avenue. This is in fairly good order, although being rather informal in nature. Overall the landscape treatment creates an ordered suburban parkland feel, although this is somewhat lessened at Hough Green by the level of through traffic.

Also of note, is the 'Duke's Drive' - a private road for the Duke of Westminster, leading from his private estate at Eaton into Chester. This terminates on the roundabout in R2, where it is marked by bollards and extensive mature boulevard planting.



*Entrance to the 'Duke's Drive'*



*Street landscaping on Westminster Avenue*

## Designated Heritage Assets

The area is all within the Curzon Park conservation area. The Cemetery north of Overleigh Road is also a Registered Park. There are only a few listed buildings, which are listed below. There are a significant number of buildings with article 4 Directions, especially on Curzon Park North, Curzon Park South and Hough Green.

- **Overleigh Lodge and Gates** (Grade II, 1893)



Within the Cemetery:

- **Memorial to Frederick Coplestone** (Grade II, Headstone of Portland stone, 1934, by Eric Gill)
- **Cenotaph to those fallen in the Great War 1914-19** (Grade II, 1932)

- **The Lodge, Curzon Park South** (c.1850, Grade II listed)

- **4 Curzon Park South**



- **8 and 10 Hough Green** (Grade II, 1850s)



## Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit

A total of 45 Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit have been identified:

- **R1a. Tollit House** - an Arts and Crafts style property set in extensive grounds.



- **R1b. 3 Hough Green** – Gothic Revival style with mullioned arched windows and stone/terracotta banding.



- **R1c. 11 Hough Green** – Gothic Revival style, with mullioned leaded windows and battlements at ground floor.



- **R1d. 17 Hough Green** – Jacobean Revival style villa.



- **R1e. 15 Hough Green** – Arts and Craft style semi with very pronounced low roof pitch.



- **R1g. Redland House** – pair of Victorian houses currently undergoing refurbishment.



- **R1f. Claverton (7 Hough Green)** – Edwardian villa



- **R1j. The Goldsmith's House, 50 Hough Green** – a 2 storey neo-Classical style property with rendered window surrounds and datestone on pediment.



- **R1k. 16-18 Hough Green** – an early Victorian, semi-detached property with bay windows and white window surrounds with black dressing.



- **R1m. 4-6 Hough Green** – Italianate style with arched windows and colonnade.



- **R1l.12-14 Hough Green** – similar style to R1k with front bay windows and red stone window surrounds.



- **R1n. 2 Hough Green** – a two storey extended property with bay window and Italianate style arched windows.



- **R1o. Group of 3 Victorian semis, Hough Green** – consistent style between the group (with minor differences)



- **R1q. 13 Hough Green** – good Arts & Crafts style villa



- **R1p. 24-26 Hough Green** – Italianate style villa with distinctive detailing



- **R1r. Cavendish House** – recently refurbished with some alterations but retains historic character



- **R1s. 5 Hough Green** – Arts & Crafts style villa with distinctive porch



- **R3a. Chapel, Overleigh Road Cemetery** – single storey Vernacular Revival style with decorative stone and leaded windows.



- **R2a. 2-4 Wrexham Road** – Edwardian Baroque style pair with Dutch gable fronts in two pairs.



- **R4a. Mereside House** - Edwardian house with interesting details, and some unsympathetic additions.





- **R4b. Curzon Green** - distinctive Arts & Crafts buildings.



- **R4c. 9 Curzon Park North** - Dominant Arts & Crafts building.



- **R5a. 1 Cavendish Road** - striking Edwardian villa, dominant in streetscene.



- **R5c. 9 Cavendish Road** - simple, rustic-style Edwardian building.



- **R5d. 4 Cavendish Road** - good Arts & Crafts style house.



- **R5g. 6 Westminster Avenue** - very distinctive Arts & Crafts building.



- **R5e. Tresco** - Edwardian house with extensive timber face detailing.



- **R5h. Langrick** - Edwardian villa.



- **R5j. Overleigh Road** - white rendered Edwardian house.



- **R5l. The Cottage** - rural style rendered house.



- **R5k. Abbots Bank** - large Edwardian house.



- **R5m. Burland** - large Arts & Crafts house.



- **R6d. 5 Curzon Park South** - white rendered Victorian house.



- **R6g. Curzon House** - Victorian/Edwardian villa - now converted to apartments.



- **R6f. 6 Curzon Park South** - large Edwardian house.



- **R6h. Ursuline Convent** - large Edwardian building, former Convent.



- **R6i. 25-27 Curzon Park South** - large and distinctive Edwardian semi-detached pair.



- **R6k. 9-11 Curzon Park South** - large Italianate style (probably Edwardian) semi-detached pair.



- **R6j. 15-23 Curzon Park South** - semi-detached Edwardian pairs, included for group value.



- **R7t. 11 Cavendish Road** – large Arts & Crafts villa on the corner with Lache Lane



- **R7u. 14 Lache Lane** – good Arts & Crafts style house



- **R7w. 23 Lache Lane** – good Arts & Crafts style house



- **R7v. 27 Lache Lane** – good Arts & Crafts style house



- **R7x. 17 Lache Lane** – good Arts & Crafts style house with distinctive porch and roofline



- **R7y. 8 Lache Lane** – good Arts & Crafts style house



## Key Detractors

No key detractors have been identified in this area.

## Summary: Character Assessment

The character of the area is consistently high with the following summary by sub-area:

- **R1. Hough Green: Positive** – well landscaped road with some good buildings, providing good evidence of their planned suburban development.
- **R2. Grosvenor Road: Critical** – a major approach to the City, marked with an open environment and strong views northwards.
- **R3. Overleigh Road Cemetery: Critical** – an historically important facility, with strong local attachment and in a pleasant parkland setting.
- **R4. Curzon Park North: Positive** - a planned suburban road with a range of good quality houses.
- **R5. Westminster Avenue/Cavendish Road: Positive** - leafy suburban streets with many good Arts & Crafts and Edwardian houses.
- **R6. Curzon Park South: Positive** - a consistent street of high quality and varied architecture.
- **R7. Lache Lane: Positive** - an important approach to the City with many fine Arts & Crafts houses.

## Character Statement

*“The Curzon Park Character Area is a strong example of a planned middle-class suburb at the southern edge of the historic City. It includes two key road approaches and an attractive open space setting, including Overleigh Cemetery, culminating in a grand arrival on Grosvenor Bridge. The character of the suburban area has a mixed but high quality architecture, with many fine examples of Victorian, Arts & Crafts and Edwardian styles as individual and distinctive buildings. This reflects its gradual history of development. Consistency and cohesiveness is provided by the street form and generous landscaping, which creates a pleasant and exclusive, distinctly suburban environment.”*

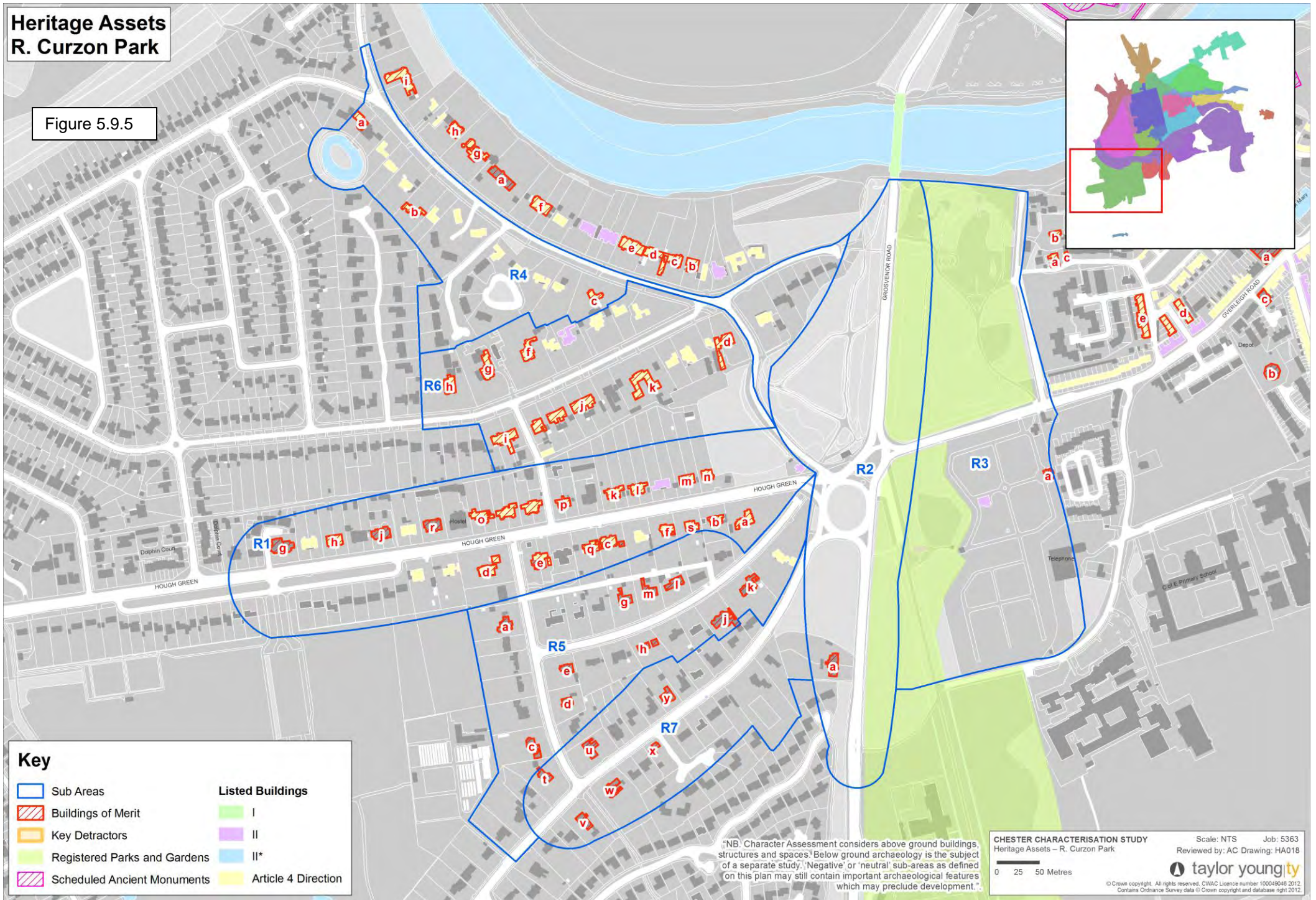


*Cavendish Road*



# Heritage Assets R. Curzon Park

Figure 5.9.5



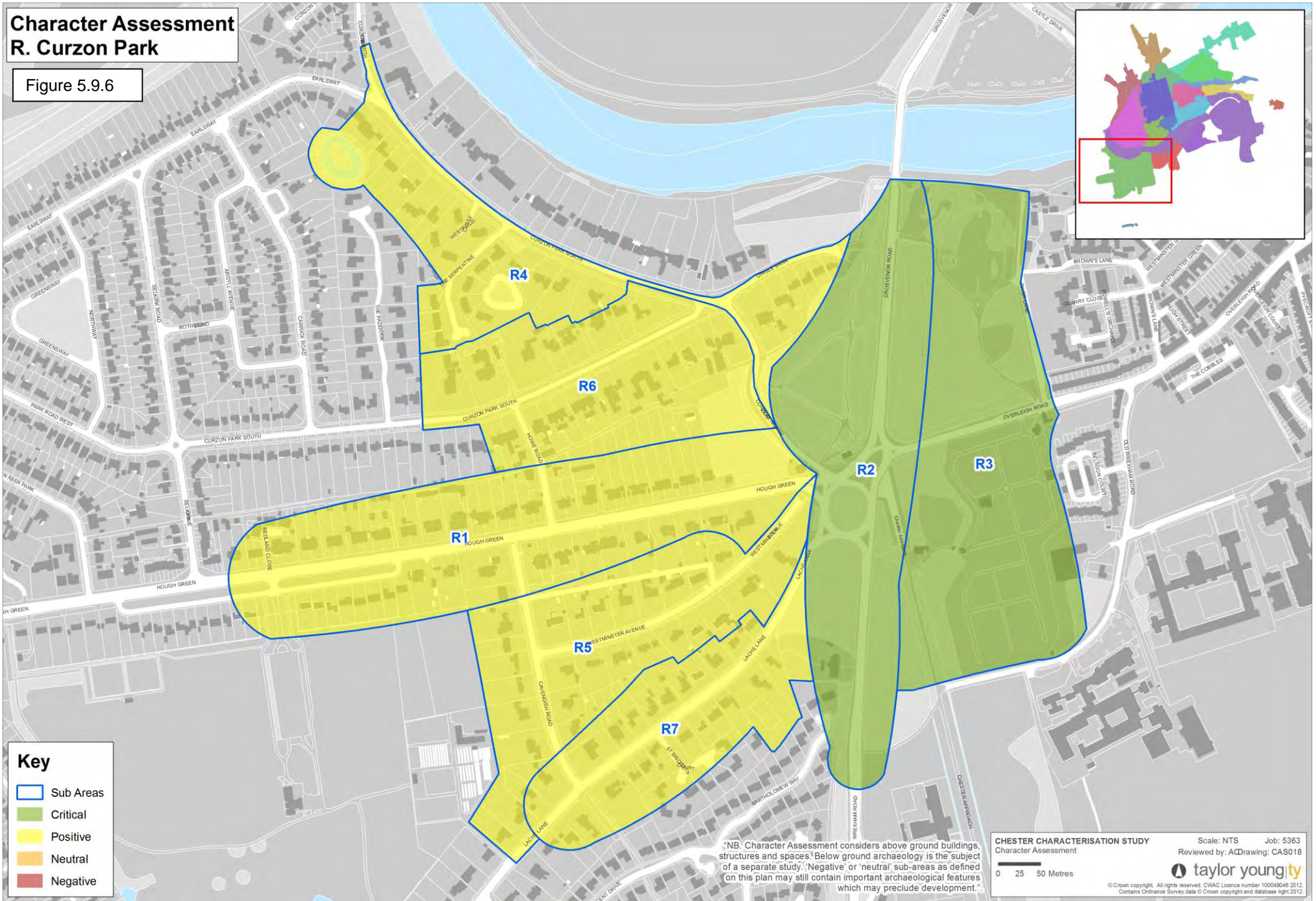
## Key

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sub Areas                    | Listed Buildings I   |
| Buildings of Merit           | Listed Buildings II  |
| Key Detractors               | Listed Buildings II* |
| Registered Parks and Gardens | Article 4 Direction  |
| Scheduled Ancient Monuments  |                      |

"NB. Character Assessment considers above ground buildings, structures and spaces. Below ground archaeology is the subject of a separate study. 'Negative' or 'neutral' sub-areas as defined on this plan may still contain important archaeological features which may preclude development."

# Character Assessment R. Curzon Park

Figure 5.9.6



**Key**

- Sub Areas
- Critical
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

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**CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY**  
Character Assessment

Scale: NTS Job: 5363  
Reviewed by: ACDrawing: CAS018

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## Management and Policy Recommendations

The area remains in good condition with the special character still very evident today. Landscaping, from the Cemetery to street trees, is generally well maintained throughout. Many of the buildings have Article 4 Directions and more still have been identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit. The high number of such buildings identified reflects the architectural quality and continued good condition of these buildings. It will be important to protect these identified buildings from demolition or unsympathetic alteration.

## Capacity to Accommodate Change

Whilst there are no large scale development sites in the area there is scope for change. This corresponds with the buildings that are not listed or included as Buildings of Townscape Merit. There are a significant number of these, especially on Lache Lane, many of which are Inter-war or Post-war.

## Design Principles for New Development

The buildings referred to above could be altered fairly freely (subject to normal planning policies) as they do not have special heritage value. They could also be demolished and replaced by new buildings. This is especially the case as many buildings are set back and hidden by vegetation and boundary treatments and also when considering that a character of the area is its mix in architectural style.

What is important is that the built form of large detached or large semi-detached pairs continues to prevail on development sites and then high quality and distinctive individual architecture is applied. The 2-3 storey height of existing buildings should be followed, as should the local building line and boundary treatments.

