

5.10 S. Queen's Park

Character Area Assessment

Location

This Character Area focuses on the planned suburb of Queen's Park, to the immediate south of the River Dee. It includes those parts of the suburb within the Queen's Park conservation area. This also includes Queen's Park High School.

The Character Area comprises the following sub-areas:

- **S1. Victoria Crescent** - All the land within this oval-shaped circuit (also including Queen's Park Road and South Crescent Road) with the exception of the riverside length, which is included in Character Area M.
- **S2. Queen's Park High School** - the school buildings and playing fields.
- **S3. St John's Road** - the Victorian grid of streets including St John's Road, St John' Rear Road, Victoria Pathway, Northern Pathway and Eastern Pathway.
- **S4. St George's Crescent** - the parts of this semi-circular road that lie within the conservation area, also includes Bottoms Lane.



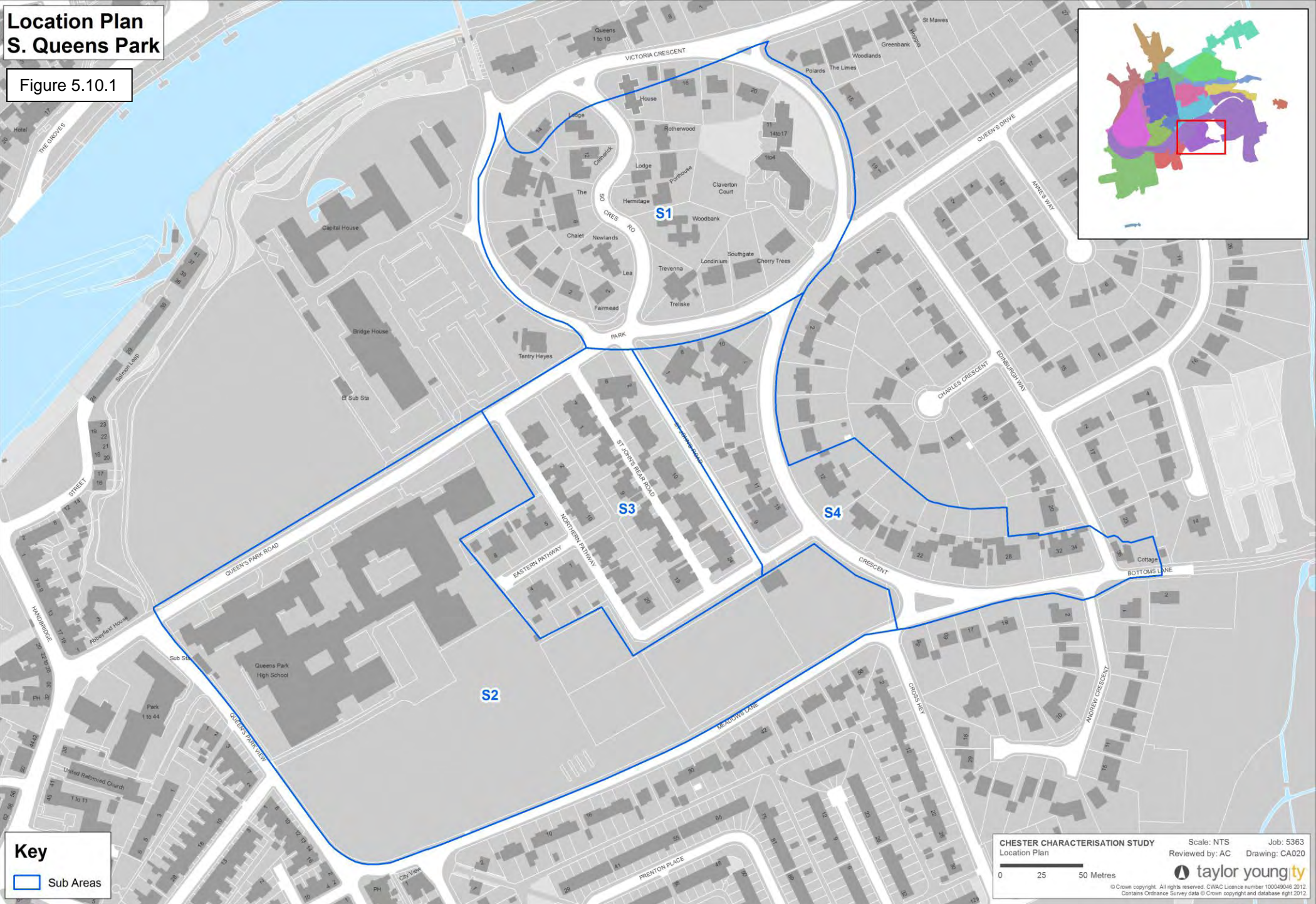
Victoria Crescent



St John's Road

Location Plan S. Queens Park

Figure 5.10.1



Key

Sub Areas

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Location Plan

Scale: NTS
Reviewed by: AC
Job: 5363
Drawing: CA020

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Historical Development

The spatial constraints imposed by the River Dee and its meadows meant that most of the early suburban development in Chester took place in an arc to the north and north-east of the walled City, or on the southern bank around Handbridge and Saltney. The suburbs to the south and east of the river generally consisted of more spacious properties than the terraced housing to the north of the walled City (with the exception of Liverpool Road and Parkgate Road). South of the river, Chester's mid-century prosperity encouraged the promotion of two exclusive suburbs, Curzon Park and Queen's Park.

Access to the City had been improved by the construction of the Grosvenor Bridge in 1832 and the development of Curzon Park commenced with the first house constructed in 1847 and continued rapidly in the 1850s.

Queen's Park was planned on a greenfield site immediately south of the River Dee in 1851 by Enoch Gerrard. It was developed in the 1850s and 1860s as a middle class residential suburb. The Duke of Westminster originally intended to have the area laid out as a model industrial suburb but Victoria Pathway remains the only part of this vision that was realised.

The Queen's Park suspension bridge was opened in 1852 to serve the residential development of Queen's Park, providing a direct link to the walled city. Chester Corporation took on the responsibility for this bridge in the early 1920s. They demolished it in 1922 and replaced it with a new bridge designed by Charles Greenwood, City Engineer and Surveyor. This is the bridge that stands today. It was restored in 1998 and remains an important and well used link to the City, allowing Queen's Park to be a popular choice for commuters.



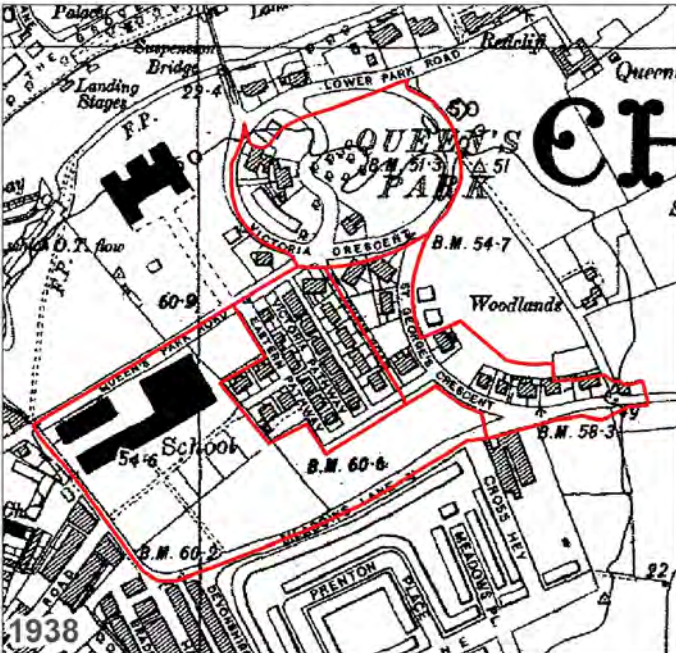
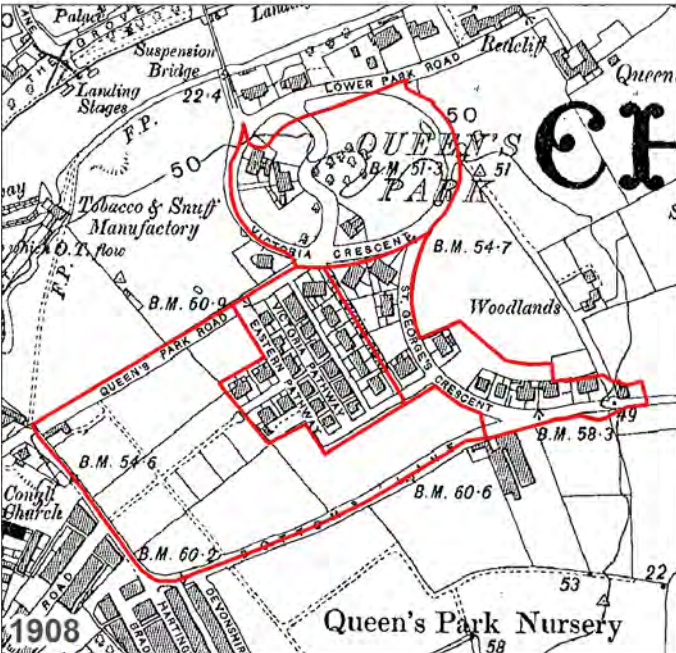
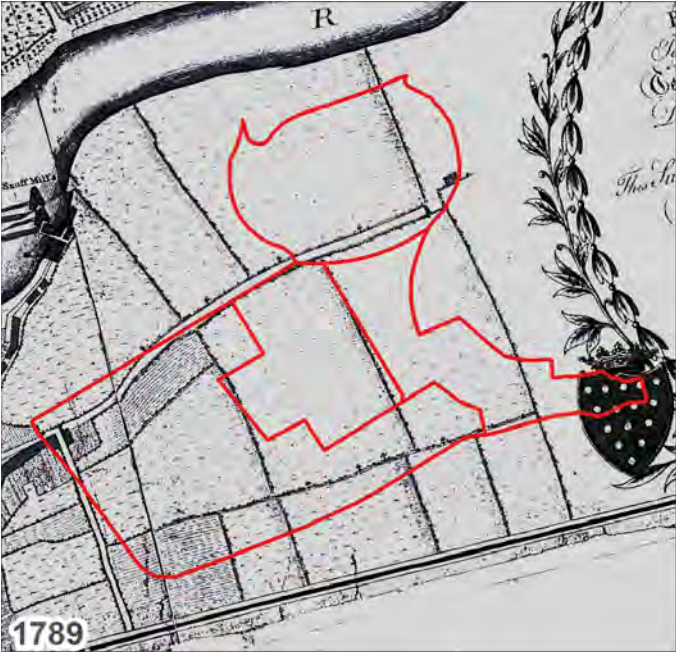
Original Queens Park Bridge 1920s (restoration by Jeremy Stubbs)

The residential development of Queen's Park was slow and only four villas and two semi-detached pairs had been built by 1873. By 1910 the total had still reached only 17, although a further 10 houses had been built on St. George's Crescent to the south. The experience there, and at Curzon Park, suggests that the demand for exclusive property in Chester was smaller than the amount of sites available. On the southern edge of Queen's Park some smaller semi-detached houses had appeared in the mid 19th century around Victoria Pathway. There has since been extensive inter-war and post-war infill and eastward extension to the suburb.

Queen's Park High School was originally opened on its current site as new premises for Chester City High School for Girls in 1912. The School had a new neighbour in 1941, when Chester City Grammar School moved into new premises alongside the Girls School. In 1968 the two schools combined to form a mixed High School.

Historical Development S. Queens Park

Figure 5.10.2



Land-uses

The Queen's Park character area is mostly a planned residential suburb. The character area covers the part of this area that is within the conservation area but also Queen's Park High School.

Urban Form

The form of the area is marked by the planned origins of the suburb. Streets are either long and straight or gently arcing. The most striking features in plan-form are the complete oval of Victoria Crescent and the large semi-circular form of St George's Crescent.



St George's Crescent

An older, more traditional form of short, straight streets is found in sub-area S3, although within this there is the interesting arrangement of the Victorian houses backing onto the streets (St John's Rear Road and Northern Way) where vehicular access is provided, and fronting onto a pedestrian alley: Victoria Pathway. Bottoms Lane, which leads to Earls Eye Meadow is probably an older pre-existing road, which has an earlier property alongside it.



St John's Rear Road

Within this street form buildings are generally detached or semi-detached and set back from the street behind walls and hedges. They are generally two-storey, although many Edwardian and Victorian properties are two-and-a-half storeys, especially on St George's Crescent. There are also a number of bungalows on the eastern edge of Victoria Crescent.

Queen's Park school comprises a series of buildings fronting Queen's Park Road, with playing fields to the rear. Of the buildings, the Edwardian Girl's School and Inter-War Boys' School are the dominant features. These are distinctive buildings, each typical of their era. They are two large storeys in height, effectively three storey in places, the Edwardian building with large Dutch gable fronts. Later, infill developments have joined these two formerly separate schools and created a continuous street frontage. Modern development has also extended the massing of the school buildings southwards toward the playing fields.

Urban Form
S. Queens Park

Figure 5.10.3



Key

Sub Areas

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Figure Ground - S. Queens Park

Scale: NTS Job: 5363

Reviewed by: AC Drawing: FG019

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Townscape Character

There is a mix of ages of property in the area, from Victorian and Edwardian to Inter-war and post-war housing. The older properties are generally more prevalent in the St John's Road and St George's Crescent sub-areas and also at the junction of Queen's Park Road/ St John's Road/ Victoria Crescent (where houses are aligned diagonally to address the junction) but there is a diverse mix throughout. The more modern properties are generally domestic scale suburban architecture of no special merit. The Edwardian properties are good examples of modest middle-class housing of their era. The Victorian properties are larger and represent the most impressive buildings in the area but the overall impression of the area is Edwardian/Inter-war.



Typical Edwardian house in the area

The individual Victorian houses are generally 2-3 storeys with typical Victorian features such as traditionally-pitched roofs, gable fronts, bays and sash windows. Many are white rendered or have white-painted brickwork. A number of these properties are Italianate in style, with arched windows and other Italianate details.

There are also some smaller middle-class Victorian houses in the St John's Road sub-area, seemingly as part of a small planned scheme by John Harrison, all of which is Grade II listed. Eastern Pathway also has a strong group of three-storey middle-class semi-detached Victorian housing with typical features of the era.



Typical larger Victorian house in the area



Victorian houses, Eastern Pathway

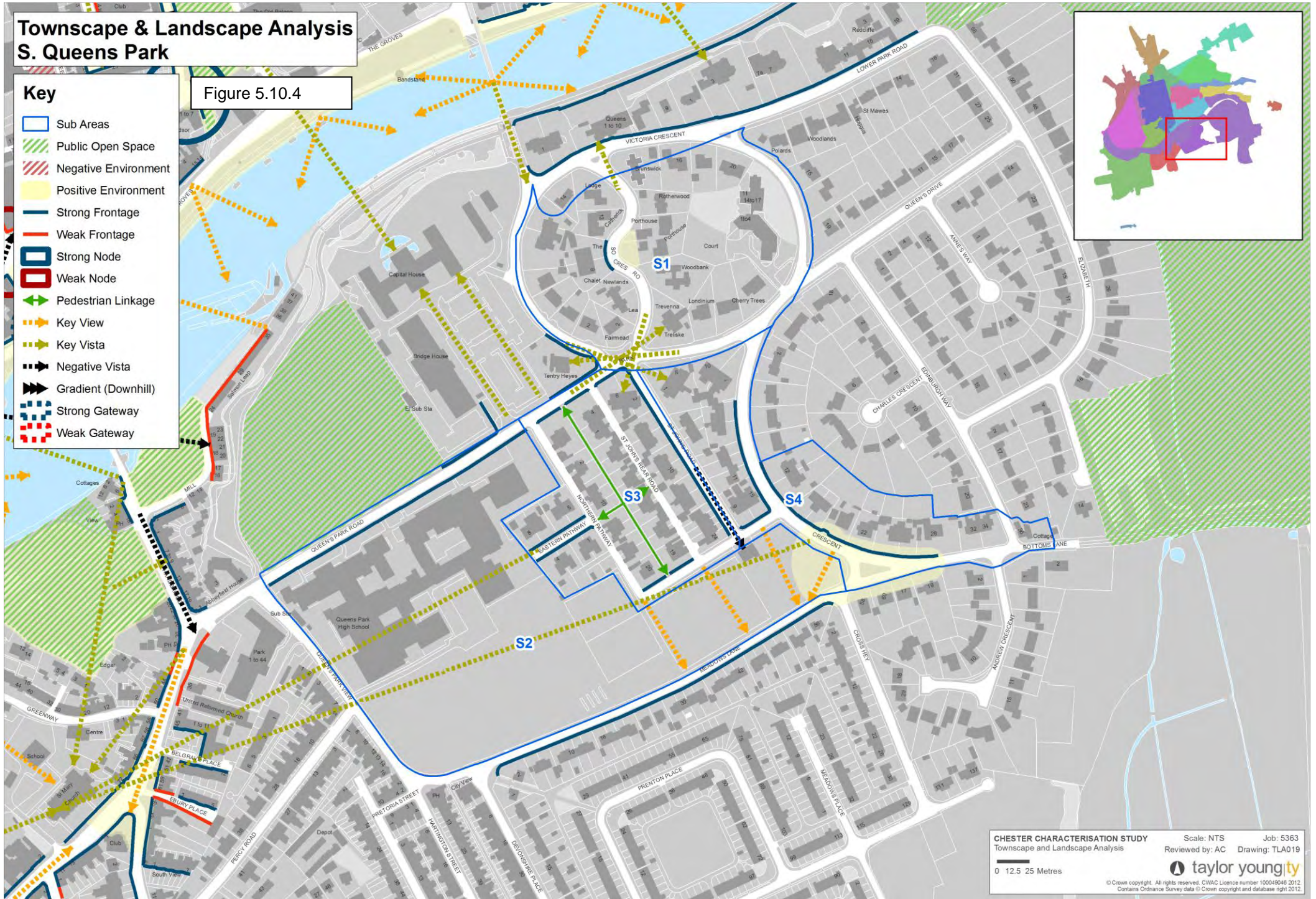
S. Queen's Park: Typical Materials and Details



Townscape & Landscape Analysis S. Queens Park

Figure 5.10.4

- 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

As was the case with Curzon Park, landscape character plays a large role in determining the character of this area. This includes the suburban street environment and the interaction of buildings with a number of key open spaces.

The two key open spaces are the playing field of Queen's Park School - both the fields south of the school and those on the opposite side of Queen's Park Road. As private, and rather featureless, open spaces, it is not the spaces themselves that are important but their impact on the surrounding townscape: i.e. their street frontages and views across them. The frontages to the street are generally well maintained hedges. This, and the sense of openness from the fields, gives the surrounding urban area a pleasant semi-rural feel. The playing fields also serve to separate the Queen's Park area from the surrounding built-up area - giving it a stronger identity as a distinct and separate place.

In terms of views, the most significant are those across the playing fields south of the school to Meadows Lane, both westwards from St George's Crescent and southward from Northern Pathway. The Meadow Lane frontage is an attractive piece of townscape and the playing fields give it a strong setting. When seen from St George's Crescent, this view is

enhanced by St Mary's church in Handbridge being seen in the background. It is unfortunate that a group of poor quality garages partly obscures this view from Northern Pathway.



View to Meadows Lane

Throughout the study area generous landscaping provides an attractive suburban townscape. This includes planting within front gardens and well maintained hedges but also a significant amount of planting in the public realm. This latter element, in the form of mature street trees and incidental grassed open spaces provide an important element of local character and a good setting for buildings.



Typical landscaping within the public realm.

As mentioned previously, Victoria Pathway - the pedestrian route fronted by Victorian housing in sub-area S3, is an interesting feature.

Unfortunately, whilst this could have provided a strong setting for the properties it is instead something of a missed opportunity with a narrow route and heavy vegetation obscuring the properties.



Victoria Pathway

Designated Heritage Assets

As described previously, all of this area is within the Queen's Park conservation area. There are 11 listed buildings in the area, all of which are within the St John's Road sub-area.

There are also several Article 4 Directions in place, mostly on the western arm of Victoria Crescent, St John's Road and St George's Crescent.

The following listed buildings are in the area:

- **Nos. 4 to 10 St John's Rear Road** (all Grade II, all 1850s) - probably by James Harrison.



- **Nos. 3 to 17 St John's Rear Road** (all Grade II, all 1850s) - probably by James Harrison



- **Manor House, 2 Northern Pathway** (Grade II, 1852)



- **Nos. 2 to 18 Northern Pathway** (all Grade II, all 1850s) - probably by James Harrison

Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit

17 un-listed Buildings of Townscape Merit of been identified in the area:

- **S1b. The Chalet** - Victorian, large semi-detached property in Italianate style.



- **S2a. Queens Park High School - Inter-war frontage** - the former Boys' Grammar School.



- **S2b. Queens Park High School - Edwardian frontage** - the former Girls' School.



- **S3a. 2 St John's Road/6 Queen's Park Road** - Victorian semi-detached property in Italianate style.



- **S3b. 12-14 St John's Road** - Victorian middle-class housing



- **S3e. Eastern Pathway semis-** 2-3 storey Victorian semi-detached houses.



- **S3c. 4 Queen's Park Road** - larger Victorian house



- **S3f. 20 Northern Pathway** - recently refurbished simple early Victorian house



- **S3g. 19 St John's Rear Road** - Victorian house on the corner of St John's Rear Road and Northern Pathway



- **S4b. 10 Queen's Park Road/1 St George's Crescent** - large Victorian semi-detached property with distinctive detailing.



- **S4a. 8 Queen's Park Road/1 St John's Road** - Italianate style large Victorian semi-detached pair, brick painted in white.



- **S4c. 3-5 St George's Crescent** - large, white-rendered Victorian house.



- **S4d. 12-14 St George's Crescent** - large Edwardian semi with distinctive period detailing.



- **S4f. 20-22 St George's Crescent** - good quality Edwardian detached house included for group value.



- **S4e. 9 St John's Road/15 St George's Crescent** - Edwardian semi-detached pair with black and white detailing,



- **S4g. 24-26 St George's Crescent** - Victorian semi-detached suburban housing.



- **S4h. 36 St George's Crescent** - simple Victorian L-shaped property, probably agricultural and pre-dating surrounding development.



Key Detractors

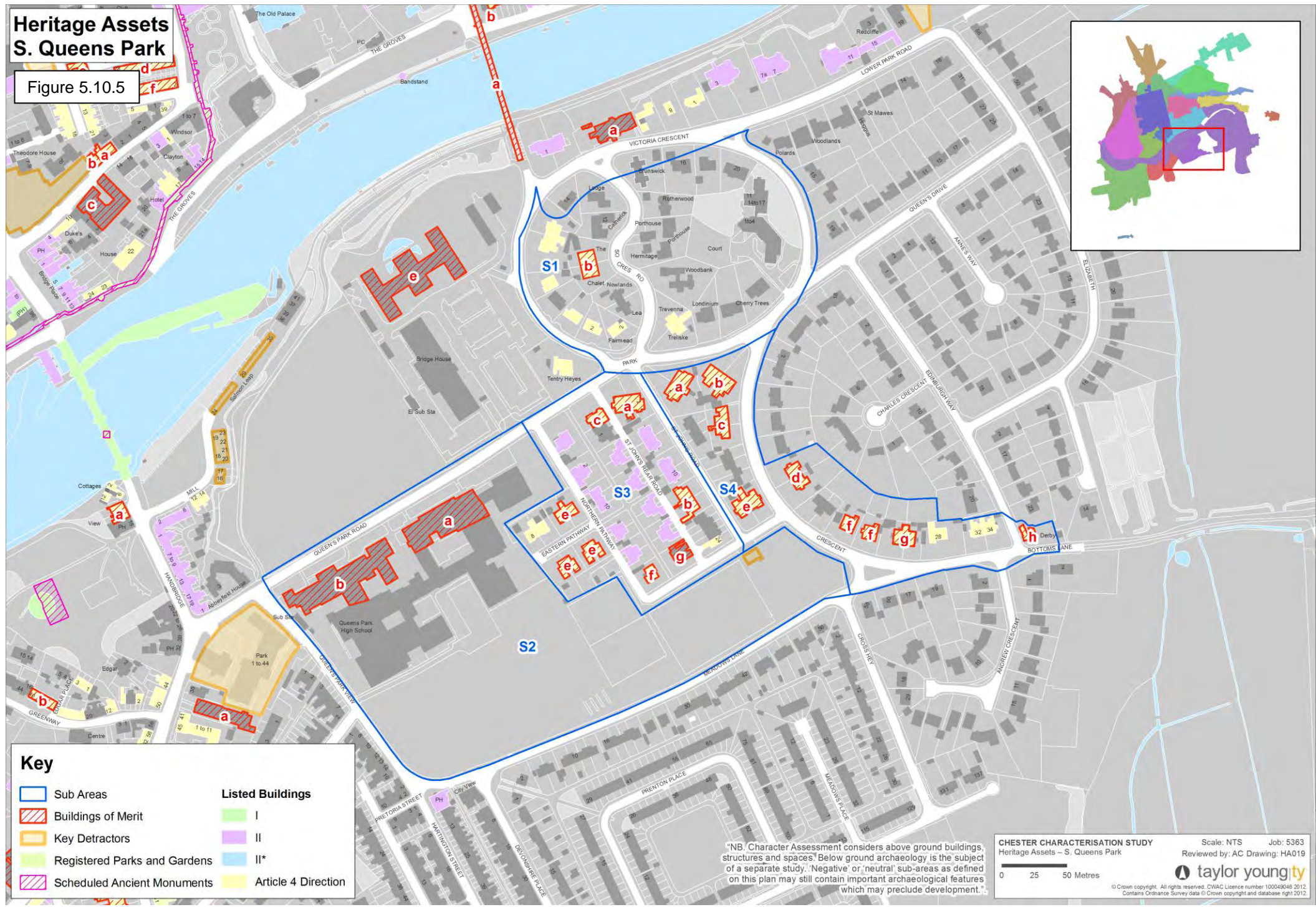
As mentioned previously, the garages at the southern end of St John's Road present an unattractive termination of the view down this attractive street. Furthermore, they obscure what would be an attractive view, to the school playing fields and the Meadows Lane frontage beyond. It would be beneficial if this were removed and any replacements should be placed out of this line of sight.



Garages at the end of St John's Road

Heritage Assets S. Queens Park

Figure 5.10.5



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

"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."

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Heritage Assets – S. Queens Park

Scale: NTS Job: 5363
Reviewed by: AC Drawing: HA019

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Summary: Character Assessment

In summary, the character of this area is positive throughout:

- **S1. Victoria Crescent: Positive** - a planned suburban street form with a distinctive circular street within which there is a range of suburban buildings and a well landscaped street environment.
- **S2. Queen's Park High School: Positive** - the school includes a strong frontage with distinctive Edwardian and Inter-War elements which have local historical significance. The playing fields provide a strong setting to development on Northern Pathway, St George's Crescent and Meadows Lane.
- **S3. St John's Road: Positive** - a distinctive and well designed suburban housing scheme (probably by Harrison) with an interesting access arrangement, accompanied by adjacent high quality Victorian housing.
- **S4. St George's Crescent: Positive** - a similar strong form to S1 (see above) with several good examples of Edwardian suburban housing and an earlier survival at Bottoms Lane.

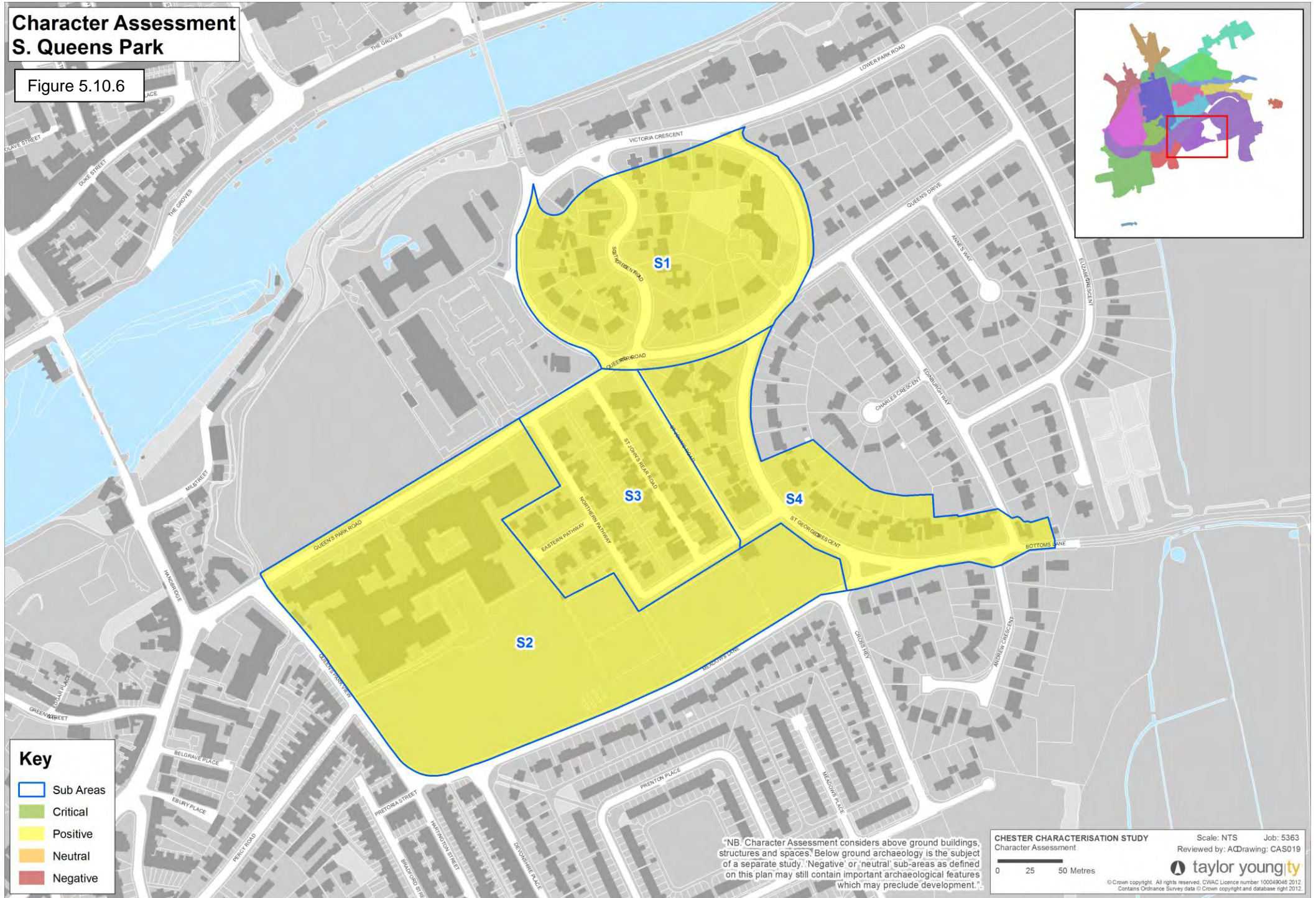
Character Statement

“Queen's Park is an attractive and well ordered suburb of Chester that tells much of the story of its southward suburban expansion: the planned, circular street form; individual large Victorian homes and a planned street-grid of Victorian homes; and later Edwardian, Inter-War and post-war dwellings. All these houses sit within a generously landscaped and distinctive street environment that provides coherence and identity. Queen's Park High School presents a striking frontage on Queen's Park and its playing fields play an important role in the structure and setting of the surrounding urban form”.



Character Assessment S. Queens Park

Figure 5.10.6



Key

- Sub Areas
- Critical
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

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Management and Policy Recommendations

Conservation management in the area is generally holding up well. The area retains its special character visually and the conservation area designation is still appropriate and effective. The listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit are by and large in good condition and most alterations have been sensitive. Maintenance of the public realm and landscape is good and planting within private curtilages on the streetscene is also good. It will be important for both the Council and private owners to maintain these standards.

Capacity to Accommodate Change

The Character Area includes a large number of buildings of little special architectural merit including Inter-war, post-war and modern houses. These buildings could potentially be extended and adapted or cleared and redeveloped without causing significant harm to the character of the area. There is more limited scope to adapt existing buildings of townscape merit and listed buildings and any alterations will need to be carefully considered. There are no obvious opportunities for large scale development. Queen's Park High School could potentially undertake infill and remodelling of their modern additions but the integrity of the Queen's Park Road frontage and of the playing fields should be preserved. The open space itself, and its boundary treatments, would benefit from some enhancement.

Design Principles for New Development

The important points to follow when extending or redeveloping housing plots with building of no special merit will be in ensuring that the urban form is maintained - the detached and semi-detached nature of dwellings, their size and position within plots, the building line, and the height and roofscape of buildings. These should all follow the surrounding form. Innovation and contemporary architecture could be

accommodated within a framework. It will also be important to maintain a similar form of boundary treatment to those predominating on adjacent existing dwellings.



Post-war development on Victoria Crescent



Queen's Park High School Playing Fields