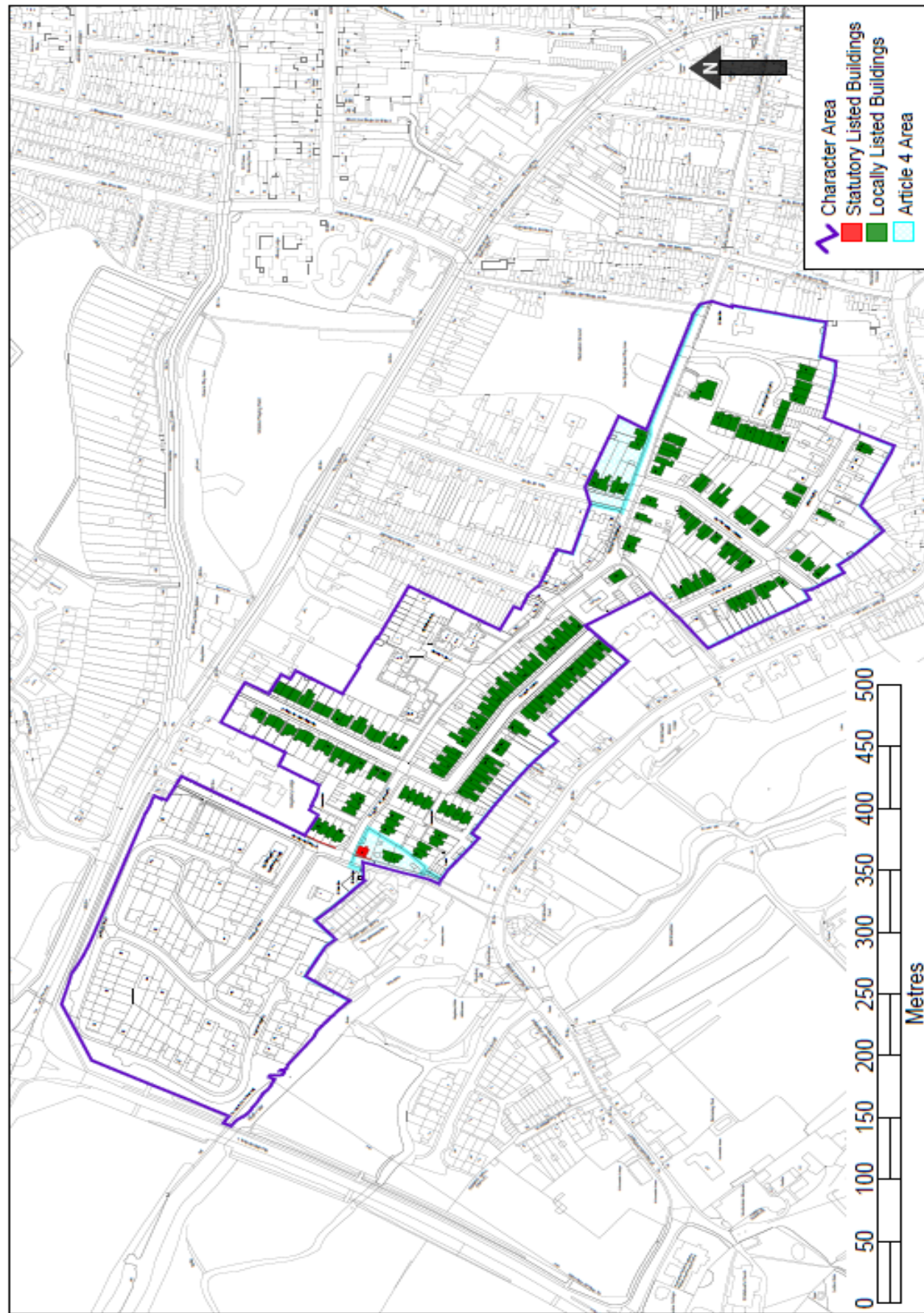


# ***Character Area 5c***

## ***Mount Pleasant***







# **AREA 5C: MOUNT PLEASANT**

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

*Abbey View Road, Branch Road (part), Camlet Way, Fryth Mead, Hill Street (part), Kingsbury Avenue, Kings Road, Mount Pleasant, Offa Road, Portland Street, Ver Road, Verulam Road (part).*

**Article 4 Direction – covers small areas to south of Mount Pleasant at the western end and north at the eastern end.**

### Scheduled Monuments

None.

### Listed Buildings

*Branch Road*

3, Wall to street at 3 Branch Road (Grade II).

### Locally Listed Buildings

*Abbey View Road*

Odds: 1 & 3, 5 & 7, 11 & 13, 15, 19, 21, 23.

Evens: 2, 4-14 (incl.), 18-28 (incl.).

*Branch Road*

(part - for remainder see Area 4c – Fishpool Street)

Outbuildings to Kingsbury Lodge (20) (also curtilage of LB).

Odds: 5 & 7.

Evens: 2.

*Hill Street*

(part - for remainder see Area 5b Verulam Road)

Odds: 21-27 (incl.).

Evens: 52.

*Kingsbury Avenue*

Odds: 1-29 (incl.).

Evens: 2-24 (incl.), 28 & 30.

*Kings Road*

Odds: 1-67 (incl.).

Evens: 2-18 (incl.), 18a & 18b, 20 & 22, 24-58 (incl.).

*Mount Pleasant*

Old Garden Court (2-17 incl.).

Odds: 9 (Mount Pleasant House), 11-19 (incl.), 21, 25 & 27, 29.

Evens: 2 & 4.

*Gonnerston*

1-22 (incl.).

*Offa Road*

Odds: 3-15 (incl.).

Evens: 2-4 (incl.), 6-12 (incl.).

*Ver Road*

Odds: 1-5 (incl.).

Evens: 4, 12 & 14.

*Verulam Road*

(part - for remainder see Area 5b Verulam Road)

Odds: 149-151 (incl.), 155, 185, 187 (now 2 Branch Road).



*No.3 Branch Road (grade II listed).*



*Kings Road terraces (all of which are locally listed).*



## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Character Summary

The Mount Pleasant Character Area is to the west of the city centre and lies between Fishpool Street and Verulam Road, the ancient, and more recent, western routes out of the City. As mapped, this Character area has a narrow, reasonably linear form, running north-west to south-east, centred on Mount Pleasant, a road that was cut through farmland in the early part of the 19th century.

The boundaries of this character area are somewhat dictated by its position between two major routes. To the north and east, the boundary largely follows the rear boundaries of the C19 development associated with Verulam Road and Welclose Street, excluding any more recent development which adjoins Mount Pleasant. To the south, the boundary follows the rear boundaries of properties on Fishpool Street. To the west, Bluehouse Hill forms the boundary.

Topographically, this area is one of the most interesting within the St Albans Conservation Area, being built on and around the Kingsbury Mound, a hillock which forms a natural plateau near to the centre of this area. In the past, the definite topography of this mound has led to much speculation that this was the site of the fortified Saxon settlement of Kingsbury, although this is not current archaeological thinking. On its north side, Kingsbury Mound rises from Verulam Road and then levels out; the land then falls more steeply towards Fishpool Street and the Ver Valley in the south. The westerly slope, from Branch Road, is reasonably gentle, but again, having levelled out, the land falls steeply from the eastern edge of the plateau, at the boundary of the New England Street Playing Field. Mount Pleasant follows these changes in level, gradually climbing the south side of the mound to the level ground of the plateau, and then falling away steeply, before meeting Lower Dagnall Street, where the land starts to climb towards the city centre.

Although this area is primarily residential, the character is extremely mixed, having been developed in a piecemeal fashion over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Late Edwardian developments are interspersed with a number of mid to late C20 developments: a series of residential housing developments of varying quality, which reflect the building styles of the different decades. The largest of the more modern developments is the area of housing between Bluehouse Hill and Branch Road, in Fryth Mead and Camlet Way, which is a 1970s suburban, housing development. With its landscaped setting and well-screened boundaries, these houses, to the west of Branch Road, are somewhat separated both physically and in character, from the remainder of the area, which lies to the east of Branch Road. To the east of Branch Road, the mid to late C20 development is of a more urban scale, more piecemeal, and on smaller, garden and infill sites.



*The topography of the area is key to its character and in the creation of views. There is also a mix of urban and suburban character due to the piecemeal form of development.*

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Historic Development

At the turn of the C19, Fishpool Street was the main north west route from the city centre. This area, to the north of Fishpool Street, was farmland. An ancient footpath ran along the field boundaries, following the current path of Mount Pleasant connecting Dagnell Lane (now Lower Dagnall Street) with Kingsbury. Part of this footpath followed the medieval borough boundary.

In 1826, Fishpool Street was effectively bypassed as a main route when Verulam Road was cut on farmland to the north. Branch Road was also cut, joining Fishpool Street to the new road, rerouting an earlier lane which, circumventing Kingsbury Farm to the west, joined St Michael's to Everlasting Lane. Shortly afterwards, Mount Pleasant was more formally established on the line of the ancient footpath. Originally known as Mud Lane, it seems likely that this route remained an undeveloped rural lane for many years. Large plots facing Verulam Road became developed with grand houses, whose grounds ran back to Mount Pleasant, turning their backs on the rural lane.

In the mid C19, residential roads were cut between Verulam Road and Mount Pleasant, and a small amount of Victorian housing was developed on Mount Pleasant at the end of Portland Street and Hill Street. Most of this was subsequently demolished, only fragments remain at nos. 2, 4 and 29. For the most part, until the end of the C19, this area remained largely undeveloped back land, sandwiched between two ribbons of development facing the two main routes, ancient and new.

At the end of the C19, St Albans saw an enormous increase in speculative housing development and pressure for land intensified. This back land, close to the city centre was ripe for development. At the turn of the C20, land on the south side of Mount Pleasant, at the rear of houses on Fishpool Street, was plotted and sold, becoming Kings Road. A decade later, Kingsbury Avenue was the last side road to be cut between Verulam Road and Mount Pleasant. It was plotted and developed with suburban, Ed-

wardian housing. The remaining large area of farmland on Mount Pleasant, opposite the end of Hill Street, was developed at a similar time becoming Abbey View Road, Offa Road and Ver Road. By 1920, most of the area was built up, and Mud Lane had changed its name to Harley Street.

In 1926, one of the notable and successful St Albans builders, Mr Miskin, built his own grand house, Old Garden House, in a large plot on Mount Pleasant, facing the New England Street Recreation Ground.

It was not until the latter half of the C20 that many of the remaining undeveloped areas began to be developed. In 1960, The Lawns, a development of twenty-four flats, was built on the rear garden of Ashwell House, a large Italianate villa on Verulam Road. In 1963, the Gonnerston houses were built, partially within the rear gardens of Kingsbury Lodge, and partially on the site of the redundant Motor Body Building Works at the end of Kings Road, the only significant industrial site within the area. In the early 1970s, the housing at Fryth Mead and Camlet Way was built on the large green field site between Branch Road and Bluehouse Hill. In the 1980s, the grounds of Old Garden House were developed, severing the gracious house from its garden. In the 1990s, housing was developed on the Review Newspaper site, between The Lawns and Verulam Road. This housing replaced the last commercial site within the area and today, the area is exclusively residential.



*Watercolour showing the Abbey viewed from Kingsbury Mount, showing the rural nature of the area before it was developed and which heavily influences its character. Image courtesy of St Albans Museums.*

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis

#### *Branch Road*

Branch Road is the oldest and most-used access road into this character area, sloping down gently from Verulam Road to Fishpool Street and St Michael's. Although once part of a major route from the north of the city centre, it has long been assigned a quieter character. To the west, the 1970s housing in Camlet Way is set on lower ground and, for the most part, this housing is well-screened from the road by mature trees which make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. St Michael's Memorial Hall, designed by Percival Blow in 1925, is the only building on this side of the road which breaks the tree screen, but it is set back from the road, and is not dominant in the streetscape. Blow was a notable St Albans architect, but this building is quite a plain, red brick, single storey building.

To the east, the Grade II listed brick and flint wall of Kingsbury Lodge, is the most apparent feature. This wall and some mature yew hedging, effectively screens the fine façade of Kingsbury Lodge, which is set back from the road behind this wall. The roofs and upper storeys of the Gonnerston houses, which were built in the gardens of Kingsbury Lodge, are visible above this historic wall, although they are somewhat masked, but the juxtaposition of the historic wall and the 1960s housing is not one that works particularly well.

Towards Fishpool Street, south of the junction with Mount Pleasant, the houses on the eastern side are more obvious within the street-scene, most notably the landmark, Grade II listed, mid-C19, brick and flint house which sits almost directly on the pathway, on the corner of Branch Road and Mount Pleasant. A pair of Edwardian semi-detached cottages in red brick and pebble-dash with half-timbering complete the built development on this side of the street. They are set back slightly from the pathway behind a brick and flint wall which adds to the continuity of front boundary treatments.



*St Michael's Memorial Hall breaks the tree screen but is well set back so is not dominant.*



*The brick and flint wall of Kingsbury Lodge is grade II listed. Other boundary treatments in the road create continuity through the use of the same materials.*



## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

#### *Camlet Way and Fryth Mead*

Developed on a green field site in the 1970s, this area of housing is on the very outskirts of the town, and the medium density of building and the generous landscaped setting does mark a definite transition between the denser urban development of St Albans and the open countryside. The River Ver runs along the southern boundary of this estate and these houses lie in the lower part of the valley with higher land surrounding on the other three sides. This change of level, together with the mature trees, ensures that the estate is well screened from the surrounding area.

This area is a suburban housing estate of terraced and link-detached houses, which, although quite modest, are set within a spacious, open, landscaped setting. All the houses are set back from the road and the front gardens are laid to grass and unfenced. The areas at the street corners are also landscaped, open and grassed, which makes a great contribution to the spacious character of the estate.

The houses are homogenous in terms of their scale, which is compact two-storey, and in their design and materials. However, the setting of these commonplace houses is well-considered. In addition to the generous landscaping, the houses are laid out on staggered building lines, following the line of the road, which creates a certain informality in the layout of the housing throughout the entire estate.

Inevitably, there have been some extensions and alterations to the houses, and these are successful only when they are of an appropriate scale, when they respect the homogeneity of the houses and when they do not attempt to enclose the open nature of the setting.



*Trees and a change in level screen Camlet Way and Fryth Mead from Verulam Road.*



*The houses in Camlet Way and Fryth Mead are homogenous in their scale, design and materials.*



*The houses in Camlet Way and Fryth Mead have an open, well landscaped setting.*

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

#### *Mount Pleasant*

The narrow road which is the focus of this character area, Mount Pleasant, has a scale and character which is explained by its origins as a rural lane. Barely a secondary route, this lane connected the residential streets on the outskirts of the city centre to Branch Road and the settlement at Kingsbury. The piecemeal and slightly unplanned nature of the development of this area is likely to be as a result of its back land position between two important thoroughfares, Verulam Road and Fishpool Street.

#### *Mount Pleasant (west)*

The western part of the Mount Pleasant rises gently from Branch Road, traversing the southern slope of the Kingsbury Mound, the land on the northern side of the road being slightly higher than that on the southern side. Mount Pleasant follows the medieval borough boundary, a field line that became the rear boundary of the substantial properties on Verulam Road. It was previously known as Mud Lane, which is indicative of its character - that of a rural back road.

In this part of Mount Pleasant, very few houses address the street and the continuity of the street frontage is disjointed. The junction of Kingsbury Avenue and Mount Pleasant was not developed as a perimeter block. Houses in Kingsbury Avenue face each other, with their side elevations towards Mount Pleasant and, as a result of this orientation, coupled with the sparseness of development, many of their rear elevations can also be seen clearly from the street. These houses have been altered and extended to the rear and these rear elevations, which would not normally be part of a public streetscape, lack architectural continuity. Care needs to be taken to ensure that rear additions, which are visible in the streetscape, are well conceived. A flat-roofed dormer addition to the roof of no. 29 is a visible and unfortunate addition to a good quality Edwardian house.

On the south side of the road, the terraced houses of King's Road turn their backs to Mount Pleasant. Visually, this is the poorest part of

Mount Pleasant. The rear elevations of these houses are clearly visible. Although altered and extended on the ground floor level, continuity of form, particularly the rhythm of the out thrust gables, is largely intact at first floor level and the original roofscape is also relatively unscathed. Most detrimental is the assortment of garages, hard standings, sheds, walls and fences that have colonised the rear boundaries of these properties. This jumble forms the frontage onto Mount Pleasant. The character is poor, reminiscent of a rear service area, and the streetscape is seriously degraded in this part of the street. Any development at the rear of these properties, particularly on the rear boundary, should not add further disparate elements into this vista and, where possible, should aim to improve the architectural continuity.



*The rear boundary of King's Road properties creates a negative street frontage on Mount Pleasant.*



*The sparseness of development on Mount Pleasant means that the rear elevations of Kingsbury Avenue are often visible.*



## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

Only in the latter half of the C20, when the rear gardens of Kingsbury Lodge and Ashwell House were developed, did any development orientate its frontage towards this western part of Mount Pleasant.

At the junction with Branch Road, the Gonnerston houses, built in 1963, designed by Herbert, Cox & Gear, are flat-roofed, two storey town houses built on both the north and south side of Mount Pleasant. The town houses are built in short terraces of three or four houses and, although those on the north side are more conventionally plotted, those on the south side are arranged around a communal garden courtyard and access to the houses is by footway. The landscaping is good and this space is a quiet, private oasis with a good sense of enclosure. Those houses that face onto Mount Pleasant are set back with small landscaped gardens to the fore. Car access and garaging is planned to be separate and non-intrusive, hidden behind the development.

The most important feature of these near-identical, town houses is the punctuated floor plan which gives a defined rhythm to the both the front and rear elevations, which is fundamental to the design. In the past, some changes have been made to these houses, infilling the recesses, using permitted development rights, but this has been to the detriment of the overall appearance. The original materials of these houses were yellow stock brick, dark brown stained timber window frames and green apron panels running below windows. Some of these materials have also been changed and windows have been replaced without regard to the pattern of fenestration. Retaining the continuity of these well-designed, locally listed houses is important if the overall design is not to be compromised.

The Lawns was also built in the early 1960s, within the rear garden of Ashwell House. The mature trees and the old brick wall, which front Mount Pleasant, are legacies from that garden. The plot is sparsely developed and the two-storey buildings are set back some distance from

the street, which results in a somewhat inactive street frontage, lacking in vitality. Buildings are set around a large communal grassed area, but the spacious character is somewhat let down by the lack of imaginative landscaping.

The style of these flats is reminiscent of Garden City development; the architecture is rather plain and mundane and the materials used are of their time. This development is unlike any other part of this character area.

To the rear of the Lawns, Cymbeline Court is a small, unobtrusive, gated development of two and three storey, Edwardian-style townhouses, which are well conceived in terms of their form, detailing and materials.

From this part of Mount Pleasant, there are good views of the Abbey tower in the distance, which lies straight ahead and appears to close the view up Mount Pleasant.



*The 1960s development The Lawns has an inactive street frontage because of the distance it is set back from the road. Image courtesy of John Bethell.*



*The Gonnerston houses have found a non-intrusive solution to the problem of providing parking. Image courtesy of John Bethell.*

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis contd.

#### *Kingsbury Avenue*

Cut in 1910, Kingsbury Avenue crosses the Kingsbury Mound. The level of the road arches, falling more steeply towards Verulam Road. The street was developed as a number of separate, normally paired, plots and, as a result, most of the street consists of different pairs of semi-detached houses. The street was substantially completed by 1920, and there is only a tiny amount of more recent development which has been built on infill plots. This is suburban, well-detailed, late Edwardian family housing. Houses are set back from the street, with limited landscaping in small front gardens, which are bounded by low front boundary walls. The houses on the east side are on higher ground and have steps up to their front doors.

Houses are well detailed. The predominant materials are red brick and pebbledash render. Most houses have slate roofs. Feature gables are half timbered and there is some pleasing timber detailing to some of the porches.

#### *King's Road*

A cul-de-sac, cut in 1890, King's Road lies across the southern slope of the Kingsbury Mound; the houses to the north are on higher ground than those to the south. Houses on the north side have steps to their front doors and the gardens to the rear of the houses on the south side, slope down towards Fishpool Street.

King's Road has a strong identity, and the architectural cohesion is reinforced by a sense of enclosure, both ends of the cul-de-sac are closed vistas. This is one of the most evenly developed streets within the area. The street was plotted with identical plot widths (15') and a defined building line (6'). This is typical, late C19, terraced development. Builders bought both individual plots and groups of plots, so there are individual houses and groups of identical houses. There is some variety in detailing between the different groups of houses. Some have bays, some porches, some have polychromatic brickwork; mixing the predominant red brick with Luton grey bricks.

However, because of the tight plot parameters, the simple terraced form, the continuity of height, scale, vertical fenestration, and the limited palette of materials, the street frontage has great architectural cohesion and a very defined and rhythmic character. Each house contributes to this good quality street frontage, and the houses on Kings Road are, for the most part, in fairly original condition. Many houses retain their original sash windows.

Although the public frontage of these houses is good, the rear of the houses on the north side is more problematic, as these are part of the street frontage of Mount Pleasant (see above).



*Well-detailed, Edwardian houses on Kingsbury Avenue. Image courtesy of John Bethell.*



*King's Road displays architectural cohesion, despite some variety in detailing, due to identical building plots and building line.*



## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

#### *Mount Pleasant (central)*

In the central part of Mount Pleasant, the road reaches the top of the plateau and starts to level out. This area is more densely developed. Around the junctions with Portland Street and Hill Street, the buildings address the street more conventionally, but, although predominantly two-storey, there are a great variety of housing types, which are mixed in terms of age, dwelling size, character, materials and quality.

On the north side is a 1990s, terraced development of two storey flats, which has a small setback from the back of the pavement, with a small landscaped area to the fore, open to the pathway. Carriageways through the building give access to parking courts at the rear of the terrace. The buildings form long, narrow terraces along the road edge, which turn around the corners into Portland Street and Hill Street. The terraces are of similar scale to Edwardian terraced development and materials are also similar: "red multi" bricks, slate roofs and timber windows. Although of an appropriate scale, the windows are small in comparison with their Edwardian counterparts, and there is a greater expanse of brickwork. The continuous façade of brickwork, coupled with the small setback and limited landscaping, gives this development a dense, urban feel that is accentuated by the narrowness of the street.



*1990s flats on the north side of Mount Pleasant.*

On the south side, the 1950s block of flats (nos. 31-41) does not contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. Three-storey, this building is flat-roofed and is set back from the street on lower ground, so its negative impact is slightly mitigated. Unfortunately, this building is opposite the end of Portland Street, and closes the vista when looking south from Portland Street.

Dolphin Cottage, no. 29, is also somewhat compromised by this block of flats. It is a good quality, Regency house, now sitting within a small plot. Originally a diminutive house, and latterly a house and shop, this house was sensitively extended in the 1980s. The medieval borough boundary runs to the rear of this house, which was built as an early encroachment onto common land outside the city boundary. The footpath to the side of this house is sited on an old field boundary and footpath, leading from Fishpool Street towards the north.



*Dolphin Cottage (no. 29).*



*1950s flats on the south side of Mount Pleasant.*

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

#### *Mount Pleasant (east)*

The eastern part of Mount Pleasant, beyond Hill Street, has a more spacious feel. On the level land on the top of the plateau, the road widens, and the development becomes less dense and more suburban in character. On the northern side of the street, the garden to the side of no.4 Mount Pleasant, and the rear garden of no. 27 Hill Street (a house that presents a side elevation to Mount Pleasant), create an important gap in the streetscape. There is a fine, mature pine tree on the street edge, which is a landmark tree and a positive element in the conservation area.

Nos. 2 and 4 Mount Pleasant are a pair of good quality, rendered and painted mid-Victorian cottages, which were both extended to the side in 1913. They are sited on the edge of the plateau, on the boundary of the New England Street Playing Field, just before the land falls steeply to the east.

The southern side of Mount Pleasant, to the east of this footpath, was plotted in the early C20, when Abbey View Road, Ver Road and Offa Road were plotted for development. This is suburban, late Edwardian and 1920s family housing. Houses are set back from the street, with small front gardens, bounded by low front boundary walls and fences. Most retain the low hedges that were set behind these walls. Houses are well detailed. The predominant material is pebbledash render, sometimes with red brick up to first floor level, and sometimes with red brick quoins. Most roofs have red clay tile roofs. Feature gables are half timbered. No. 11 Mount Pleasant is the last house on the level land of the plateau, sited on the edge of the hill.

The road broadens further as the land falls steeply eastwards from the edge of the plateau. On the north side of Mount Pleasant, sweeping down from the top of the hill to a dished area of low ground, the New England Playing Field is a large grassed expanse with a good sense of enclosure. The dipped nature of the land and the surrounding buildings of New England Street and Verulam Road act together to create the en-

closed character, creating an obvious sense of place. On the south side, no. 9 is a large, 1930s Arts and Crafts house, previously known as Old Garden House. This substantial house is privately distanced from the road, set back, and on lower ground. It sits behind the many high quality, protected trees in the immediate surroundings and the red brick boundary wall, which runs the length of the boundary with Mount Pleasant.

To the rear, although set back and not particularly visible from the street frontage, is Old Garden Court, a 1980s development of town houses. This development wraps closely around what were the lawns of the old house and this landscaped setting enabled the retention of important trees on the site. The punctuated floor plan creates a series of bays on the front elevation, and the resultant roof form is both unusual and interesting. The materials are a dark red brick and natural slate. Designed by Melvin, Lansley and Mark, this scheme won a Civic Trust award.

No. 1 Mount Pleasant is a plain 1950s bungalow,



*Nos. 2+4 with New England Street Playing Field in the dip below.*



*Old Garden House with the 1980s development of Old Garden Court behind.*



## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

set in a large plot, which was subdivided from the plot at no. 9. The red brick boundary wall of no. 9 continues along this front boundary, and the bungalow is set back from the road and not visible in the street scene. The extensive gardens contain a number of important trees.

The New England Street Playing Field on the north side of the street, and the wide garden frontage of nos. 9 and 1 Mount Pleasant on the south side, together create an important green ribbon; an open space which acts as a separation between the city centre and the Kingsbury mound. This spacious green area contributes greatly to the character of the conservation area.

Important views of the city centre are gained across this open area and the dip in the land level and the openness of the area allows a broad view of the buildings on the side of the hill leading up to it. Across the dip, these low rise, predominantly residential, buildings appear to be at the same level as Mount Pleasant, although much of the city centre is on higher ground. To the southwest, there is a fine view of the Abbey, which dominates the low rise development that surrounds it.



*View of the Abbey from Mount Pleasant.*



*New England Street Playing Field provides important*



*View of the city centre from Mount Pleasant.*



*Frontage of nos. 1+9 creates open space which helps separate the city centre and Kingsbury Mound.*

## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Spatial Analysis (contd.)

#### *Abbey View Road, Ver Road and Offa Road*

These three roads were cut and plotted in 1910, but the development of these roads was quite protracted. In Abbey View Road and Offa Road, a framework of development had been established by 1920, but, with plots being developed into the 1930s, there is a variety of housing within these streets. The west side of Abbey View Road is more densely plotted than the east side. On the west side, there are some typical late Edwardian terraces and semi-detached housing in regular, narrow plots. On the east side, the houses are more suburban, the plots more spacious and there are occasional views of the Abbey in the gaps between the frontages. These houses, although more sparsely plotted, have the same suburban character as the adjacent houses on Mount Pleasant, which were built at the same time.

Offa Road is a cul-de-sac where most of the houses are late Edwardian terraces. Red brick and pebbledash predominate, and these are generally reasonably plain terraced houses, without the fine detailing that is seen on earlier terraced housing in the area. Towards the end of the street, some new detached houses have been built which reflect an Edwardian style, in terms of their form and materials. The vista at the end of the street is closed, quite pleasingly, by a side view of a new large house, which is accessed from Fishpool Street.

Ver Road, is a private cul-de-sac, from which there are spectacular views of the Abbey on the hill directly above; a view that is accentuated by the dip in the land level towards the end of the cul-de-sac. The road is unsurfaced and there are no pavements, a grass verge is to the fore of the houses. Development was more protracted in this street, and the houses are much more mixed in architectural style. Small Edwardian cottages, of reasonable quality, are intermingled with more modern development, of varying quality. Although there is little architectural continuity, this street does have some positive characteristics – the informal road surfacing and grass verges are not characteristic of development which is so close to the city centre, and the views of the Abbey and its historic setting are very fine.



*Abbey View Road.*



*Offa Road.*



*Ver Road with the Abbey in the background.*



## Area 5c: Mount Pleasant

### Public Realm

This is predominantly a residential area and, largely because the housing is varied, the setting and the public realm is mixed. The landscaped setting of the houses in Camlet Way and Fryth Mead, creates a good quality public realm, but this area has a different feel from the remainder of the area. The rest of the area has a more urban feel and most of the green space is within the gardens of houses. Many of the front gardens are small and, individually, can only make a limited contribution. Within these gardens are a few mature trees which contribute to the quality of the area. Any loss of these front garden areas, to enable on-plot parking should be resisted.

The open space of the New England Street recreation area (see Character Area 5b) is clearly exceptional within this urban context and makes a huge positive contribution to the character of the area even though it is located outside of this character area.

The narrowness of Mount Pleasant does not allow for a great deal of on street parking, particularly as width restrictions have also been imposed to calm through traffic. However, although it may not be entirely adequate, there has been thoughtful provision of off street parking in the past, and this area does not appear to be completely dominated by parked cars. Parking may be somewhat of a problem in Kings Road, where the housing is dense and narrow plotted. Perhaps for that reason, there is poor, mostly car-related development on the rear boundaries of the houses on the north side. This has resulted in a low quality, inactive street frontage on Mount Pleasant, which would benefit from some thoughtful improvement.

Throughout the area, there are a number of historic brick walls which bound the edge of the footpath. These red brick walls greatly contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Particularly in Mount Pleasant and Kings Road, there are areas of traditional, blue brick paving

and kerb stones. This paving adds to the visual quality of the area and should be retained and, if possible, should be extended into the gap areas to give a continuous surfacing. Branch Road would also be improved by the use of this traditional paving, which would emphasise the historic character of this street.



*Mount Pleasant is very narrow and this is increased by traffic-calming measures. The result of this is very limited space for on-street parking.*



*Historic red brick walls are a feature of this area.*

## **Area 5c: Mount Pleasant**

### **Positive & Negative Characteristics and Scope for Change**

#### **Positive**

- ✓ The historic character of Branch Road.
- ✓ The character of Mount Pleasant which still has qualities of a quiet rural lane.
- ✓ The screened landscaped setting of the houses in Camlet Way and Fryth Mead.
- ✓ The Gonnerston development and its setting.
- ✓ The architectural cohesion and good architectural detailing of the Edwardian houses of Kings Road.
- ✓ The variety of good quality family housing on Kingsbury Avenue.
- ✓ The variety of housing types which gives a mixed residential area.
- ✓ Landscaping to the front garden areas.
- ✓ The landscaped setting and high quality trees of Old Garden Court.
- ✓ The views of the Abbey from within the area, particularly those from Ver Road.
- ✓ The exceptional open space of the New England Street Playing Field.
- ✓ The 'green ribbon' which separates this area from the development on the outskirts of the city centre.

#### **Neutral**

- The mock Georgian architectural style of Camlet Way and Fryth Mead which is not locally distinctive.
- The architectural style and setting of The Lawns.

#### **Negative**

- ✗ The street frontage of Mount Pleasant to the rear of Kings Road.
- ✗ Loss of front garden areas to on-plot parking.
- ✗ The 1950s block of flats (nos. 31-41) in Mount Pleasant.
- ✗ Some small pockets of development and individual infill developments which are not in keeping with the prevailing character.

#### **Scope for Change**

- Improvements to the streetscape at the rear of Kings Road.
- More landscaping and trees at the western end of Mount Pleasant.
- Improvements to landscaping at property frontages.