



# Dresden Conservation Area Appraisal

*March 2008*



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# 1. Appraisal Context

- 1.1 This Character Appraisal has been prepared for Dresden Conservation Area, whose original boundaries were designated in November 1985.
- 1.2 Conservation Areas are designated by Local Authorities under fulfilment of duties imposed by Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This defines Conservation Areas as:

*“areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”*

Special interest may originate from a variety of sources, while character is defined in a holistic sense rather than deriving from the merits of any single building.

- 1.3 Production of Character Appraisals is required under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister’s *Best Value* initiative (BVPI 219), though best practice has long required their preparation. The objective of an Appraisal is to analyse and define in depth the special interest and traits which make up the *character* of a Conservation Area, to identify the pressures and challenges facing its survival and to recommend courses of action which will aid in achieving sensitive management, preservation and enhancement (the latter points fulfilling duties imposed by Section 71 of the 1990 Act).
- 1.4 Conservation Area status is a material consideration in the evaluation of planning applications. Here Section 72 of the 1990 Act requires Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of achieving preservation or enhancement through their decision making. Appraisals represent an important resource in fulfilling such duties while Planning Policy Guidance 15, *Planning and the Historic Environment*, provides a principal point of guidance. Where new development is planned Appraisals may provide a useful design resource to those proposing it.
- 1.5 Conservation Area status curtails certain ‘permitted’ householder development rights requiring planning permission to be sought in these areas (outlined in the General Permitted Development Order 1995). Local Authorities have further powers to restrict permitted developments to the elevations of properties that front the highway through the introduction of Article 4(2) designations, while approval of the Secretary of State is required for more wide ranging 4(1) designations.
- 1.6 English Heritage recommends production of distinct Management Strategy documents for each Conservation Area. The basis of these documents is the analysis contained within and recommendations arising from each Appraisal. These documents will provide a boost in efficiency while helping ensure fulfilment of statutory duties. In the context of the new Local Development Framework (LDF) these Management Strategy documents may eventually be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 1.7 Work on the new LDF is currently proceeding. In the interim, policies included within the City Plan 2001 continue in force unless superseded by those arising from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 or Regional Planning Guidance. The City Plan reiterates the Authority’s commitment to fulfilling statutory duties regarding Conservation Areas and listed buildings, sets design and development

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standards, while introduces two non-statutory 'lists' of relevance to this Appraisal: a *Local List* (Buildings of Special Local Interest) and *Areas of Archaeological Importance*.

- 1.8 When reading or using an Appraisal it is important to note that while every effort is made to provide detailed analysis the document can never be comprehensive. Failure to mention a particular element or detail *must not* be taken to imply that it is of no importance to an appreciation of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and thus of no relevance in consideration of planning applications.
- 1.9 This Appraisal has been produced by the Directorate of Regeneration and Heritage (Urban Design and Conservation), Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Enquiries regarding this Appraisal should be addressed to:

The Urban Design Team on

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## 2. The Study Area

- 2.1 The Dresden Estate is a suburb of Longton, which is one the most Southerly of the six towns of Stoke-on-Trent. The Conservation Area sits on the edge of the town, and on the edge of the city boundary facing out towards the countryside.
- 2.2 Dresden Conservation Area is centred on the houses that remain from the original estate of the 1800s.
- 2.3 The development of Dresden is intrinsically linked with Longton. Longton developed rapidly in the early 1800's (later than the surrounding towns) with the conversion from a coal to a pottery industry.
- 2.4 Historically the surrounding area has been used for residential properties housing Longton's community. On the estate this included builders, estate agents, pottery manufacturers and small tradesmen.
- 2.5 Dresden today houses mostly a mixture of residents to suit the variety of housing types in the area and is resolutely middle class.
- 2.6 The park is still a central feature of the area and is still popular with young and old. It maintains its bowling greens, fishing lakes and now boasts a large skateboard park and play area.
- 2.7 Dresden became part of the suburb of Longton in the early to mid 1900s as the surrounding countryside was developed.

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### **3. History and Archaeology**

- 3.1 Much of Dresden was formed out of the Spratslade Farm Estate, purchased by the Longton Freehold Land Society in 1850. At this time it was necessary for voters to have ownership of a freehold with a minimum value of 40 shillings. In the 1840s a political movement organised by Liberal radicals sought to effect Parliamentary reform. A Freehold Land Society would buy an estate with the financial assistance of trustees, which would then be divided into plots worth 40 shillings. These would be purchased by members with money borrowed from building societies, therefore enabling them to vote. The Longton Society was one of the most successful in the area in terms of creating new voting rights. Spratslade Farm was purchased in 1850 for £5,000.
- 3.2 The earliest available documents refer to the estate at “Spratslade”, the old name for the district later to become Dresden. The new name was adopted shortly afterwards, most likely named after the porcelain producing town in Germany. The plan for the Spratslade Farm area contained 11 streets. Many, such as Ricardo Street, were named after famous liberal reformers; John Lewis Ricardo being a local M.P. famous for setting up the North Staffordshire Railway Company. Purchasers were drawn from a cross-section of the Longton business community. They included builders, estate agents, pottery manufacturers and small tradesmen. By 1864, 505 houses had been built on the estate.
- 3.3 The largest plots tended to be by the side of Trentham road, reserved for ‘villa residences’. However, the sites on the edge of the estate were most valuable due to their views of the open countryside. Cocknage Road, which formed the northern boundary of the estate, was one of the most desirable locations and was occupied almost entirely by villa residences. Ricardo Street was more varied, with the western part of the street up to the junction of Landsdowne Street built up with terraced houses. The eastern end of the road adjoined the boundary of the estate and therefore contained mostly villa residences.
- 3.4 In the nineteenth century the land to the south of the Spratslade Farm Estate was owned by the Duke of Sutherland, the largest land-owner around Longton. In 1886 the land for Queens park was offered by the Duke to the people of the whole Borough of Longton. The park was flanked by the railway line built by the Duke in the late 1870s to service his new colliery in Florence. It was the first municipal park built in the potteries, and was intended to provide a haven of clean air for the workers of the potteries. The park was designed by John H. Garrett, supervisor of the Duke’s Florence housing estate. The other main contributor to the creation of the park was the Mayor of the Borough, John Aynsley. His hard work and determination led to the donation of the land, and through personal donations and fundraising allowed the park to be opened in 1888 entirely free from debt. The Sutherland and Aynsley memorial was unveiled in 1892, consisting of the 45 foot clock tower, a drinking fountain and a belfry. The park boundary wall is still intact, but most of the cast iron railings on top of the wall were removed during the Second World War.

3.5 The park reflected the social structure of Victorian Britain. It was not viewed as a place to play, and no facilities were provided for children. Two lodges were built to house the park superintendent and the park head gardener. In 1892 cast iron sign posts were erected at various points to identify the route for the carriage drivers. Some of these are still standing, although none of the direction signs remain. The sale of alcohol was forbidden on the site of the park, and this led to the Park Inn being opened in 1907 to cater for the large numbers of visitors to Queens Park. In the era where workers only had Sundays off, it was estimated that there could be upwards of ten thousand visitors on a Sunday.



**FIGURE 1:** *Ariel view of the Conservation Area*

3.6 The whole of the park is designated an area of archaeological importance and the park is also on the historic parks register as a grade II park. There are no specific entries on the Sites and Monuments Record for Dresden Conservation Area.

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## 4. Spatial Analysis and Appraisal of Views

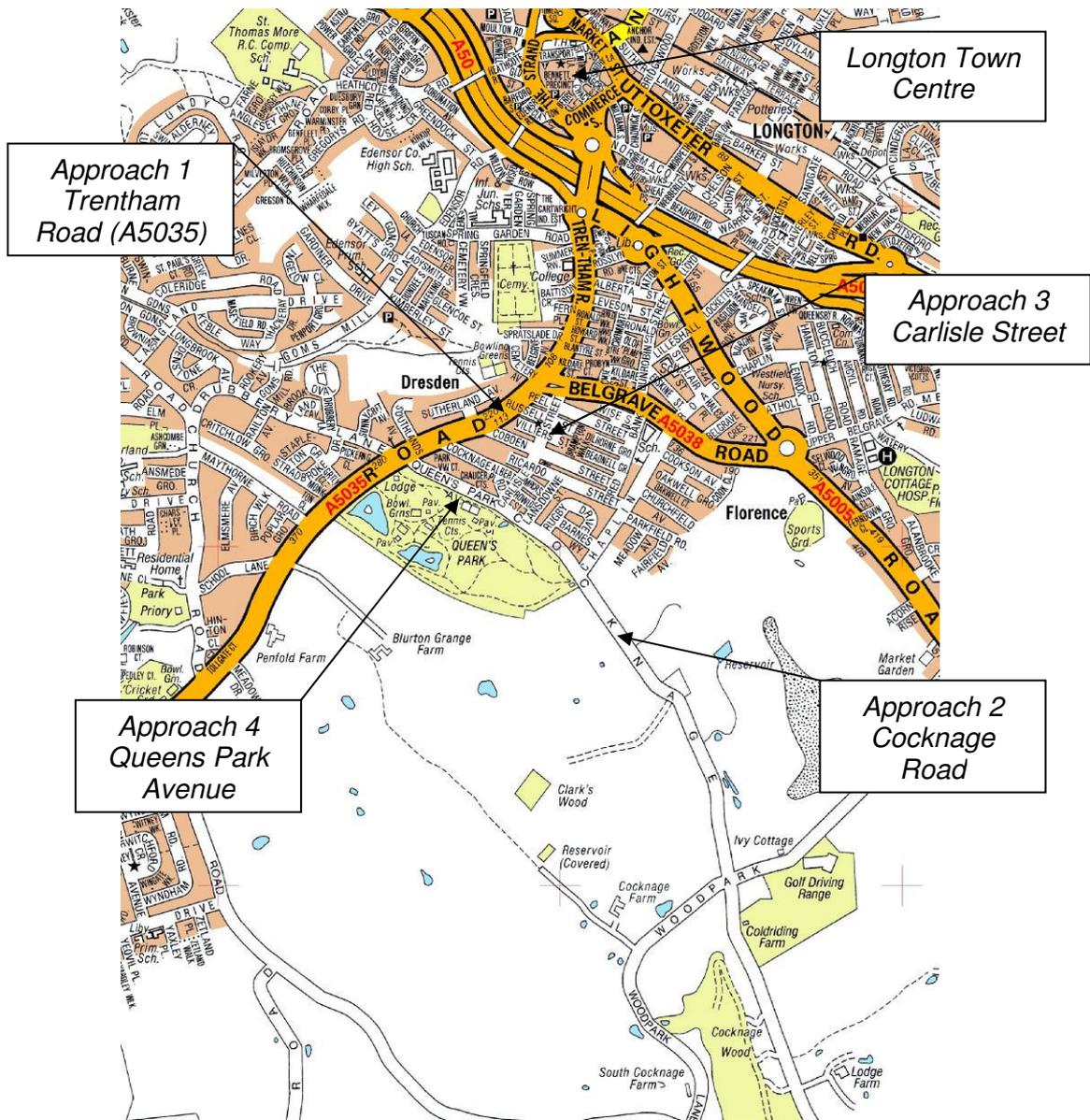
### 4.1 Form

- 4.11 Dresden Conservation Area encompasses those buildings built as part of the Building Society scheme which still maintain their character and appearance. This includes a variety of dwellings from terraces to large detached villas. The Conservation Area is surrounded by open countryside to the South with an old railway line to the West. To the North and East is the suburban sprawl of Longton.
- 4.12 Routes through the Conservation Area are generally wide tree lined roads. Only Cocknage Road and Trentham Road predate the building of the estate, hence Cocknage Road's splay which is out of place with the layout of the other roads within the estate.



**FIGURE 2:** *Cocknage Road curving round to right with the large mature trees which are typical of the area in the foreground*

4.13 The Conservation Area is drawn together through the meeting of two distinct paths that predate the estate. The area is a mix of smaller residential roads and larger through roads (here termed 'Approaches'). The following definitions are used thus:



**FIGURE 3:** Modern road map

- **Approach 1:** Trentham Road (the A5035 between Trentham and Longton)
- **Approach 2:** Cocknage Road from the South
- **Approach 3:** Carlisle Street
- **Approach 4:** Queens Park Avenue

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## 4.2 Views

4.21 A number of significant internal views, alignments and relationships can be identified:

- The whole area is dominated by greenery and in particular large mature trees. The park has a large expanse of green space which extends out to the tree lined Queens Park Avenue.
- From inside the park through the lines of large trees and rhododendrons, the houses of Approach 2 and 4 are partially visible.



**FIGURE 4:** *Showing the intimate relationship between the estate and the park*

- Where roads within the Conservation Area abut one another quaint views are created of some of the smaller terraces.



**FIGURE 5:** *Photos taken in the early 1900's showing the prominence of the war memorial*

4.22 There are views of mixed quality out of the Conservation Area.

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- One of the largest impacts upon views within the Conservation Area is the location. The area sits on a hill overlooking Longton. This gives views out over the town and buildings such as the Sutherland Institute (currently Longton Library), Enson Works three bottle kilns and St James Church can be seen.



**FIGURE 6:** *View to the North West showing near and far views combined due to the elevation of the estate*

- Whilst those distant views are of quality the views to the end of the street, whilst often with a green element, tend to be of later buildings of neutral quality.
- The war memorial is an important entry point to the Conservation Area, together with the park it creates and green entrance to the main throughway (Approach 4) though the Conservation Area.

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## 4.3 Open Spaces

4.31 A major part of the Conservation Area is the park which was created after the estate was built. It is a large mature park built in the 1880's famous for its trees, horticulture and lakes with extensive community facilities including:

- Children's play area
- Several lakes
- Fishing on one of the lakes (controlled by Fenton and District Anglers)
- Full size football pitch
- Skate facilities
- Sports courts
- Three crown green bowling greens
- Toilets



**FIGURE 7:** *Showing the informal and formal nature of the park*

4.32 The 45 acres park was given to the city by the Duke of Sutherland. Entrance to the new park was by three ornamental gates bearing the armorial bearings of the Duke of Sutherland, and the Borough of Longton on each. The lakes of the park covered 5 acres.



**FIGURE 8:** *One of the lodges*

4.33 The park is on several levels with an elevated path along side the former railway line allowing views of the park. It has a clock tower (dedicated to Sutherland and Aynsley) and two lodges as well as numerous other structures such as the bandstand and bowling pavilions.

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## 5. Built Form

### 5.1 The Influence of Use Patterns and Patronage

5.12 The influence of patronage was explained in Part 3 under History and Archaeology.

5.13 The use of the area for large individual residential properties can still be seen today, although some properties have sold off their surrounding land for development.

5.14 Generally the larger and more decorative houses are to be found along Queens Park Avenue and the South end of Ricardo Street.



**FIGURE 9:** Map of the estate in 1878  
[http://www.thepotteries.org/maps/1878\\_dresden.htm](http://www.thepotteries.org/maps/1878_dresden.htm)

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## 5.2 Architectural Character, Materials, Colours and Textures

### 5.21 Style

The Conservation Area is stylistically very mixed. Whilst the buildings cover two distinct periods, the styles vary considerably due to the nature of the development. Houses range from the elaborately decorated Dresden House to smaller plain brick terraced houses. The two periods can be defined as properties built when the estate was created in the 1800's, and the infill development which started in the 1970's. Due to the nature of the development the terraces are not workers' houses but rather genteel well proportioned small terraces.



**FIGURE 10:** *Contrasting detailing within the Conservation Area whilst still retaining a similarity of style*

### 5.22 Plan, Form and Massing

The majority of the buildings within the Conservation Area are detached villa residences with some of those being later infill. Mixed in with this are terraces with typically three or four houses in them and large semi detached houses. All are set back from the road with small front gardens and walled rear gardens. The villa residents are located to the edge of the original estate along Ricardo Street and the West end of Queens Park Avenue. There are no unduly tall buildings, either within the Conservation Area or on its outskirts.

### 5.23 External Walls and Façade Finishes

#### Brickwork - Tiles

Smooth or rough faced red brick laid in Flemish bond is the common façade material across the Conservation Area and particularly so along Approaches 2, 3 and 4, where it is also used for boundary walls and gate posts. The brickwork is strikingly emphasised at 2 and 4 Rowland Street and through detailing in Staffordshire blue brick diaperwork commonly found in the vernacular revival style of the 1880's. There is also use of elaborate brickwork at 53 Ricardo Street to create a very decorative building using three types of brick.

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Many of the houses within the Conservation Area have no brick detailing and have very simple plain lines. Brick eaves details are plain throughout the Conservation Area with the exception of some of the more ornate houses such as 53 Ricardo Street and 27 Queens Park Avenue. In Rowland Street many of the original houses have decorative diaperwork in Staffordshire blue brick with relieving four centred arches also accentuated by use of diaperwork.



**FIGURE 11:** *Diaper brickwork and stone window surrounds*

### Stonework

Stonework is restricted to decorative detailing on structures throughout the Conservation Area with the exception of the war memorial and clock tower in the park which have been built in stone. Stonework is also in evidence in walls and on the (often painted) sandstone caps of dwarf brick garden walls and piers throughout the Conservation Area.

### Facade Treatments

A majority of the buildings in the Conservation Area are brick but many have plain rendered gable ends. Some buildings lost their character by being completely rendered such as 72 and 74 Carlisle Street. Tile hanging is also visible on the gable of no 15 Queens Park Road.



**FIGURE 12:** *Showing two very different styles of stone detailing showing the mixture of styles throughout the Conservation Area*

Concrete

Nowhere used extensively.

## 5.24 Roofs

- Material

Most roofs carry local dark blue-purple tiles. A few of the houses within the Conservation Area have been re-roofed in a concrete tile. The exception to these is those few houses that retain their slate roofs such as 11 Mercer Street, 23 Queens Park Avenue and 69 Ricardo Street. A majority of the houses within the Conservation Area have simple gable roofs without embellishments. 39 Cocknage Road has a double span gable roof, as does the Tower House (no 53 Ricardo Street) which also has the addition of a tower with a square truncated spire with detailed decorative ironwork at its top. There are a few decorated ridge details within the Conservation Area, particularly along Queen Park Avenue. Deep eaves with eaves details decorated in stone, brick or timber boarding are common throughout the area. Chimneys play a strong part in the character of the area with most housing having tall traditional chimneys, some with decorative detailing such as the chimneys at 23 and 27 Queens Park Avenue.



**FIGURE 13:** *Roofs: The tower of the Tower House showing the complex detailing*

- *Pitch and Type*

The Conservation Area is characterised by houses with plain gable roofs although some houses have simple hipped roofs. Approach 1 and 2 are distinguished by plain tiles clay roofs especially on the four terraces. Loft conversions seem to be rare within the Conservation Area with only a few houses having dormer windows and almost no rooflights in evidence.

## 5.25 Windows

- *Type and Fenestration*

There are some sash windows retained within the Conservation Area although the majority of properties, especially within the central part of the Conservation Area, have replaced their windows with uPVC. Stone cills and lintels are an important characteristic of the Conservation Area as are large windows with a vertical emphasis. Ground floor bay windows are also common throughout the area.

## 5.26 Porches

Porches are not a feature of the Conservation Area with the exception of 27 Queens Park Avenue and 53 and 54 Ricardo Street which retain their original porches. Front doors generally are flush with the front of the building and have a small projecting canopy or head detail. Number 4 and 2 Rowland Street have side porches, one of which is enclosed.

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## 5.27 Doors

Few original or unaltered front doors survive although some particularly fine examples can be seen on Queens Park Avenue and Ricardo Street. Doors are an important feature of the Conservation Area as they are generally on the front elevation of the properties.



**FIGURE 14:** *Examples of unaltered or original front doors*

## 5.28 Enclosure

In all cases private space to the front or rear of properties was historically enclosed by brick walls and this remains the case. Walls are generally dwarf brick walls with brick piers capped with decorated stone caps. The dwarf walls of the park originally had railing which it is presumed were removed during the war.

### 5.210 Details and Features

- Several constructional details are worthy of note including the park gates, which have sadly lost their lamps.



**FIGURE 15:** *Historic photo c1920 Queens Park Gates*

- It is important to note that whilst many of the structures within the Conservation Area have simple details, they are well proportioned.

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### 5.211 Groundscape and Public Realm

- Original street, pavement and kerbing materials have been almost entirely replaced with tarmac or concrete slabs across the Conservation Area. The alleyway between Cobden Street and Ricardo Street and one of the entrances to a house in Queen Park Avenue are laid out in blue brick and retain an historic surface.
- The lack of street furniture in the Conservation Area enhances its open and uncluttered feel. Very little original street furniture has survived.



**FIGURE 16:** *The alleyway in 1967 and today retaining its street furniture*

## 5.3 Listed and Unlisted Buildings of Importance

### 5.41 Buildings on the Statutory List

- There are no buildings within the Conservation Area on the statutory list.

### 5.42 Buildings of Special Local Interest Listed in The Local Plan

- The Tower House (53 Ricardo Street)
- 2 and 4 Rowland Street

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#### 5.43 Unlisted Structures of Note

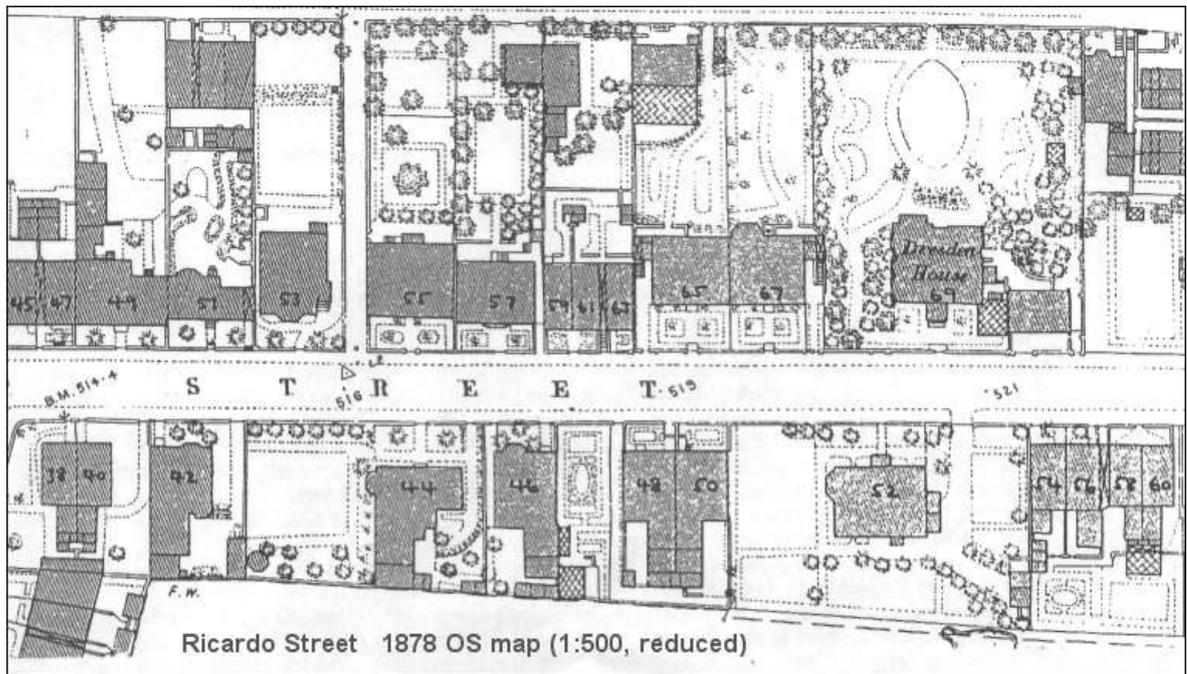
Most buildings within the Conservation Area pre-dating 1920 make a positive contribution to its character, though alterations have reduced this in a number of cases. The following selection of notable unlisted buildings is by no means comprehensive:

- *Chaucer House (No 23), Queens Park Avenue:* A large detached dwelling with an impressive street frontage, with two full height canted bays on either side of the front door. Decorated door and window arches to ground floor and decorated cills to first floor with a plain slate roof. One of the most visible and prominent buildings along Approach 4.



**FIGURE 17:** *Chaucer House (No 23), Queens Park Avenue*

- *Strathmore House (No 27), Queens Park Avenue:* A large detached dwelling built in the Arts and Crafts style at a slightly later period than most of the estate, between 1880 and 1900. Stone corbels hold up the gable end with windows with stone mullions and transoms below. There is a large ornate chimney with stone and brick detailing and a decorated brick band of fleur-de-lys wraps around the building.
- *Eldon House (No 69) Ricardo Street:* A large detached property, now a nursing home, in a flamboyant decorated style. Built c1857 for a local pottery manufacturer on three plots of land, it originally had a large garden and a coach house and conservatory to the side. It was originally called Dresden House.



**FIGURE 18:** *Ricardo Street* showing the original layout

- *54 Ricardo Street:* a large detached villa residence opposite to Eldon House. Built in a plan style it still retains its large chimneys, sash windows and elegant porch supported on two columns. The garden to the side has been built on but a reminder of where the garden was is visible in the full height side bay windows.
- *Nos 65 and 67 Ricardo Street:* Two similar semi detached houses which, despite losing some of their original features, retain their character. Built in brick with projecting dress stone quoins and stone eaves and copings. The two properties both have projecting porch with decorated metalwork as a top detail and also retain all 6 tall chimneys with stone detailing.



**FIGURE 19:** *Nos 65 and 67 Ricardo Street showing the tall chimneys*

- *11 Mercer Street:* A large plain but well proportioned detached property retaining some of its sash windows and chimneys. It also retains its walled garden and coach house.
- *31 Cocknage Road:* A large brick semi-detached property now split into two. It sits on a prominent corner of the oldest street in the Conservation Area. It retains its sash windows and simple proportions and forms an important entry point into the Conservation Area.
- *Rear of No 4 Cocknage Road:* Coach house of one of two semi detached properties. Unusual in that it is attached to the rear of the house at right angles to the house.
- *68 Carlisle Street:* A large mid-terrace property which retains many traditional features including front door, fanlight and sash windows.
- *Clock Tower:* Built as a memorial to the people who made the park possible, the Duke of Sutherland and John Aynsley, a potter. Stone clock tower topped with a small dome supported on slim columns.
- *War memorial:* Stone war memorial erected in 1924-37 to those from Meir, Longton and district who fell in the 1914 - 1918 war and all other wars and conflicts since.
- *The Park Lodges:* The park has two lodges adjacent to both gates. Both are brick, built but the East lodge has a tile hung upper storey and the North lodge is rendered with timber detailing the first storey.



**FIGURE 20:** *The North lodge*

## **5.4 Trees, Green Spaces, Edges and Ecology**

- 5.41 As the park forms a central part of the Conservation Area it is also the green space.
- 5.42 Small front gardens (and larger ones to the rear) are generally in evidence within the Conservation Area creating small patches of green to frame the front elevations of the properties.
- 5.43 There are many mature trees throughout the Conservation Area, particularly within and on the edge of the park and along Queens Park Avenue and Cocknage Road.

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## 5.5 Detractors, Neutral Areas and Gap Sites – Enhancement and Development Opportunities

5.51 Features which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- There are a few buildings of negative character within the Conservation Area. The later infill buildings such as those built in the 1970's and after certainly do not have a positive impact on the Conservation Area, and in fact detract from the character and scale of the area.
- There are buildings of little or no character within the Conservation Area including the two large blocks of flats in Queens Park Avenue which are incongruous with the scale and character of the area.
- Replacement windows and doors, particularly those made of PVCu. These are often of varied design within terraces or semi-detached properties, negating their harmony, while plastic windows are intrinsically harmful to the appearance and fabric of historic buildings.
- The depot in the South East corner of the park is in need of improvement and in particular screening from the park.



**FIGURE 21:** *Harmful modifications. Removal of timber detailing, sash windows and timber doors and replacement with inappropriate uPVC*

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5.52 Neutral Areas – those neither contributing to nor detracting from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area:

- There are no neutral areas in the Conservation Area.

5.53 There are no gap sites within the Area. However, there is a large gap site on Ricardo Street adjacent to the Conservation Area which is currently grassed over.

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## **6. Pressures and Threats**

- 6.1 Replacement windows and doors, particularly those made of PVCu, can seriously harm the character of the Conservation Area. There is currently no Article 4(2) Direction which covers windows and doors in the Conservation Area.
- 6.2 Careful consideration should be given to further proposals relating to infill development as it can damage the character of the area and alter the special layout of the original estate, detracting from the Conservation Area's character.
- 6.3 Maintenance of the park is vital to the upkeep and character of the area.
- 6.4 The park's lodge house on Queens Park Avenue is currently vacant. This building is situated in a prominent position next to one the park entrances.

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## **7. Summary of Special Interest**

### **Architecture**

Although the original estate buildings are all of a similar period each house was individually designed. This creates an individual yet uniform character to the Conservation Area. The styles are, for the most part, flamboyant with intricate detailing.

### **History**

The area was created through the support of liberal benefactors who created plots of land priced at 40 shilling plots and over. This created a wide variety of middle class dwellings. Little has changed in the area since the park was built with the exception of the flats and infill development.

### **Character and Appearance**

The Conservation Area has a suburban feel with the park creating an elegant feel to the area. The large houses and tree lined roads create an oasis within the city. A range of different sized dwellings allows for a wide community and the park attracts visitors from miles around.

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## 8. Recommendations and Proposals

- 8.1 Boundaries Boundaries in each case are suggested by natural breaks in townscape character or historical developmental patterns and relationships. Current boundaries are appropriate and therefore no boundary revisions are proposed.
- 8.2 The survival of many original features including windows and boundary walls is a crucial aspect of the special interest of the Conservation Area and demands the consideration of Article 4(2) designations to prevent insensitive modifications. Provision of generic guidance to householders on sensitive home improvement options should be considered whether or not a new Article 4 designation is approved.



**FIGURE 22:** *Example of inappropriate changes and how this alters the character of a house*

- 8.3 Some of the notable unlisted buildings included in section 5.43 might be considered for inclusion in the Local List at its next review.
- 8.4 The Tower house might be considered for putting forward to English Heritage for statutory listing.

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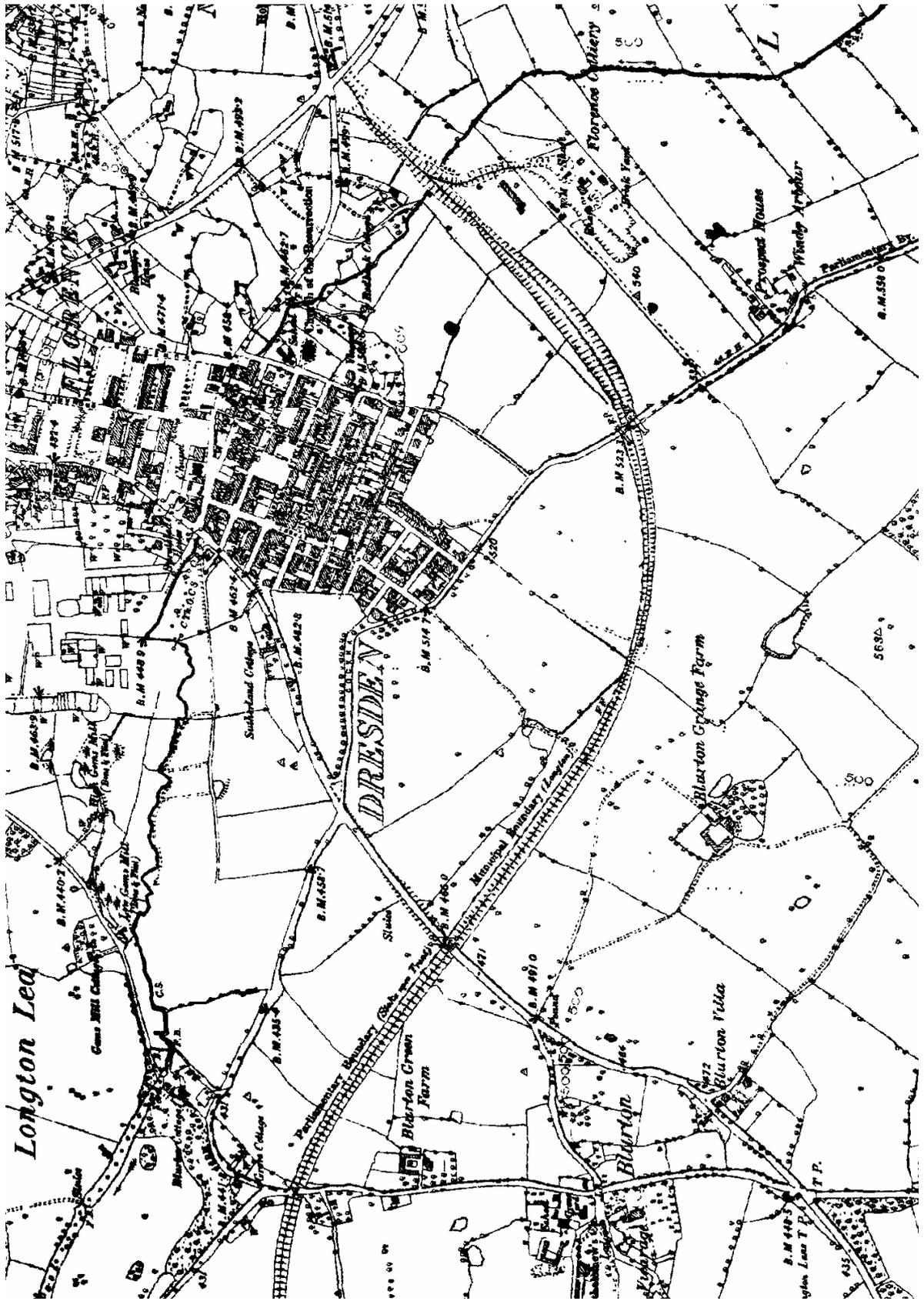
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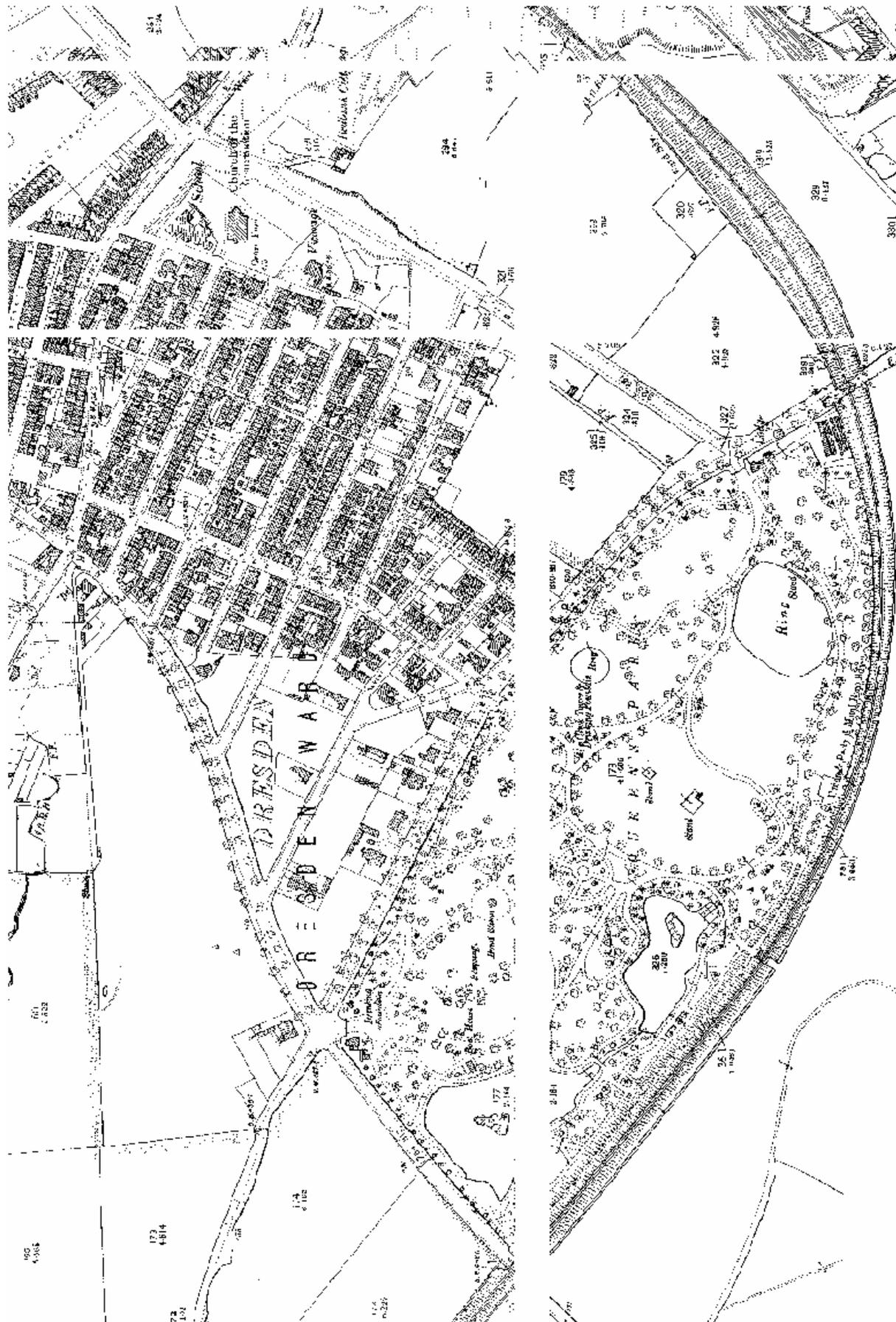
## Appendices



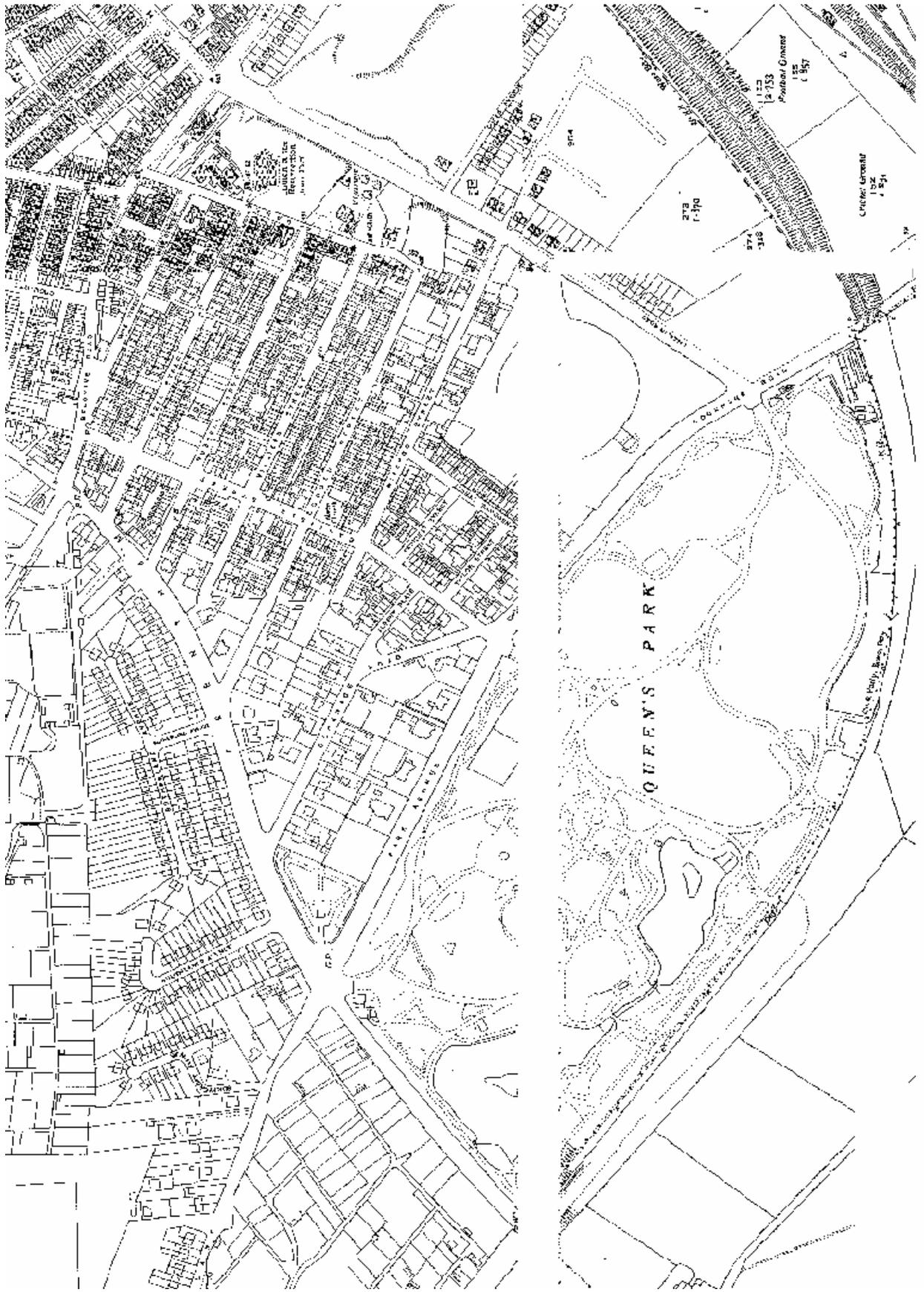
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Dresden in 1880



Dresden in 1900



Dresden in 1937