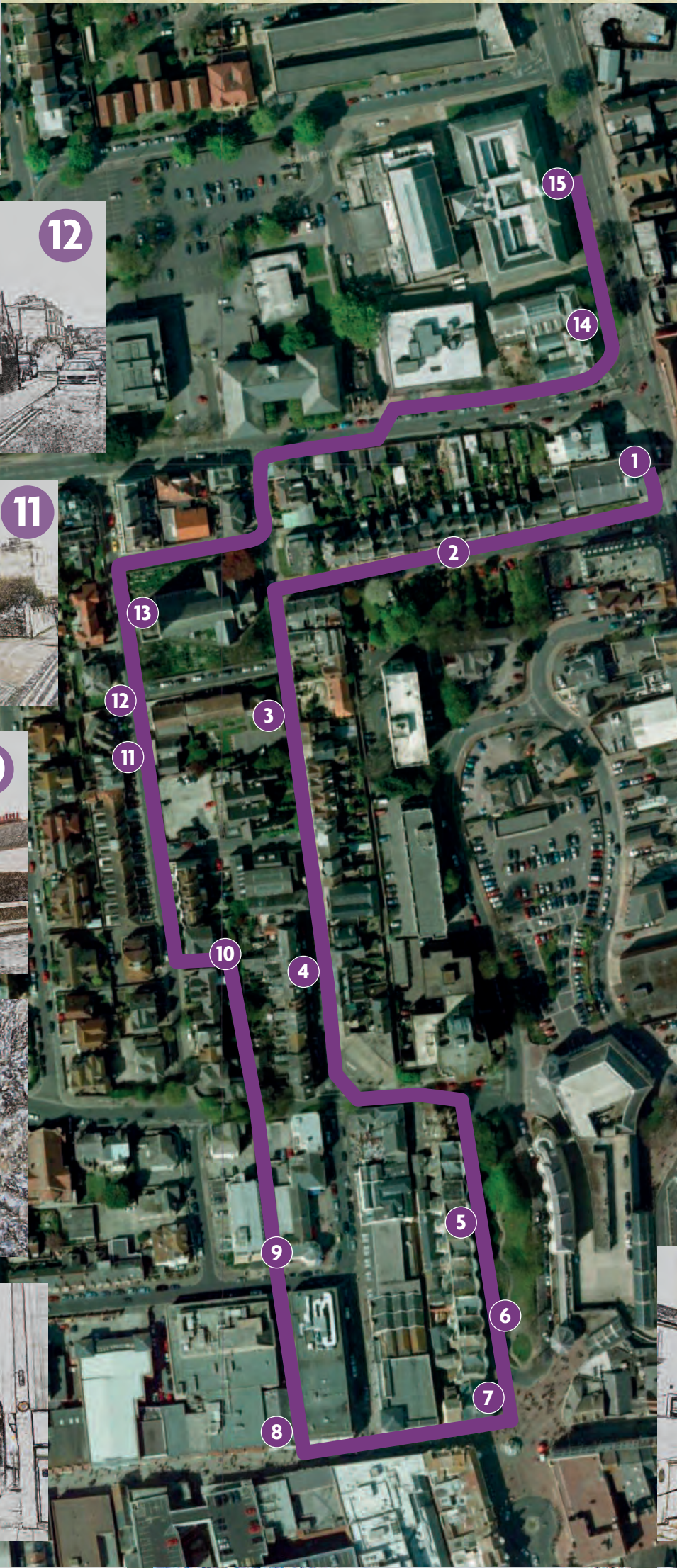


TOWN TRAIL 2



WORTHING HERITAGE TRAILS

TOWN TRAIL 2

Introduction: this trail follows a circular route around the town centre, exploring some of the best of the town's nineteenth century buildings and the social history of the time.

Duration: 60 minutes

Terrain: follows pavements and twittens – this trail should be suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

1 St Paul's was built in 1812 and is the only church in Worthing built in the classical style. Originally it was a 'Chapel of Ease' catering for the wealthy residents and visitors to the town. Pews were owned and places 'sub-let' for a fee, ensuring that poorer people were excluded. This practice continued until 1890, in which year the chapel was rededicated as the parish church of St Paul's, having previously been a chapel of the parish of Broadwater. The building was closed to worship in 1995 and subsequently deconsecrated. It is now a café and community centre.

2 Ambrose Place, originally known as Mount Pleasant, was built between 1814-26, and is the most outstanding example of Regency architecture to be found in the town. The terrace was built by Ambrose Cartwright, and was later renamed in his honour. Significant residents have included George French, the newspaper proprietor, who used his column in the Worthing Gazette to promote hostility towards the Salvation Army, culminating in the riots of 1884. Harold Pinter, the playwright, lived here in the 1960s when he was involved in several productions at the Connaught

Theatre. One of the first residents, Mrs Elizabeth Crawford, recalled the Swing Riots of 1830, when 'burning, destroying and mobs' were almost a daily occurrence, and even middle-class people like herself were forced to make savings. 'We make no new acquaintances,' she wrote, 'for we dread anything that leads us to expense'.

3 This building (currently empty at the time of writing) was recently a health studios and gym, but it was originally built in 1861 as the **Christ Church Schools**. Its flint work shows highly crafted 'knapping', where the stones are split and laid, as far as possible, to resemble brick courses.



11 The Provident and Relief Benefit Society opened their purpose-built soup kitchen in 1892, during a harsh winter when unemployment was high. The soup on offer was in reality more of a stew, consisting primarily of mutton and pearl barley. No salt was added. The idea was to fill the bellies of the poor, rather than to entice them back with a tasty meal. The soup kitchen closed in 1924, although a temporary one in Ivy Arch Road was opened during the winter of 1938/39, when unemployment reached record levels in the town.

12 The Spiritualist Church is built in the Art Nouveau-Deco style. Note in particular the stained glass windows which are a distinctive feature. Celebrity spiritualist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, opened the church in March 1926.

13 Christ Church is one of the most impressive flint built buildings in Sussex. As well as knapping (use of split flints in construction), galleting was also employed, whereby flint flakes were placed in the mortar to strengthen it. The church was built in 1843 and was the first in the town in the neo-gothic style. Unlike the Chapel of Ease (later St Paul's), Christ Church had 'free' pews and was therefore open to people of all classes. A fishermen's gallery in the southern transept was later added. The explorer John Turtle Wood, who rediscovered Ephesus, is buried in the churchyard.

14 Worthing Museum and Art Gallery was built following a bequest from Alderman Alfred Cortis, a man who left £200,000 on his death in 1913. Cortis was Worthing's first mayor in 1890. He had served on the Local Board, the predecessor authority to the Town Council. It is not entirely clear how Cortis made his fortune, which in modern money would equal many millions of pounds. He ran a corn merchant business in the town and had served in the army where he rose to the rank of sergeant. Towards the end of his life he lived in Highworth House, a grand Victorian villa opposite Liverpool Terrace that was demolished in 1988.

15 The Town Hall was opened by Prince George in 1933 and was built on the site of two large early nineteenth century houses. It attracted controversy at the time, both for its cost - £120,000 at a time of economic crisis - and its appearance, which some thought severe, even brutish. One local magazine columnist referred to it as 'the barracks'. Its design reflects the self-confidence of local government in the 1930s, when considerable powers were wielded from the Town Hall. The building is grade II listed.

4 The Hare and Hounds has been a public house since 1852, although the building itself dates from the late eighteenth century. The current premises have been expanded into what was once a neighbouring residential property.

5 Liverpool Terrace was completed by 1830 and commemorates the then recently retired Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool. The terrace is very similar in appearance to those found at Brighton and represents a refinement of the early style of bow-fronted terrace, typified by Bedford Row, built nearly 30 years earlier.

6 The '**Desert Quartet**' of four monumental male heads was sculpted by Dame Elizabeth Frink in 1990. Her original design for a tableaux of horses, men and a dog, was rejected by councillors, one of whom objected to the anatomical detail of the naked figures. Some have seen in the Desert Quartet (or 'Frink Heads' as they are known locally) the artist's considered response to the rejection of her first designs. Nonetheless, the bronze heads are now estimated to be worth several millions of pounds. Dame Elizabeth died in 1993.

7 Holder's drapery and habersdashers shop occupied a site on the corner of Liverpool Terrace and Montague Street from 1900 until it closed in 1973. This area in front of the shop became known as Holder's Corner – a name that still persists in 2013. As you walk west along Montague Street, notice the archway sign to Field Row. This twitten can be followed along to Ambrose Place. Part of the route still retains its original flint wall. Until the 1870s the land to the east of Field Row (north of present-day Shelley Road) was still in agricultural use.

8 The modern shop façade to the left of the twitten next to Boots ('Savers' in 2013) masks a Victorian building which was originally

the **Mechanic's Institute of the Independent (Congregational) Chapel**, which stood next door on a site now occupied by Boots. The Institute was there to offer working men an alternative to the public house: games and refreshments were available, but no alcoholic drinks. The Institute also ran regular lectures on a diverse range of subjects. If you walk down the twitten, you will see at the back of the building there is a preserved neo-gothic window – an original feature from the old Institute.

9 If you cross over **Chandos Road**, you can follow the twitten behind the modern shops in Portland Road. You will notice that the original flint walls have been replaced by modern brick walls. Cross over Shelley Road and continue to follow the twitten. To your right you will see a building that is a remnant of a row of 'back-to-back' cottages that once stood on this site. To your left you will see a high flint wall, built to shield the occupants of the villa in Grafton Road from their poorer neighbours. The construction of dwellings for all classes in close proximity was not a sign of enlightened thinking, but rather of a lack of available building land. As the town underwent rapid expansion following the arrival of the railway in 1845, many local landowners resisted pressure to release land for housing. Only the agricultural depression of the 1870s forced their hand, leading to the development of, for example, Liverpool Gardens.

10 This mid-Victorian villa typifies the style of home that professional middle-class people, such as doctors, solicitors, and accountants, would aspire to own. All such properties would have servants to look after the occupiers and their families. Indeed, even the more modest homes of tradesmen and skilled artisans would have had at least one servant to meet their needs.

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TOWN TRAIL 2



Victorian Town and Civic Pride

The Worthing Heritage Trails are a project created by the Worthing Heritage Alliance (www.worthingheritagealliance.org.uk) and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

General visitor information about Worthing can be found at www.VisitWorthing.co.uk

More information about the history of Worthing can be found at www.oldworthingstreet.com
www.worthingcommunityplay.org.uk
www.worthingsociety.org.uk



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