

CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

CIRENCESTER PARK CONSERVATION AREA
GLOUCESTER STREET AND RIVER WALK CONSERVATION AREA
CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA
CIRENCESTER SOUTH CONSERVATION AREA

Consultation Draft 2021



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A conservation area was originally designated for Cirencester in 1968, which was reviewed in 1980; 1984; 1991 and 2008 and finally in 2021. There have been various names and boundaries for the conservation areas since 1968. The previous boundary and name changes occurred in 2008 and designated four Conservation Areas within the town:

- Cirencester Park
- Gloucester Street And River Walk
- Cirencester Town Centre
- Cirencester South

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, as defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

A Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset, and is an important consideration in assessing planning applications.

Map 1. Cirencester Conservation Areas (see Appendix 1)

1.2 Comprehensive appraisals of the four Conservation Areas were undertaken in 2008, providing a wealth of useful historic and descriptive information, as well as photographs; for that reason very few photographs are included in these appraisals (the 2008 appraisals remain available on the Council's website¹).

1.3 This 2021 appraisal provides a shorter and more accessible document that combines the analysis of all four Conservation Areas, in part to aid in the preparation of a "masterplan" for Cirencester. Many issues are relevant across all four Conservation Areas and have been presented jointly, for example, the townscape and green infrastructure/open space analyses; however, there are also separate detailed assessments of each Conservation Area and the individual character areas within each one. This combined appraisal is also accompanied by management proposals, which relate to all four Conservation Areas.

1.4 The aim of the appraisals is to set out the special interest and character of the four Cirencester Conservation Areas.

¹ <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/historic-buildings-and-conservation-areas/conservation-area-maps/>

2. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

2.1 Cirencester lies in the floodplain of the River Churn, a tributary of the River Thames. Sitting in a shallow bowl it is surrounded to the north and west by the Cotswolds (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and to the south by the relatively flat expanse of the Upper Thames Valley. The Conservation Areas fall entirely within the (landscape) National Character Area 107² (The Cotswolds).

2.2 Cirencester is a fairly compact market town, whose attractive and distinctive character is strongly influenced by its historic development, including the original Roman road pattern and medieval street pattern. It is characterised by buildings of a modest scale and, for the most part, by intimate and enclosed spaces. The historic town, within the late 20th century ring road, has two distinct phases. Taking a line marked by Lewis Lane and Querns Lane, the northern section is characterised by a curvilinear medieval street pattern, with tightly packed buildings, often built up from the back edge of the pavement. South of Lewis Lane and Querns Lane, and including the small section bordered by Sheep Street and Ashcroft Road, the built form is derived predominantly from nineteenth century development in the form of tight terraces to straight streets and avenues giving a sense of space and regularity.

2.3 Many of the approaches into Cirencester are within green wedges of undeveloped land, which are important to the town's appearance and character and link it with the surrounding countryside; this is especially true of Cirencester Park and the Abbey Grounds.

2.4 The unifying feature is the prominent use of Cotswold stone for buildings, walls and roofs. Interest is provided by a variety of building styles and architectural features, and in the modulation of historic street frontages. More recent buildings exhibit a wider range of building materials, including brick and natural blue slate.

Map 2. Landscape Designations (see Appendix 1)

² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5900626>

3. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 **Roman Corinium** - The town was of considerable importance in Roman times as Corinium Dobunnum and was at the junction of several key Roman roads – some of which are still main roads today. The town developed into a local government centre and agricultural market. There was also a large military fort. Today, there is relatively little to see of the Roman period other than the amphitheatre and some remains of the Roman wall around the settlement. However, there are considerable below ground archaeological deposits. In recognition of this important archaeological resource much of the town is scheduled³; but it is likely that important archaeological remains are also present outside the scheduled areas.

Map 3. Archaeology (see Appendix 1)

3.2 **The Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Period** - The Abbey was founded during this period and the present parish church constructed. The town increased in prosperity from the 14th century onwards, because of the wool trade and Cirencester's role as a market town. Buildings and street patterns from the medieval period can still be found towards the centre of Cirencester. The Abbey's properties were sold as part of the dissolution of the monasteries, the Oakley Estate on the west side of the town to Sir Benjamin Bathurst, and the Abbey Grounds on the east side to Dr Richard Master. The two families were to have a profound influence on the development of the town.

3.3 **Seventeenth Century** - The town continued to benefit from the wool trade, with fine stone buildings replacing many of the timber-framed domestic buildings of the medieval period. The new type of local vernacular style developed around the needs of the inhabitants and the capability of the stone. The typically gabled two-storey houses, incorporating stone mullioned windows with drip moulds over, and stone slate roofs with stone chimneys, were built off the pavement edge in densely-packed terraces.

3.4 **Eighteenth Century** - There was a distinct change in architectural fashions, with elegant and classically-inspired houses, which served to demonstrate the growing wealth and social standing of their inhabitants. The development of Cirencester Park by Allen, 1st Earl Bathurst, was a very important physical change in eighteenth-century Cirencester. The Earl rebuilt the Mansion in subdued classical style and laid out the Park. The canal arrived in the late 18th century, bringing new trade connections.

3.5 **Nineteenth Century** - At the start of the century most of the town lay north of Lewis Lane and Querns Lane. To address poor housing conditions new houses and shops were built, mainly in a very "Cotswold" style and roads were widened. These "improvements" included the demolition of a tightly packed group of medieval properties to the south of the Church, which opened up the Market Place. The Watermoor suburb south of Lewis Lane developed slowly throughout the century and by 1850 it had its own church. The Great Western Railway arrived in 1841 linking Cirencester with Kemble. In 1883 a further branch line station was opened at Watermoor by the rival railway company. New institutions and facilities were also constructed, including a public outdoor swimming pool.

3.6 **Twentieth and Twenty-First centuries** - Further public and commercial buildings were constructed in the early 20th century, often in the new Arts and Crafts style, including The Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard building. As the population expanded housing estates were built

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[https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/scheduledmonuments/#::~text=A%20scheduled%20monument%20is%20an%20Area%20Act%201979%20\(1\).&text=Buildings%20in%20use%20for%20non%2Dresidential%20purposes%20may%20be%20scheduled](https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/scheduledmonuments/#::~text=A%20scheduled%20monument%20is%20an%20Area%20Act%201979%20(1).&text=Buildings%20in%20use%20for%20non%2Dresidential%20purposes%20may%20be%20scheduled).

around the town, mainly outside the Conservation Areas, and this has continued into the 21st century.

3.7 Various schemes have addressed the major increase in traffic, including most notably the inner ring road, which severed the amphitheatre from the town centre, and large areas of car parking. Within the town centre, a number of medieval and later buildings were demolished and new developments undertaken, some more successful than others.

Cirencester Park (Grade I registered park and garden – Historic England)

The Park covers more than 1,000 acres extending westwards from the Mansion for some 8km towards Sapperton. A 1.5 to 3 metre high, mostly drystone wall extends around much of the park perimeter. There are two main approaches from the east, one private (an eighteenth semi-circular courtyard with curved wall and yew hedge) with associated gates and a main public access (with wrought iron gates and railings and two 19th century lodges).

The Park consists of extensive woodland together with parkland and private pleasure grounds. It was designed by The 1st Earl Bathurst and the poet, Alexander Pope. Cirencester Park combines both the formal geometric layout of previous designed parks characterised by radiating avenues extending in straight lines between principal viewpoints, and the naturalistic elements of later designs incorporating irregularly shaped woods and glades and occasional serpentine paths. There are many structures of interest in the Park including the lake in the private grounds of the Mansion and several “follies” or garden structures, such as Pope’s Seat and the Hexagon.

There are various key vistas, including the former Elm Avenue (Windsor Walk) on a line extending west from the church tower through the centre of The Mansion and terminating at Queen Anne’s Monument, and also the Broad Ride extending on a gentle rise from Cecily Hill and continuing for several miles.

The Park is a major informal recreation facility (open to the public at the discretion of the Bathurst Estate) on the edge of the historic town centre. The Park is also home to more formal sporting activities and events.

Map 4. Registered Parks and Gardens (Cirencester Park) (see Appendix 1)

4. CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS - INTRODUCTION

4.1 The four Conservation Areas have somewhat different characters, relating to their visual appearance, their historic development and the current and past uses of the area. The special interest and key characteristics of each Conservation Area is summarised below. Each Conservation Area has been sub-divided into character areas. There is often not a clean edge to each area but rather a gentle transition of character. For each character area a list of key characteristics and features is provided. These are not exhaustive but give a flavour of that character area.

4.2 Some of the character areas described in the 2008 appraisals have been combined as they are very similar. The reference numbers used in the 2008 appraisals are included for clarity.

4.3 For each character area there is a list of opportunities for enhancement and issues to be addressed to improve the quality of that character area, for example, too many parked cars or buildings in a poor state of repair. Actions to address these are included in section 10 – All Cirencester Conservation Areas: Management Proposals.

5. CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS OF THE FOUR CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS

5.1 The Park Conservation Area (CA1)

Summary

5.1.1 The majority of the Park Conservation Area comprises the easternmost part of the historic designed Cirencester Park. The relationship between the Park and the town is of crucial importance. There is a marked contrast between the wide open spaces of the Park and the more contained urban space of Cecily Hill, the two meeting at the ornate iron screen and gates at the top of Cecily Hill. Further south the Park (and the Mansion) are divided from the town by a high wall and the famous yew hedge. There are striking long views within the Park, including of the Mansion and church tower.

5.1.2 The Park Conservation Area is sub-divided into three character areas:

Map 5. The Park Conservation Area (CA1) Character Areas (see Appendix 1)

Character Area CA1 A (2008 CA1:1): Cecily Hill – Key Characteristics and Features

- A broad linear urban space defined by predominantly two storey almost continuous historic building frontages built off the back edge of the pavement on the north side and, for the most part, set back behind mature gardens on the south side.
- Cecily Hill represents a transition between urban and rural; marked by the wrought iron railings and screen. It has an intimate scale in contrast with the vastness of the Park itself.
- A mix of imposing classically inspired polite architecture of the early eighteenth century onwards sitting amongst more rustic and simplistic residential properties typical of the Cotswold style (gabled elevations, stone surrounds and hood moulds to windows and doors, small hipped and gabled dormers, with Cotswold stone roofs and chimneys).
- Fairly consistent building heights of two and three storeys punctuated by the occasional prominent pedimented frontage rising higher than its neighbours, and prominent chimney

stacks, mostly of ashlar stone to various designs, many diagonally set and appearing in pairs or threes and providing vertical emphasis.

- Dominant use of limestone for frontages, flank walls and garden walls with occasional use of brick for chimney stacks and one prominent shaped gable end to 7 Cecily Hill.
- Predominantly limestone slate roofs with some Welsh slate and clay tile.
- The southern side of Cecily Hill is characterised by small gardens with boundary hedges offering a degree of separation and containment. To the north side, gaps in the street scene lead to glimpses of mature planting in the rear gardens sloping down towards the River Walk.
- The rear gardens on the south side are flanked by mature trees separating these properties from the private grounds of the Mansion and forming an important visual backdrop especially at the west end of Cecily Hill.
- The castellated former barracks (armoury or Castle) at the top of the hill dominates short views from within the Park.
- The elegant Park entrance ironwork screen containing a pair of large eighteenth century gates.
- An unusually wide pavement on the north side suitable for promenading.
- Tall hedges are the most visible boundary treatment on the south side with limestone rubble walls forming a significant boundary treatment on the north side.
- A quiet residential street outside office hours but busy at the start and end of week days.

Character Area CA1 A: Cecily Hill - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telegraph poles and overhead wires • Signage and street clutter • Prominent bin storage at The Barracks • Street parking |
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Character Area CA1 B (previously CA1:2): The Barton – Key Characteristics and Features

- A quiet and rural part of the Conservation Area, located less than 500 metres from the town centre.
- A listed farmstead group (farmhouse, barns, cottages and dovecote), built mainly in a Cotswold vernacular style of mid- to late-17th century origins, with 18th and 19th century additions and alterations, viewed across an historic orchard with boundaries formed by mature parkland trees and hedge banks creating a strong sense of enclosure.

Character Area CA1 B: The Barton - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor condition and underuse of some estate buildings • Corrugated sheet roofs to barn extensions within the yard |
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- Declining numbers of orchard trees

Character Area CA1 C (2008 - CA1:3, 4 & 5): The Broad Ride, The Mansion & The Kennels – Key Characteristics and Features

- Almost all of this character area is within the registered park (see additional information on Cirencester Park). It is, however, hidden from the main road by mature trees, the substantial yew hedge and the high limestone rubble wall that begins at the main gates to the Mansion and continues all along the southern boundary; the wall lowers to mid-height west of the lodges.
- The entrances to the Park within this character area include the classically-inspired and massive gated entrance together with adjacent small 20th century lodge facing Silver Street and two 20th century gates and limestone piers enabling access from the old Tetbury Road.
- Two limestone ashlar piers mark the west end of the Conservation Area, beyond which, the grassland is managed less intensively. This marks a distinct change in character and as such, is an appropriate boundary for the Conservation Area.
- Key landscape features of the Park include:
 - the Broad Ride which is the main axis of the Park, leading towards Sapperton.
 - the avenue of mature limes along Windsor Walk.
 - the Ha-Ha and Fulham Bridge on Windsor Walk which separate pasture land from the more formal areas of the Park.
- The land has a gently undulating form, which creates subtle variations in views. Important views include:
 - the alignment of the Broad Ride and the parish church.
 - the alignment of the Queen Anne monument (to the south-west of the character area), the Mansion and the parish church.
 - views to and from the various follies and eyecatchers within the Park, such as the Hexagon.
 - views of the west elevation of the Mansion from Fulham Bridge on Windsor Walk.
- Other features of interest in the character area include the raised path along the old Tetbury Road, which is important visually and provides appropriate safety for pedestrians.

Character Area CA1 C: The Broad Ride, The Mansion and the Kennels - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Modern post and rail fencing
- Condition of some historic railings
- Condition of Ha-Ha and other stone walls
- Unsympathetic street furniture (galvanised railings on south raised walk)
- Poor condition and underuse of historic buildings (some estate buildings)
- Unsympathetic modern buildings

- Traffic noise
- Need for pre-emptive tree planting to replace older trees as they mature and die

5.2 The Gloucester Street & River Walk Conservation Area (CA2)

Summary

5.2.1 Gloucester Street forms the principal spine of the Conservation Area; its gently curving form combines with a near continuous building line created by properties built off the back edge of the narrow pavement, to form a long and particularly intimate urban space. There is a marked contrast between this and the wider areas of green open space, which surround it to the east and especially to the west and north. The open fields provide a tranquil context and semi-rural setting with banks of trees, providing a strong sense of enclosure and appropriate boundaries to the Conservation Area.

5.2.2 Barton Lane and Gooseacre Lane are more suburban in character and as such form a transition between the two character areas.

5.2.3 The Gloucester Street and River Walk Conservation Area is divided into two character areas.

Map 6. The Gloucester Street and River Walk Conservation Area (CA2) Character Areas (see Appendix 1)

Character Area CA2 A (2008 - CA2:1): Gloucester Street – Key Characteristics and Features

- A long narrow gently winding intimately-scaled urban space, which is defined by predominantly two- and three-storey almost continuous historic building frontages built off the back edge of the pavement on both sides with the occasional narrow front or side garden.
- Retention of a number of historic corridor mews or “places”, indicative of the network of former tradesmens’ and artisans’ premises located at the rear of dwellings facing onto Gloucester Street.
- A few other small spaces, mainly private gardens, punctuate the otherwise highly dense built form; examples include the garden in front of The Old House.
- This area has evolved since the medieval period and retains many good examples of the Cotswold vernacular style mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries.
- The southern end of the street contains a handful of buildings of more polite architectural style, most notably Powell’s School, and a few buildings with Georgian facades and classical proportions albeit with few overt architectural pretensions.
- Good examples of Arts and Crafts style, displaying many of the characteristic features of their more historic neighbours.
- Dominant use of limestone for frontages, flank walls and garden walls and for chimneys stacks but with brick often used for tall rear chimney stacks and occasionally for rear and side elevations.

- Predominantly limestone slate roofs with some Welsh slate and clay tile and significant numbers of chimneys.
- Generally rustic and simple properties typical of the Cotswold style of gabled elevations with moulded window and door surrounds, and small hipped or gabled roof dormers.
- Distinctive, small-scale features including several date stones, traditional door furniture, enamel street signs, hanging signs and elements of iron, including railings and gates, which combine to create added visual appeal and local distinctiveness.
- A number of modern buildings, which fit comfortably into their historic surroundings, mostly because of appropriate design, scale and massing, materials and detailing.
- The Parish Church provides a principal focal point and is a major landmark viewed from Gloucester Street and to a lesser extent, Barton Lane.
- A quiet residential street outside office hours due in part to a lack of through-traffic but becoming more vibrant during school term time. In addition to Powell's School, other uses include a hotel and, historically, public houses and shops.

Character Area CA2 A: Gloucester Street - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Telegraph poles and overhead wires
- Loss of rear boundary features to create parking
- Signage clutter

Character Area CA2 B (2008 - CA2.2): The River Walk – Key Characteristics and Features

- This area is mainly open fields and spaces, with some development around Barton Lane and on the main road.
- Barton Mill House whilst physically altered, together with the mill pond and associated bridges, is of historic interest.
- The outdoor public pool provides an unusual urban feature whilst its "Castle" backdrop is impressive.
- The character of the River Walk itself varies along its route. Thomas Street to Barton Lane - a tightly-enclosed urban space bordered by high walls with the Gunstall Brook flowing alongside before the views open up about half way along its length across pasture land; Barton Lane to Gloucester Street Bridge - open land bordered by tree banks with only occasional glimpses of buildings to the south and east; Gloucester Street Bridge to Spitalgate Lane - the Jack Gardner Memorial Garden, an urban park which provides a green barrier between the busy Abbey Way and residential areas. A number of weeping willow trees reinforce the waterside character.
- The fields used as pasture for horses, sheep and occasionally cattle, together with allotments and public gardens which surround Gloucester Street provide a peaceful and semi-rural retreat.

- All the green open spaces of the River Walk character area are important to the setting of both Gloucester Street and the town itself.
- Substantial belts of mature trees within the River Walk character area contrast with the small number of individual specimen trees in Gloucester Street.

Character Area CA2 B: The River Walk - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsympathetic modern buildings (fuel station canopy and signage) |
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5.3 Town Centre Conservation Area (CA3)

Summary

5.3.1 Located in the centre of Cirencester, this Conservation Area contains the majority of the oldest parts of the town and has a complex evolution and character. The Market Place and the adjacent Parish Church form the principle spaces both historically and now as the focus for social, religious and community activities.

5.3.2 For the most part, medieval streets of narrow width radiate in winding form from the Market Place. The contained linear spaces found here and the vibrancy of the commercial and retail activity is in marked contrast to the quieter open expanse of the Abbey Grounds, where Abbey House was located (demolished 1964).

5.3.3 There is a mix of uses, including residential properties and most of the town's small- to medium-sized retail and office premises, together with local institutions and community and religious facilities.

5.3.4 The Town Centre Conservation Area is divided into four character areas.

Map 7. The Town Centre Conservation Area (CA3) Character Areas (see Appendix 1)

Character Area CA3 A (2008 - CA3:1, 5 & 6): Town Core, The Forum & Sheep Street – Key Characteristics and Features

- A historically and architecturally rich area consisting of a varied mixture of smaller scaled spaces, of mostly enclosed character, and centred on the Market Place, with its spectacular parish church whose tall tower provides a landmark for the whole of Cirencester.
- The Character Area lies at the commercial core of the town and contains a vibrant mix of retail, commercial, residential, community and religious uses.
- Streets are mainly tightly defined by mostly two- and three-storey buildings built off the back edge of the pavement in long, narrow, medieval plots, set at right angles to the road, mingling with buildings of later periods whose wider dimensions indicate plot amalgamation.

- Cotswold stone is used for most elevations, both coursed rubble and in places smooth ashlar for facades; roofing materials are varied and include limestone slates, clay tile and Welsh slate, the whole creating a cohesive character.
- Use of brick for later buildings, and occasionally, the rear and side elevations of stone buildings, and most often for high side boundary walls.
- Wide range of spaces, including Market Place, The Forum, Brewery Court, the old station, shopping streets, narrow medieval routes, the churchyard, corridor mews and courtyards, all serving a variety of purposes ensuring active use of the area.
- Very good pedestrian permeability because of a network of corridors and pathways between buildings and streets, under buildings towards courtyards and mews, and through public / commercial buildings.
- Many properties retain side entrances and corridor “mews” known as “places” offering access to premises developed in long narrow plots; these spaces create visual interest whilst some provide access to small shopping and café facilities, for example, Swan Yard.
- The roughly triangular West Market Place was opened up following the demolition of several properties backing onto the north of the church and facing Black Jack and Gosditch Streets in the early 19th century. The result is an enclosed pedestrian space partly filled by an impressive mature Cedar tree.
- As the streets move away from their medieval alignment, closest to the Market Place, many widen out because of later redevelopment with more varying plot widths, although often with the buildings still set at the back of the pavement, e.g. Castle Street.
- There is a significant survival of timber-framed buildings especially in Market Place dating from the later 17th century and evidenced by shallow window reveals but often concealed by rendered facades.
- Use of revivalist and Arts and Crafts derived detailing in the later 19th and early 20th centuries including hood moulds, mullioned windows and oriel windows.
- A roofscape enlivened by the use of large numbers of gabled frontages interspersed with pitched roofs behind parapets and occasional pediments, together with tall chimney stacks and high level ornamentation including cornices encouraging views upwards and reinforcing the vertical emphasis of individual buildings and the townscape of the character area.
- Enrichments including doorcases, cornices and window architraves.
- A number of surviving, mostly nineteenth-century shop fronts, especially in Market Place, Castle Street and Black Jack Street, many retaining features such as ornate console brackets, fluted pilasters, turned glazing bars, iron ventilation grilles and subtle signage painted onto slim fascias, along with imaginative and ornate hanging signs.
- Both Cricklade and Dyer Streets contain several good historic shopfronts and some well-designed modern replacements, together with numerous hanging signs providing detail and variety to ground and first floors, although the southern section of Cricklade Street is gradually becoming residential due to change of use of ground floors.

- Views are dominated by the church tower, with that from the Forum north along South Way being especially important. Shorter views toward local focal points, most often found on corner plots with frontages on two or more elevations, and glimpsed views into corridor and courtyard mews.
- The Parish churchyard forms a tranquil, enclosed, green, rectilinear space contained by the tall rear elevations of premises fronting Market Place and a high limestone rubble wall marking the boundary with the Abbey Grounds.
- Some good traditional paving most notably to corridor mews, together with modern paving schemes such as that encircling the parish church and Market Place, and a handful of eye-catching elements of street furniture.
- Trees are not numerous but where they are found within the character area, they form an important element.
- Limestone rubble boundary walls, and some brick, form a distinctive element and are most important in enclosing gardens and various areas of domestic, commercial and public car parking especially where such areas have been created as a result of lost gardens, for example to the north of Dyer Street.
- Sheep Street is part of the main route for vehicular traffic into the town towards the Brewery Car Park. However, it retains some sense of enclosure at its northern end by a terrace of two-storey buildings on its east side, built off the back edge of the narrow pavement, and the raised tree-lined embankment on its west side, forming the boundary with the Sheep Street public car park. It then opens out with large detached buildings set back from the road frontage and within their own larger plots.
- The area either side of Hammond way is now dominated by large contemporary styled buildings providing both office and residential uses.
- Trees within the neighbouring Cirencester Park and the boundary wall along Tetbury Road are important features and add to the sense of enclosure.

Character Area CA3 A: Town Core - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsympathetic modern buildings and public realm (for example around the Brewery Car Park and South Way) • Unsympathetic shop fronts • Signage clutter and inappropriate street furniture in some places • Unsympathetic paving materials in some areas • Loss of original architectural features • Poor interpretation (for example of the Roman heritage) • Poor condition and underuse of some historic buildings |
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Character Area CA3 B (2008 - CA3:2): The Mead – Key Characteristics and Features

- A quiet, residential and leafy 1930s cul-de-sac of less than a dozen, mostly detached properties, set back from the roadside by small gardens extending to sides and rear.
- Two-storey houses with gables, predominantly of roughcast render with clay tile and some timber-framing, tall brick chimney stacks and timber doors and timber windows with leaded lights, which have only undergone minor changes since construction.
- Views towards the church tower to the south-east and glimpses between houses of the “Castle” are especially important.
- Predominantly low Cotswold limestone roadside walls with higher ones at the entrance to The Mead, are important in retaining front gardens and minimising the impact of parked vehicles.

Character Area CA3 B: The Mead - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of original architectural features • Unsympathetic modern buildings (prominent garage block) |
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Character Area CA3 C (2008 - CA3:3): Western Fringes – Key Characteristics and Features

- Streets are tightly defined by mostly two- to four-storey buildings, built off the back edge of the pavement, in long, narrow, medieval plots, set at right angles to the road, and mingling with buildings of later periods whose wider dimensions indicate plot amalgamation, normally in combination with road widening and occasional narrow front gardens bordered by low walls and/or iron railings.
- Thomas Street and Dollar Street are a little wider and incorporate some larger buildings sitting in generous plots and occasional narrow front gardens bordered by railings, the whole creating a contained but grander and less tunnel-like character than, for example, Black Jack Street and Coxwell Street.
- The 1970s development known as St Clements Walk wedged between Thomas Street, Coxwell Street and Dollar Street has a distinct identity and is notable for its lower building heights, limited density, open areas of garden and linking pathways.
- Park Street and Park Lane are distinguished by the high wall and high Mansion yew hedge and by the high wall and decorated roofscape of the Mansion stables.
- Good permeability allowing a range of pedestrian movement because of a network of corridors, such as St Clements Walk.
- A very varied and rich architectural mix, dating from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, but predominantly seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings, as well as some of the most historically and architecturally important buildings in the town, e.g. the Weaver’s Hall and The Woolgatherers.
- Survival of timber-framed buildings especially in Dollar Street, dating from the later seventeenth century, and evidenced by shallow window reveals but often concealed by rendered facades;

- Use of revivalist and Arts and Crafts derived detailing in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including hood moulds, mullioned windows, tall chimney stacks set at angles and oriel windows.
- Roofscape enlivened by tall chimney stacks, large numbers of gabled frontages interspersed with pitched roofs behind parapets and occasional pediments, creating a decidedly vertical emphasis to the street scene.
- A rich array of decorative architectural detail providing visual stimulus and a varied urban scene including some good timber shopfronts.
- Materials unite the various architectural styles, with consistent use of rubble limestone for early building elevations, flank walls, chimney stacks, and boundary walls, and the use of limestone slates for roofs creating a very cohesive character, with most later buildings marked by smooth ashlar limestone, or smooth render more suited to the architectural style of buildings of eighteenth century and later date, in combination with Welsh slate or clay tile, the whole providing a great variety in texture.
- Use of other natural materials including timber for windows, doors and shopfronts, in combination with cast and wrought iron, and significant numbers of limewashed elevations, but with brick limited largely to chimney stacks.
- Principal views towards the church tower, most notably from Dollar Street, with shorter linear views, most especially on the outer western route of the area marked by Park Lane, Park Street, Thomas Street, with corner buildings and those at T-junctions forming important focal points.
- Two important contained nodal spaces on the east of the character area - at the junction of Tetbury Road, Castle Street and Park Lane marking the western entrance into the town; and at the eastern entrance to Cirencester Park off Park Lane / Park Street.
- Hidden private gardens glimpsed through gaps in the street scene and occasionally between gables and above rooflines.
- Trees mostly restricted to private gardens and/or overhanging limestone boundary walls but occasionally of strategic importance in the street scene.
- Almost continuous building frontages are broken only by occasional gaps in the street occupied by small private gardens, bordered by high limestone walls, often in combination with limestone pillars.
- Some small areas of good floorscape, most notably in Park Lane, Silver Street, and Coxwell Street.
- For the most part a quiet, residential area, with some commercial and retail premises and several religious / community institutions.

Character Area CA3 C: Western Fringes - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of original architectural features • Unsympathetic paving materials |
|---|

- Unsympathetic modern buildings

Character Area CA3 D (2008 - CA3:4): Abbey Grounds – Key Characteristics and Features

- Hidden behind the church, the Abbey Grounds, a large open wedge-shaped expanse of urban parkland, forms a tranquil and informal, recreational facility incorporating the former Abbey fish pond, a children’s play area, a bandstand and large areas of mown grass used for a variety of informal games and leisure activities.
- There is good pedestrian access to the Abbey Grounds from a number of points. However, it is quite well hidden and to those unfamiliar with the area it appears as a surprising oasis within a short distance of the commercial core.
- The medieval gatehouse (the Norman Arch) provides a visual stimulus and a reminder of the history of the site.
- The visual impact of the public car park at the northwest corner of the character area is minimised by the surrounding trees.
- Additional visual interest is provided by features such as the fish pond / lake, the section of Roman wall and nearby stone bridge; the elegant route of winding pathways, and the extensive views across the grounds and especially from east to west towards the church tower.
- The trees in the grounds are attractive. They are effective and important in minimising the impacts of the adjacent dual carriageway.
- Benches of an attractive yet simple design are provided and the lighting within the Grounds is mostly of the mid-twentieth-century design with concrete columns and simple iron lamps of the Jubilee type.
- High limestone boundary walls surrounding the Abbey Grounds to the south provide texture, and a sense of containment and security.

Character Area CA3 D: Abbey Grounds - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Unsympathetic paving materials
- Unsympathetic modern buildings
- Poor interpretation (of Abbey Grounds and its history)
- Need for pre-emptive tree planting to replace older trees as they mature and die

5.4 Cirencester South Conservation Area (CA4)

Summary

5.4.1 The Conservation Area lies on fairly flat land, although it also includes two raised and curved banks - the City Bank, the remains of the Roman wall along the south eastern side, and the embankment of the former railway line across open land from the A419 to Prospect Place.

5.4.2 The Conservation Area contains development of mostly 19th and 20th century origin, which is predominantly quiet and residential in character with a few other uses including offices, shops, public houses and some recreational spaces. The open spaces within the Conservation Area are a key part of its character.

5.4.3 Cirencester South Conservation area is divided into 4 character areas.

Map 8. The Cirencester South Conservation Area (CA4) Character Areas (see Appendix 1)

Character Area CA4 A (2008 - CA4:1): Ashcroft – Key Characteristics and Features

- This area was developed in the latter part of the 19th century and is located south-west of the main historic centre of the town.
- Streets set within a regular grid pattern, comprising mostly two-bay, two- and three-storey terraced and semi-detached properties, set within regular rectangular plots, positioned back-to-back, with building lines set back from the pavement edge by small front gardens of narrow depth, and contained by low roadside walls, and undeveloped rear gardens.
- The character of the residential terraces is defined by the repetition of identical features such as timber doors and sash windows, and chimney stacks and pots, the whole giving a harmonious and cohesive character.
- Bay windows, mostly canted, and either with slate hipped roofs or parapet style, some with ornate pierced detail.
- Paired doorways with timber-framed panelled doors with square-headed or arched-headed fanlights over.
- Simple architectural detail, including dentilated eaves and cornices in contrasting brick, with occasional terracotta panels and carved capitals, polychrome detailing with contrasting materials to windows and door surrounds, and crested ridge tiles.
- Timber-boarding to gables and porches, and decorated timber bargeboards to some properties in St Peter's Road and a number of good traditional timber shopfronts.
- A mix of building materials is present, including red brick (some with contrasting cream brick dressings) and rock-faced or squared rubble limestone elevations with smooth ashlar limestone dressings; brick or stone chimney stacks; Welsh slate, Cotswold stone or red clay roof tiles.
- Gaps between each terrace or between semi-detached pairs allowing glimpses into rear gardens and/or to development beyond.
- A variety of boundary treatments, from low brick walls and iron railings, to low stone bases with iron railings, stone or brick walls with matching gate posts / pillars, and dense neatly-cut box hedging and/or topiary.
- Staffordshire Blue pavements, and/or engineering bricks to domestic pathways, bordered by blue clay/terracotta tiles in rope or chevron pattern.

- A predominantly residential character area but also incorporating two churches, a handful of shops, a surgery and a pharmacy.

Character Area CA4 A: Ashcroft - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Loss of original architectural features
- Signage clutter and unsympathetic street furniture
- Loss of boundary features

Character Area CA4 B (2008 - CA4:2): St Michael's – Key Characteristics and Features

- Contrasting with most other parts of the Conservation Area, the St Michael's character area has mostly larger, elegant detached buildings set within generous grounds and open recreation areas. The roads are mainly straight and lined with pavements. It has an attractive, green character.
- Good permeability with several pedestrian pathways through the area including the main pedestrian route on a north - south axis of St Michael's Park and the link from Trinity Road to Watermoor Road through the grounds of Holy Trinity Church.
- The almost wholesale use of Cotswold limestone, whether rubble, ashlar or rock-faced, to building elevations and boundary walls helps to bring together the varied building styles to create a harmonious character.
- Architectural detail including classical elements such as pediments and the use of iron for decorative pedestrian and vehicular gates and rainwater goods.
- Holy Trinity Church serves as an important local landmark.
- St Michaels Park is actively managed and provides formal recreational opportunities and is characterised by its rectilinear shape, high limestone boundary wall and planned planting.
- Several other areas of formal and informal recreational activity, e.g. the school.
- Large numbers of mature trees, which are important in screening and enhancing the built form. Some individual trees also form focal points.
- A wide range of uses including residential, most notably in Querns Lane; residential care homes education and commercial.

Character Area CA4 B: St. Michael's - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Loss of original architectural features
- Signage clutter and unsympathetic street furniture
- Loss of front boundary features
- Unsympathetic extensions
- Unsympathetic modern buildings

Character Area CA4 C (2008 - CA4:3, 4, 5 & 7): The Avenue – Key Characteristics and Features

- A densely-developed and compact character area, dissected by a grid of straight roads, lined with predominantly 19th century two- and three-storey terraced properties, interspersed with occasional individual and semi-detached buildings. Most properties are set back from the road edge by narrow front gardens and have relatively long and narrow plots.
- The area was constructed predominantly from the second half of the 19th century onwards, partly in response to a growing population and the arrival of the railways.
- Predominantly residential in nature, the character area also includes several shops, (including some corner shops now converted to residential), public houses and the Bingham Hall.
- Some properties built off the back edge of the pavement on long narrow plots most notably in Querns Lane and parts of Chester Street creating more intimate and tunnel-like road spaces.
- Containing mostly national architectural forms, often marked by simple classical proportion and restraint, but in most cases made distinctive through the use of local materials.
- Small-scale architectural detail and decoration to individual buildings throughout the character area.
- Some revivalist, and Arts and Crafts derived buildings including 4-14 Bowly's Cottages of 1924, on the west side of Watermoor Road, with mullioned casement windows and hood moulds.
- Residential terraces whose individual character is defined by the repetition of identical features such as timber doors and sash windows, chimney stacks and string courses giving a harmonious, rhythmical and cohesive character.
- Mostly simple pitched roofs but with occasional decorated timber gables to more ornate and/or historic revival style buildings.
- Extensive use of squared ashlar limestone, and/or rock-faced limestone for the most visible building elevations, with rubble for flank walls, chimney stacks, and boundary walls but interspersed with significant use of brick for some elevations, chimney stacks and boundary walls, together with Welsh slate and red clay tile for roofs.
- Significant views northwards towards Cirencester Parish Church from Watermoor Road and Tower Street.
- Views of the spire of Holy Trinity Church are a key focal point for the whole Conservation Area, including along Watermoor Road and across St Michael's Park.
- Watermoor House provides a key focal point, along with the remaining two chimneys of the former Malt House in Cricklade Street.
- Some trees within the built form, mostly to rear gardens and glimpsed between buildings. A few individual trees provide focal points in the street scene.
- Small green spaces within the dense built form include the small graveyard to the west of Watermoor Road and hidden areas of garden.
- A broad range of roadside boundary features often designed specifically as part of a terrace or a pair of properties, including iron railings on stone bases, rubble limestone walling with ashlar

dressings and limestone gate posts or dense cropped hedging, providing privacy and a sense of enclosure to the street scene.

- Older properties exhibit one- and two-storey single bay kitchen and bathroom extensions to rear elevations, often visible from side and rear boundaries.
- Domestically-scaled trees punctuate the pathways of the principle thoroughfare and provide additional interest, colour and shade whilst individual front gardens often incorporate colourful shrubs and/or dense hedging to form boundaries.
- A broad range of roadside boundary features, often designed specifically as part of a terrace or pair of properties, including iron railings on stone bases, rubble limestone walling with ashlar dressings and limestone gate posts, providing privacy and a sense of enclosure to the street scene.

Character Area CA4 C: The Avenue - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Unsympathetic extensions
- Loss of original architectural features
- Unsympathetic modern buildings
- Unsympathetic building materials (artificial stone)
- Poor interpretation (for example of Roman heritage at the entrance to St Michael's Park)
- Loss of front boundary features
- Signage clutter

Character Area CA4 D (2008 - CA4:6): Beeches & City Bank – Key Characteristics and Features

- A substantially green character area, with relatively few buildings, wedged between nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban development to the west, and the dual carriageway ring-road to the east, but successfully screened from the latter by a dense bank of mature trees.
- Local limestone predominates for building elevations, chimney stacks and boundary walls whilst the one brick terrace coupled with several brick chimneys and boundary walls, and parts of the former railway line, add colour and variety to the various architectural forms with roofs of either Cotswold limestone or Welsh slate.
- Views are an especially important feature and include views across open land, along pedestrian routes, and limited views towards Cirencester Parish Church to the northwest, just glimpsed from the raised City Bank, and also towards the spire of Holy Trinity Church to the west.
- Dissected lengthways by two divergent branches of the River Churn the area contains two large public recreation grounds.
- There are allotment gardens, including to the south of the curving railway.
- Trees play a vital role in the character area, not just in screening it from the busy ring-road, but in providing colour, texture, shade and visual interest throughout the area.

- Boundary walls, built predominantly of limestone rubble, make an important contribution in defining and containing spaces, ensuring a sense of enclosure and demarcating private and public spaces.
- The Character Area is predominantly residential, but also supports other uses, such as the Barn Theatre.

Character Area CA4 D: Beeches and City Bank - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsympathetic domestic extensions • Loss of original architectural features |
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6. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS – POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES/SITES (INCLUDING HERITAGE ASSETS)

6.1 There are many Listed Buildings within the Conservation Areas as well as a number of unlisted buildings, structures and sites with historic significance (non-designated heritage assets) that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas. Examples of these non-designated heritage assets include the Marlborough Arms and adjacent terrace; the Bingham Hall and adjacent housing; and brick-built terraces such as Ashcroft Gardens.

A **non-designated heritage asset** is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which does not meet the criteria for a designated heritage asset. This significance (heritage interest) may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Planning Practice Guidance: Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723

6.2 Work is currently underway as part of the Local Heritage project, in partnership with the Cirencester Civic Society and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Planning Group to undertake a comprehensive review of the non-designated heritage assets in Cirencester, including within the Conservation Areas. It is anticipated that the non-designated heritage assets will be identified within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Map 9. Listed buildings and structures (see Appendix 1)

6.3 There are also other buildings in the Conservation Areas that, although not historic in nature, still contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Areas, for example Mill Place, Barton Lane.

6.4 Unfortunately there are also buildings, structures and sites that have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas, in terms of their design quality. Nearly all of these buildings and open spaces date from the mid to later 20th century and are usually associated with poorly designed areas of the public realm from the same period. Those in the town centre are illustrated on map 10. These negative buildings and open spaces are focused on three major car park areas – the Waterloo, the Forum and the Brewery and form an almost continuous east-west swathe across the centre of the town.

Map 10. Key areas of negative buildings and public realm (see Appendix 1)

Positive and Negative Buildings/Structures/Sites - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Well-planned and strategic regeneration would enhance the appearance and character of the areas of low quality buildings and public realm in the town centre and help to respond to the current and future needs of town.
- Individual negative buildings should be addressed through improved management and careful re-development.

- New developments should draw on the character of existing positive buildings/structures (both historic and contemporary) to achieve sympathetic design in line with the Cotswold Design Code and other relevant guidance.

7. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: KEY VIEWS, LANDMARKS AND FOCAL POINTS

7.1 Views into and out of the Conservation areas are an especially important characteristic feature of Cirencester's historic core and the registered park. Given the close association of the four Conservation Areas, key views, landmarks and focal points have been analysed jointly for all the Conservation Areas.

Main Characteristics

- There are a number of key designed views within and from the registered park, for example, the views along the Broad Ride or from Queen Anne's monument to the Mansion and the church.
- Many of the important views in the town, both designed and accidental are towards the tower of the parish church, for example, from the Old Tetbury Road or Gloucester Street. Of particular significance is the long view from St Michael's Park aligned with Tower Street and South Way to the church tower (the old Roman road route) – the mid-20th century police station, with its horizontal emphasis, does not enhance this important view.
- Other taller buildings and features also act as important focal points, for example, the tall brick chimneys of Victorian terraced houses to the west of Gloucester Street as viewed from the River Walk; the two remaining chimneys of the former Malthouse in Cricklade Street; and the Holy Trinity Church spire.
- Important buildings, often on corners or seen as terminations of streets, act as focal points within the built up area of the town, for example, the former Museum of Antiquities forms a focal point at the north end of Castle Street; Powell's School at the near end of Gloucester Street; and Lloyds Bank at the corner of Castle Street and Silver Street.
- Small glimpsed views through narrow gaps add character and depth to the conservation areas, for example, the narrow corridor views into and out of semi-public mews or "places" along Gloucester Street or Black Jack Street; or to rear gardens along Barton Lane, Spitalgate Lane and Gooseacre Lane.
- Views out of the Conservation Areas also provide character and interest, for example, from the Gloucester Street Bridge towards the Bowling Green estate.
- Areas of open space permeate into the town and the Conservation Areas and views across these open spaces give a rural and open context to the town centre, for example, views out across pasture land from the most northerly sections of the River Walk and across pasture land from the entrance to the Outdoor Swimming Pool; or from high ground on the City Bank walk and along the former railway line.

Map 11. Key views, landmarks and focal points (see Appendix 1)

Key Views, Landmarks and Focal Points - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views of the tower of the parish church along Tower Street and South Way are abruptly curtailed by the now redundant 20th century police station. If the police station site is to be |
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redeveloped then forthcoming proposals should improve the visual experience of this important landmark from this position.

- Opportunities should be taken within new developments to create new focal points and landmarks, but in a way that does not detract from the historic focal points and landmarks of Cirencester.

8. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: PUBLIC REALM; GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACES

8.1 The character of the Conservation Areas in Cirencester is not just related to the buildings but also to the spaces (both public and private) between and around them. The type and variety of spaces, the ways in which they interrelate and the connections between them form a very important part of the character of each Conservation Area and are included in the list of key characteristics for each character area within the individual Conservation Area appraisal sections. However, as many of these “spaces” lie on or across the boundaries of the four Cirencester Conservation Areas this section covers all four Conservation Areas. Many of the open spaces also link up with other open spaces outside the Conservation Areas and to the countryside, all of which add to their value in contributing to the character of the Conservation Areas, as well as other benefits such as wildlife linkages, footpaths, etc. For example, the Abbey Grounds links visually across the main road to the open countryside beyond.

8.2 Additional work on green infrastructure, open spaces and public realm in Cirencester has already been undertaken and further work is in progress. It is not the intention of this document to repeat that work. Good examples of this include the Cirencester Town Centre Public Realm Design Code 2017⁴, prepared by Cirencester Town Council, which promotes and guides the improvement of the public realm across the town, the Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy⁵ (in draft) and the Cirencester Green Spaces Strategy⁶ (2011). Further work is also underway as part of the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan⁷ process.

8.3 The open spaces in the town range in scale from the very extensive Cirencester Park and Abbey Grounds to small rear gardens, courtyards and alleyways. They may be very green in character, such as the traditional St. Michael’s Park or areas devoid of vegetation such as the Market Place. These areas of both green and “grey” space can be clearly seen on the aerial view of Cirencester.

Map 12. Aerial photograph of Cirencester (see Appendix 1)

8.4 Many of the open spaces that are accessible to the public are hidden away (for example, it can be difficult to find a way into the Abbey Grounds or Cirencester Park for those unfamiliar with the town). This secluded character is part of the charm and character of these spaces. However, there are opportunities to improve signage and interpretation to ensure that public open spaces are available to all.

8.5 Cirencester has many small open spaces, such as gardens and courtyards, many of which are private that contribute to the character of the Conservation Areas. These small oases of green, with vegetation visible over walls and fences can be very important in areas of the town where there are few trees and little planting in the public realm, as they provide a soft green foil to the built environment.

⁴

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/563789b6e4b03c7ded1a9ff2/t/591981723e00be506919c13a/1494843896685/Cirencester+Town+Centre+Design+Code+2017.pdf>

⁵ Add web reference when available

⁶

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/563789b6e4b03c7ded1a9ff2/t/5937cc1ebe659441f72dac2c/1496828969402/Green+Spaces+Strategy+%282%29.pdf>

⁷ <https://cirencesternp.org/>

8.6 The open spaces and areas of green infrastructure perform a multitude of functions from recreation (e.g. St Michaels Park), sport (e.g. bowling green at Brewery Court), biodiversity (e.g. City Banks Local Nature Reserve) and water management (e.g. River Churn) – and indeed many of the spaces deliver a wide range of benefits. In addition they also have an aesthetic value in their contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.

Public Realm; Green Infrastructure And Open Spaces - Opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed

- Public realm improvements undertaken in the 2000s (CTEP) and more recently (in the Market Place) should be extended to enhance the character and appearance of other parts of the Conservation Areas.
- There is a lack of vegetation and trees in some parts of the town and further planting, including within private gardens, would provide many benefits, although tree planting can be challenging given the rich below ground archaeology.
- Need to ensure pre-emptive tree planting to replace older trees as they mature and die.
- Some areas of open space are blighted by poor design and management, for example, litter, bin storage and general neglect.
- Some public open spaces are difficult to find and signage could be improved.
- Linkages between open spaces and with other parts of the town and the wider countryside could be improved.
- There is a central core of areas of public realm, particularly related to car parks and service yards which are found in conjunction with modern buildings of poor design quality. These areas of negative public realm and buildings should be addressed in a comprehensive fashion through the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre master-planning.
- Opportunities should be taken to enhance areas of open space to maximise the multiple benefits that they deliver – for example, by considering the role that public open spaces might have in water management or creating new wildlife habitats.

9. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: CHANGES IN CHARACTER (SINCE 2008)

9.1 The Conservation Areas in Cirencester are generally in good condition with many high quality buildings and well-managed open spaces. No requirement to change the existing boundaries of the four Conservation Areas was identified within the review.

9.2 Since the last appraisal in 2008 there have been some changes. There has been an isolated dynamic shift in scale, mass and architectural style either side of Hammonds Way creating an enclave of large contemporary styled buildings. There have been many smaller infill developments, mostly in a sympathetic style and often replacing unsightly or neutral buildings, for example, in Querns Lane and Lewis Lane. Retail use along Cricklade Street is retreating north due to conversion of ground floors to residential use.

9.3 Several previously derelict historic buildings have now been restored and scrap cars have been removed from one of the areas around The Mill, south of The Beeches.

9.4 There have been some initiatives to improve interpretation and facilities within public green spaces, which have made a positive difference, for example along the River Churn.

9.5 Beyond the Conservation Areas the town is expanding substantially with further expansion yet to come, particularly to the south with the Chesterton Farm development (The Steadings). These developments and the increased population of the town may impact on the character of the Conservation Areas in the future, for example through changes in traffic management and increased footfall in the town centre.

10. ALL CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

9.1 In order to ensure the continuing high quality of the four Conservation Areas in Cirencester, a series of management proposals for the Conservation Areas have been developed. The proposals relate to issues:

- identified in the appraisals, for example within the “opportunities for enhancement or issues to be addressed” provided for each character area.
- highlighted through other initiatives, for example the preparation of the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan and the production of the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan, the Cirencester Town Centre Health Check (2018) and the Park Community Group Place Check (2018).
- anticipated as part of the way that the use of town centres and market towns is changing, such as the move away from “bricks and mortar” retail and the increasing leisure offer.
- that have arisen as part of the fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic.

9.2 The management proposals address a range of factors; some are minor but cumulative such as street clutter or buildings in need of repair and can be addressed through individual initiatives. However, there are some more fundamental issues regarding negative buildings and public realm, which would benefit from a holistic approach as part of a strategic regeneration scheme.

9.3 The ways in which the issues and sites identified in the Management Proposals are and will be resolved are under-pinned by a range of local and national policy and guidance documents, day to day processes and initiatives, for example the Local Plan (including the Cotswold Design Code) and the Local Transport Plan or at a national level the National Planning Policy Framework and the government’s town centre initiatives.

The Cotswold Design Code

The Code forms part (appendix D) of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 and is relevant to a number of local plan policies, in particular policies EN2 (Design of the built and natural environment) and INF7 (Green Infrastructure). The Code covers all aspects of design including architectural, landscape, ecological and sustainable design. It is relevant to a wide range of development, from householder extensions and alterations to conversions, major residential schemes and large-scale commercial proposals. The Code provides detailed guidance on how to achieve high quality development, be it in the Cotswold vernacular or a contemporary style that establishes a strong sense of place and responds to local character and distinctiveness. It is likely that the Code will be revised as part of the ongoing partial update of the Local Plan.

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2011-2031/>

9.4 Delivering the actions in these management proposals will require a wide range of stakeholders and partners, from individual householders and major landowners (for example Bathurst Estate and Cotswold District Council) to local government (at all levels – Town, District and County), businesses, the voluntary sector and the wider community, often working in partnership.

9.5 Some of the actions are high level and strategic and will require considerable input from all tiers of government as well as businesses and property owners, for example in addressing negative buildings in the town centre but there are also many actions that can be delivered through

community or individual action, such as clearing up unsightly rubbish and ensuring that property repairs are undertaken sensitively.

KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
Redevelopment of the town centre	As part of the Cirencester masterplan project and other initiatives, several key sites in the town centre are likely to come forward for re-development over the next 2-10 years. This is the opportunity to deliver high quality development in Cirencester, which is more in character with the Conservation Areas, be it traditional or contemporary in style.	E.g. Waterloo Car Park, The Forum area, The Brewery Car Park area – these form an east/west axis across the town centre.	Comprehensive planning for the future of the town centre.	Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP); Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; Grant bids; and Council land ownership.
Unsympathetic modern buildings	Unsympathetic modern building designs, which are incongruous or discordant within the context of the existing historic environment. Such buildings may be monolithic, in terms of scale and mass, unattractive or lack active frontages or impede pedestrian interconnectivity.	Most prominent in the town centre of town, e.g. larger commercial buildings such as Tesco, the precinct on Dyer Street and Argos.	Strategic regeneration of the town and ad hoc developments should include the removal of or improvements to key unsympathetic modern buildings (see above) Encourage innovative contemporary architecture that respects the character of the town.	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; (design code); and Grant bids
Unsympathetic building materials (e.g. artificial stone)	Many mid-later 20 th Century buildings used poor quality artificial stone products as a cheaper and more adaptable alternative to natural stone. However, this type of material has not proven to be suitable or appropriate in sensitive historic settings.	Present in most areas, most prominent on some of the larger late commercial buildings within the centre such as Tesco and Argos.	Strategic regeneration of the town and ad hoc developments should include improvements to existing buildings to reflect the character of the town.	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; and Grant bids.
Poor public realm in the town centre	Areas of public space which are unwelcoming, unattractive or impractical due to factors such as	The passage from the Waterloo to Dyer Street adjacent to Argos.	Strategic regeneration of the town and ad hoc developments should include improvements to the public realm,	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management;

KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
	poorly designed hard landscaping, traffic dominance, lack of seating, lighting, surveillance or active frontages.	The area around the Brewery Car Park. The passage between The Forum and Dyer Street.	following the guidance provided by the Town Council.	Grant bids; and More projects like the Market Place.
Public realm features in Cirencester Park are in need of improvement, e.g. seating, historic structures	Cirencester Park is very popular with local residents and visitors and there is great scope to improve its appearance and the facilities, e.g. seating that it provides.	Cirencester Park	On an ad hoc basis and through a co-ordinated approach to the long-term use of the Park. Implementation of the Cirencester Park Management Plan.	Planning proposals; Grant bids; As part of the future masterplanning of the Park; and Bathurst Estate initiatives.
Unsympathetic and poorly maintained or altered paving materials	Poor quality floorscape and surfacing. E.g. use of inappropriate modern materials such as concrete dogtooth paving. Other areas have been subject to successive excavations and reinstatements resulting in an unsightly patchwork of surfacing.	Paving in front of St John's Hospital. Brewery Car park and surrounding area.	New or repaired paving materials should be appropriately specified to fit with the historic character of the town, as well as to meet other requirements such as disabled access. Ensure that statutory undertakers, installing new or improved services are clear that new paving and repairs to paving should be of the highest quality.	Development management; Highways improvements; Extensions to the Market Place project and CTEP; Strategic regeneration Contact with all relevant statutory undertakers and their contractors; and Town Council public realm guidance.
Unsympathetic or inadequate street furniture	Inappropriate, poor quality or inadequate public seating, railings and bollards etc. within historic settings.	Lack of adequate or inspiring seating within St Michael's Park. Inappropriate galvanised railings on Park Road.	New street furniture should be designed to fit the character of the town and meet the guidance in the CTC public realm guide.	Development management; Highways improvements; Extensions to the Market Place project; Strategic regeneration; Cirencester open / green spaces strategy initiatives; and Grant bids.
Management of trees within the public realm	Many trees are approaching the end of their useful life and re-planting can be a challenge given the archaeological constraints.	Throughout the Conservation Areas	Effective re-planting strategies and practices.	Determination of tree applications and notifications;

KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
			Encouragement of appropriate tree planting and management in private gardens.	Cirencester green/open spaces initiatives; Work by the Bathurst Estate to enhance the Park; Communications with property owners in the town; and Liaison with Historic England.
Lack of interpretation	There are opportunities to provide further good signage and interpretation of local historic and ecological features, and to improve the existing provision.	Lack of signage in the Abbey Grounds. General lack of interpretation of Roman features.	Provide more interpretation about the town and its historic and natural environment, though the use of trails (e.g. Hare trail); web information; social media etc.	Work by the Bathurst Estate to enhance the Park; Ongoing initiatives such as the Hare Trail; and Local interpretation by the Corinium Museum.
Lack of visibility or public understanding of the underlying archaeology and historic development of the town, particularly from the Roman period.	Currently there is little interpretation or indication of the importance of the archaeology and history of the town visible at street level, improving this would enhance the “sense of place” of Cirencester.	The Forum Car Park.	Design new developments and initiatives so that they better reveal the underlying archaeology and street pattern for example by creating new (pedestrian) routes that follow the Roman street pattern.	Development management; Highways improvements; Strategic regeneration; Cirencester open / green spaces strategy initiatives; Grant bids; and Local interpretation by the Corinium Museum.
Signage clutter	An accumulation of street signage which can be poorly designed, unnecessarily repetitive, unauthorised or no longer relevant.	The area around the Beeches Car Park. Brewery Car Park area.	Removal of excessive signage, including that mounted on poles and buildings and temporary signage (sometimes ground-based, such as A boards).	Work with businesses to develop an understanding of how they can most effectively use signage to promote themselves; and Planning Enforcement
Loss of or poorly designed boundary features	Poorly designed or repaired boundary features, especially walls and/or loss of traditional boundary features	Cirencester Park Walls along River Walk Removal of front boundaries in Victoria Road or rear boundaries in	Work with property owners to promote the repair, retention and installation of appropriately designed boundary features.	Work by the Bathurst Estate to enhance the Park; Development management; and

KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
		Gloucester Street to provide off-street parking	Consideration of the use of Article 4 directions.	Communications with property owners in the town.
Traffic Dominance	Over dominance of traffic (including excessive traffic noise and potential damage to sensitive buildings and structures from large and heavy vehicles)	The Kennels Cecily Hill	Re-direct traffic away from sensitive areas of the town. Provision of alternatives to travelling by car. The move to electric cars may affect the perception of traffic impacts in the future.	Development management; Highways improvements; Strategic regeneration; and Public transport and cycleway/footpath initiatives.
Parking	Parked cars can detrimentally impact on the historic character of the street scene.	Cecily Hill	Ensure that on-street parking is limited in the most sensitive parts of the town. Ensure that the parking provided with commercial and residential properties does not impact on historic buildings or street scenes.	Development management; Highways improvements; Strategic regeneration; Planning enforcement; Parking enforcement; and Public transport and cycleway/footpath initiatives.
Requirement for electric car charging points.	Over the next ten years the ownership of electric cars will increase and there will be a greater need for car charging points.		Ensuring that these points are located in the most suitable locations	Development management; Public realm projects; Strategic re-development; and Car park design.
Dominance of refuse bins	Rubbish and bins stored inappropriately	At the rear of many commercial premises which are within or clearly visible from the public realm.	Encourage the provision of better designed refuse bins and areas. Remove refuse bins from sensitive locations – both on public and private properties.	Development management; Public realm projects; Strategic re-development; and Communications with property owners in the town.
Unsympathetic power and communications	Overhead wires can appear prominent and incongruous in areas, which possess a strong	Cecily Hill and Gooseacre Lane.	Encourage the removal of existing overhead wires and poles in sensitive	Work with statutory undertakers; and Development Management.

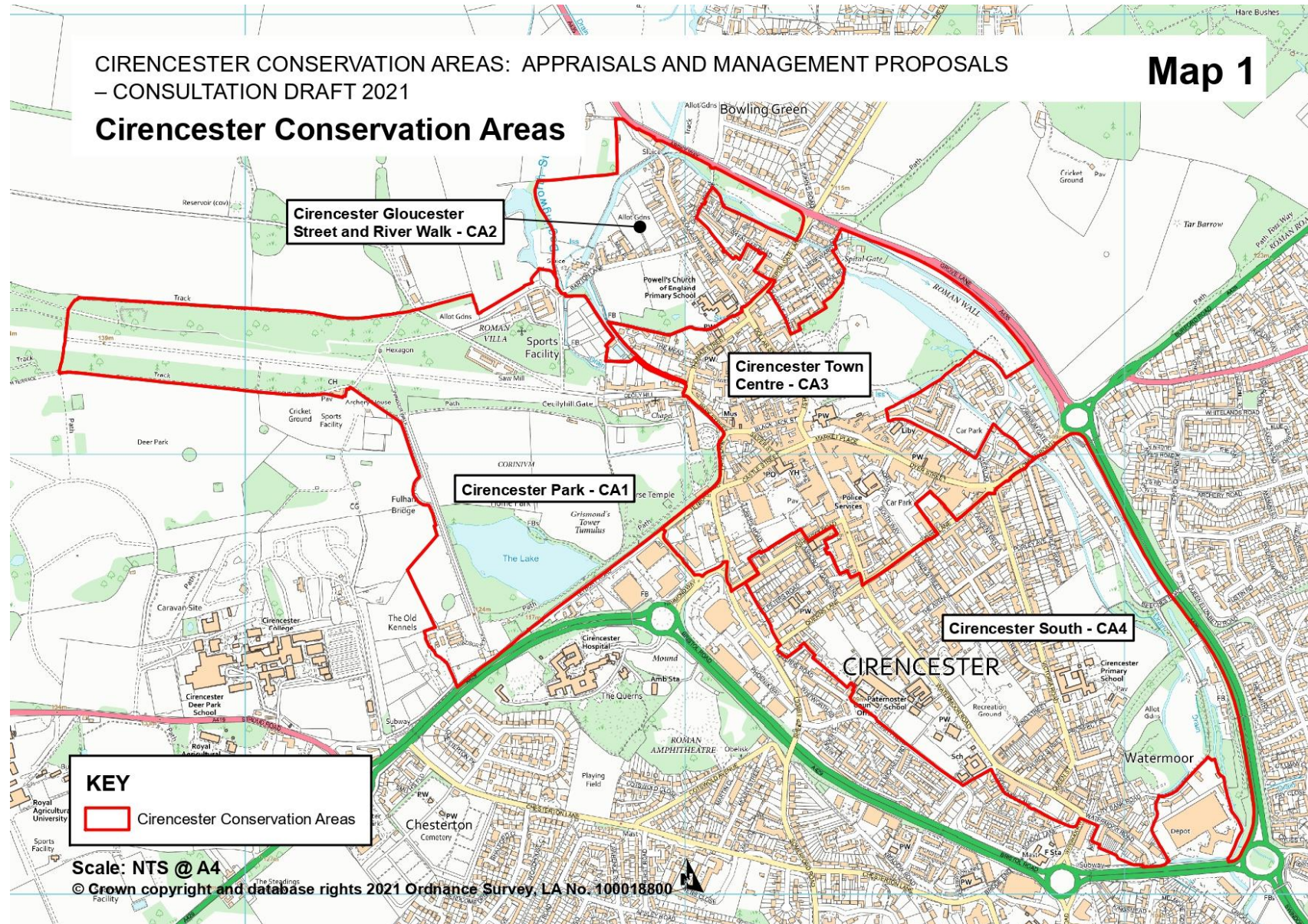
KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
poles and overhead wires	influence from the 18 th Century and earlier, or form part of a vista.		locations and ensure that new ones are not installed	
Poor condition and underuse of some historic buildings	Buildings or upper floors where there is persistent underutilisation, vacancy or lack of maintenance.	Dollar House Old railway station Various retail premises	Work with property owners to ensure better use and maintenance. Consider the preparation of guidance on the use of retail buildings for non-retail use.	Work by the Bathurst Estate to enhance the Park; Communications with property owners in the town; and Development management Strategic re-development.
Poorly altered or extended historic buildings, e.g. loss of original architectural features; loss of render.	Some historic buildings (both designated or non-designated) have been subject to change in the past that has not respected the historic character of the building, this in turn impacts negatively on the character of the Conservation Areas.	Loss of render on some classical buildings (for example Cecily Hill.) Poor replacement windows and doors, for example in 19 th and early 20 th terraces such as in Ashcroft Road and Purley Road.	Consideration of the use of Article 4 Directions to prevent inappropriate change to non-designated heritage assets. Encourage property owners to undertake sympathetic alterations to their historic buildings and to reverse the unsympathetic alterations of the past, for example through pre-application advice. Use of the Cotswold Design Code	Development management; Strategic re-development; and Communications with property owners in the town.
Lack of information on non-designated heritage assets	There is currently no comprehensive list of non-designated heritage assets in Cirencester.		Complete the preparation of a list of non-designated heritage assets, as part of the Local Heritage Project.	Partnership between the Local Heritage project (CDC-based); the Cirencester Civic Society and the NDP.
Unsympathetic extensions to non-historic buildings	Extensions to domestic or commercial buildings, which are unsympathetic to the character of the host building and the locality due to form, scale, detail or materials.	Present in all areas.	Encourage property owners to undertake sympathetic alterations and to reverse the unsympathetic alterations of the past, for example through pre-application advice. Use of the Cotswold Design Code.	Development management; Strategic re-development; and Communications with property owners in the town.
Unsympathetic shop fronts	Additions and alterations to or replacement of historic shop fronts in a manner that is	Various examples mostly in Dyer Street, Cricklade Street and some in Castle Street.	Development management (Design Code)	Development management; Strategic re-development;

KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
	discordant to the historic character of the locality.		Consideration of the use of Article 4 Directions to prevent unacceptable change to non-designated heritage assets.	Communications with property owners in the town; and Prepare specific guidance on shop conversions.
Change of use of shops to other uses	As town centre uses change from retail shops are likely to be converted to other uses, which can impact on the character of the area.		Ensure that changes are made sympathetically, respecting the character of the original building and its history.	Prepare specific guidance on shop conversions; Development management; and Strategic re-development.
Loss of or degradation of key views	There are key views in the town, e.g. of the church, that have or may become degraded by new development.	Views from Tower Street towards the church are negatively affected by mid-20th century buildings.	Ensure that these are considered within future regeneration and planning applications.	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; and Grant bids.
Climate change – adaptation	Climate change is likely to lead to more extremes in weather with increased temperatures, rainfall and potentially flooding. These could lead to demands for more air conditioning; flood alleviation schemes etc.		Need to consider climate change adaptation in new developments – orientation, natural cooling etc. Consideration should be given to how older buildings may require larger or better maintained rainwater goods to deal with increased runoff etc.	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; and Grant bids.
Climate change – mitigation	Changes will need to be made to decrease greenhouse gas emissions to try and slow down climate change.		New developments (and alterations to older buildings) should, where appropriate maximise the opportunities for lowering energy usage (e.g. insulation) and generating energy (e.g. heat pumps) Ensure new developments and other initiatives minimise the need for car borne journeys.	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; and Grant bids.
Ecological Emergency and nature recovery	Opportunities exist within both the built environment and in open	Cirencester Park; Abbey Grounds;	Cirencester Park Management Plan	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan;

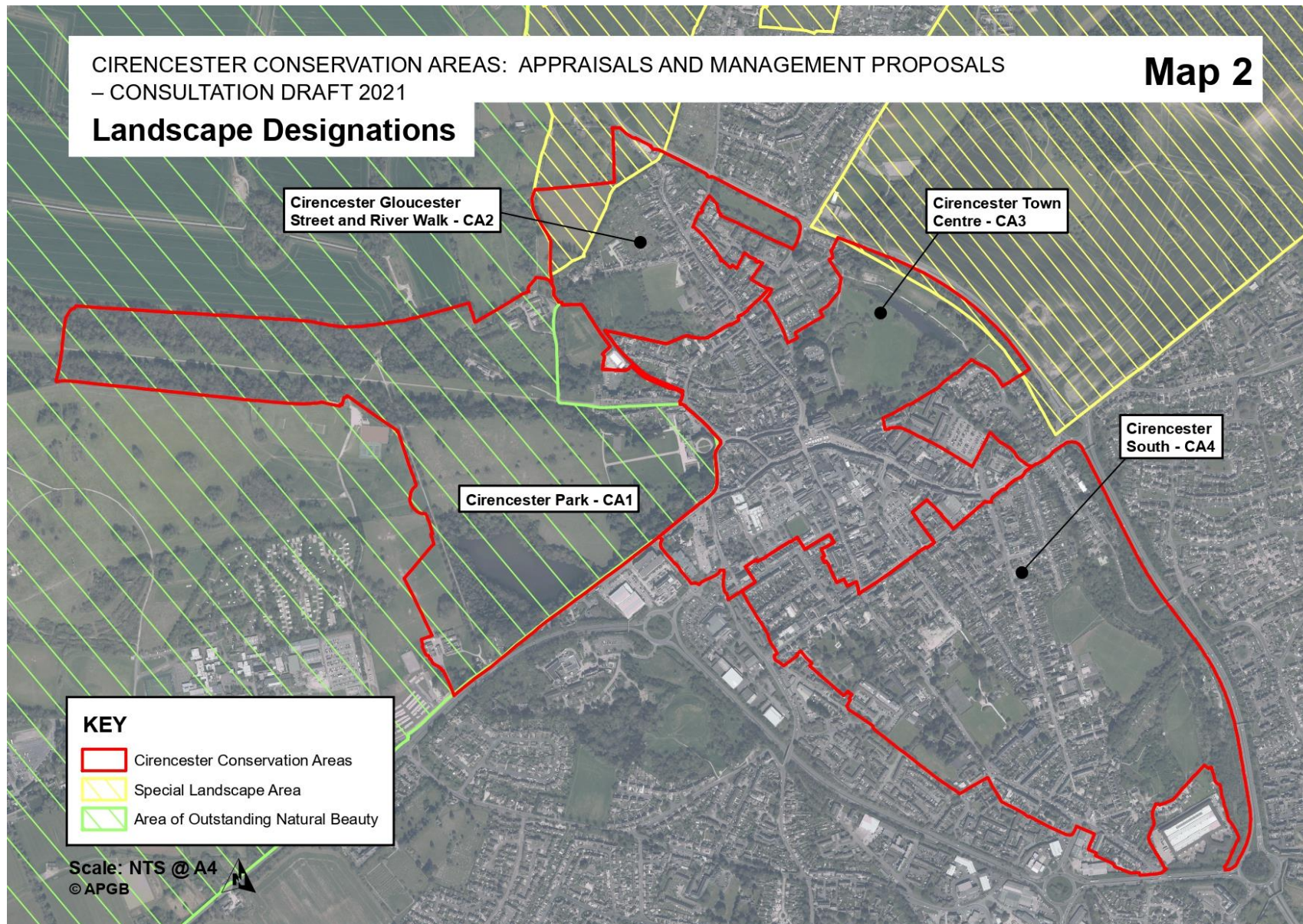
KEY ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXPLANATION	SITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, WHERE APPROPRIATE (THESE ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT A FULL LIST)	HOW WILL THIS BE ADDRESSED	DELIVERY MECHANISMS
	spaces to improve their value for wildlife, while maintaining and enhancing the character of the CAs.	St Michael's Park; and City Bank.	Wild Towns project (co-ordinated by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust).	Development Management; Grant bids; Voluntary action; and Landowner input, including the District and Town Councils.
COVID-19 pandemic	The pandemic has led to both short-term and potentially long-term changes to work (more working at home) and retail patterns. It is not yet clear what the long-term impacts will be on the CAs – loss of shops or change in the types of shop, more residential uses, etc.?		The implications of the changes brought about by the pandemic will continue to form part of strategic planning for the town, including its historic environment.	NDP; Town Centre Masterplan; Development Management; Grant bids; and Local Plan partial update.

Appendix 1 – Maps

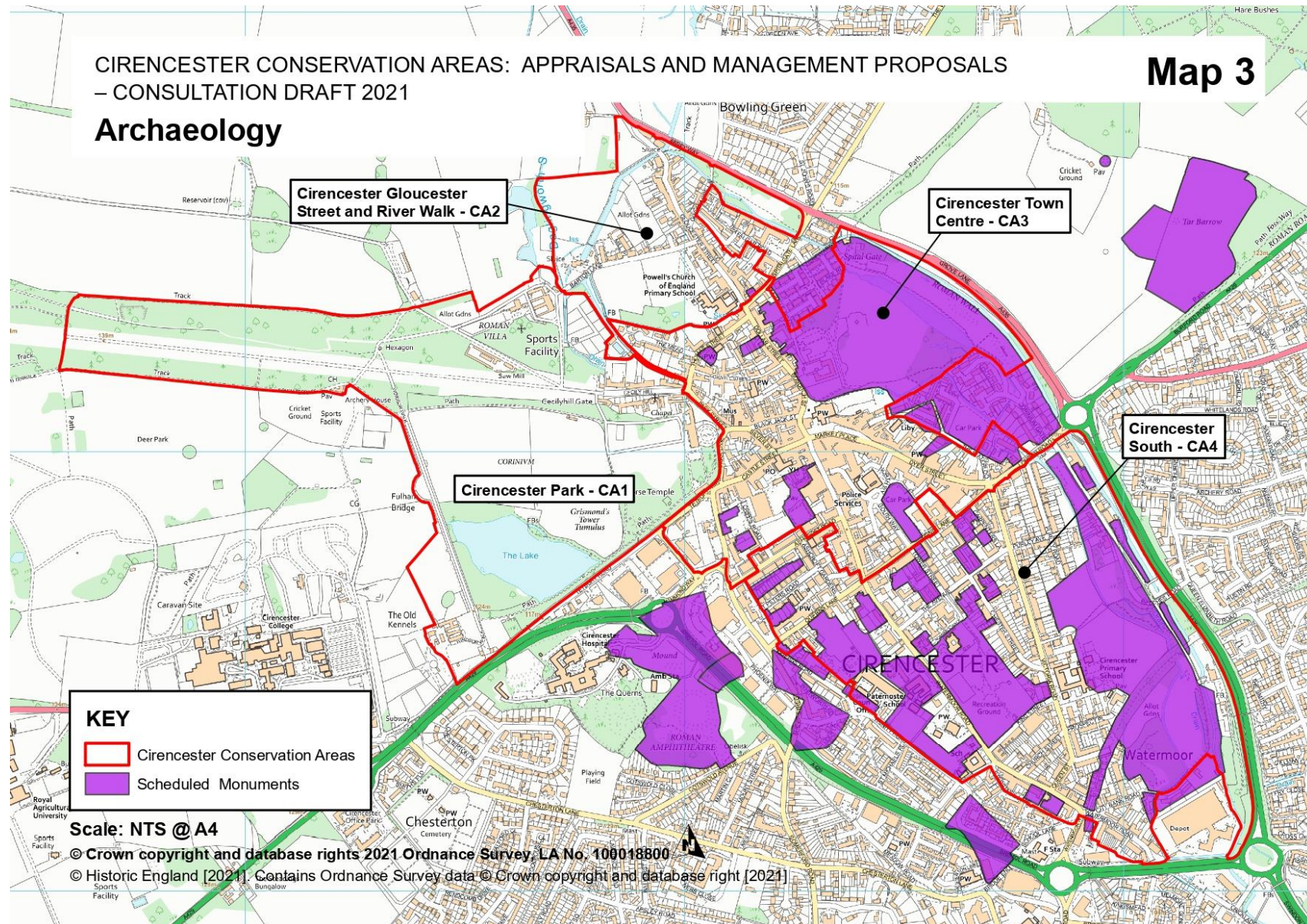
Map 1. Cirencester Conservation Areas



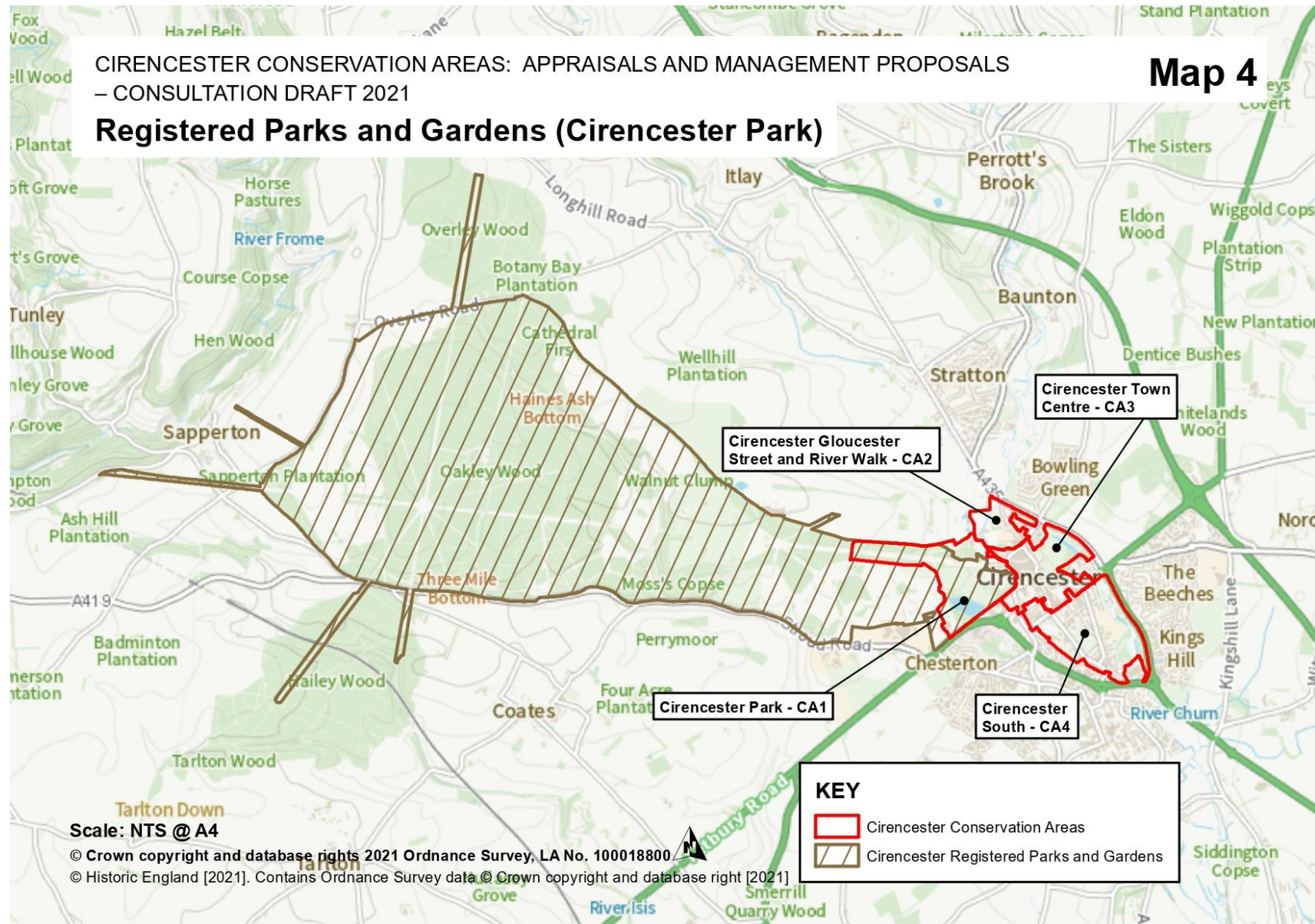
Map 2. Landscape Designations



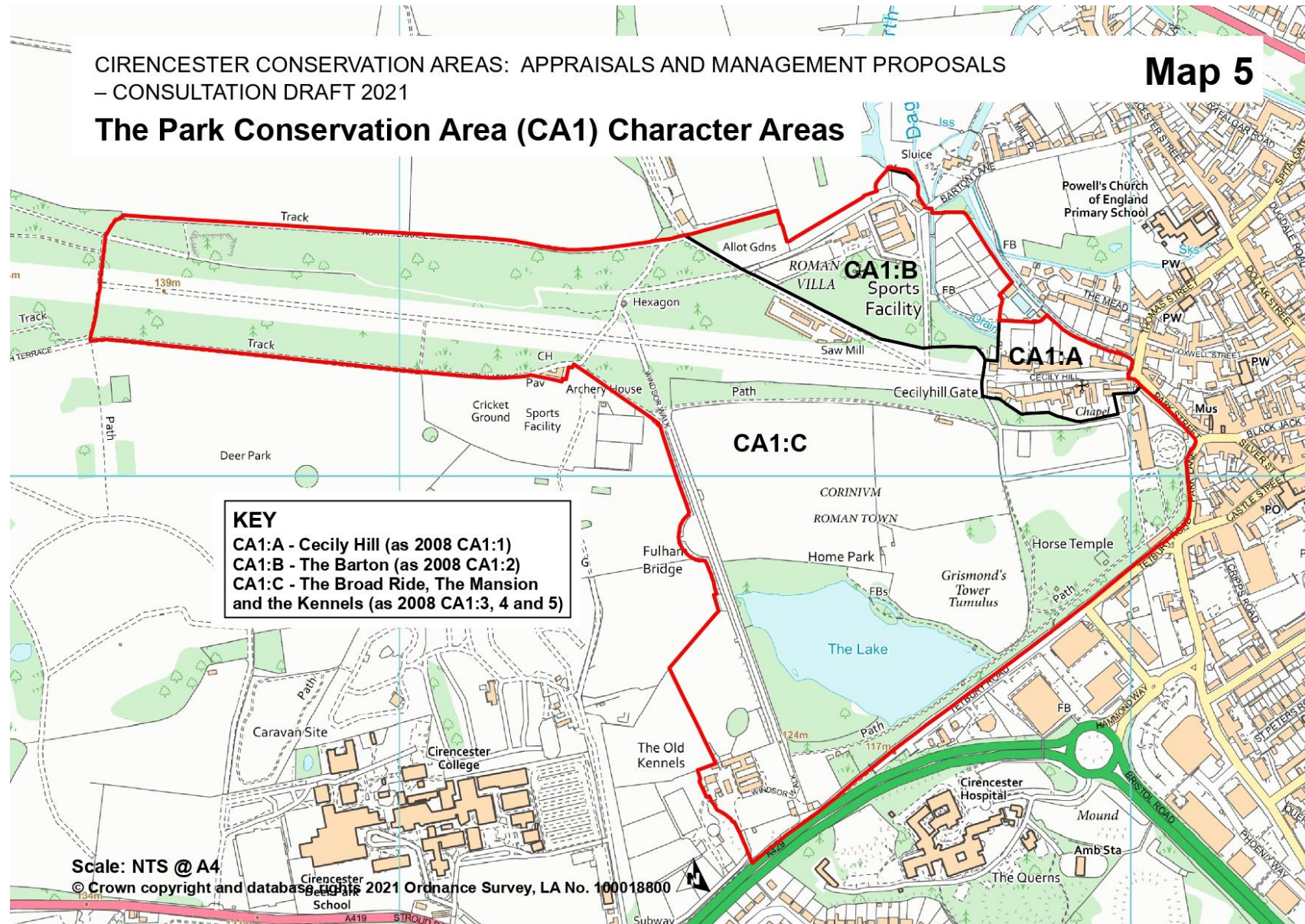
Map 3. Archaeology



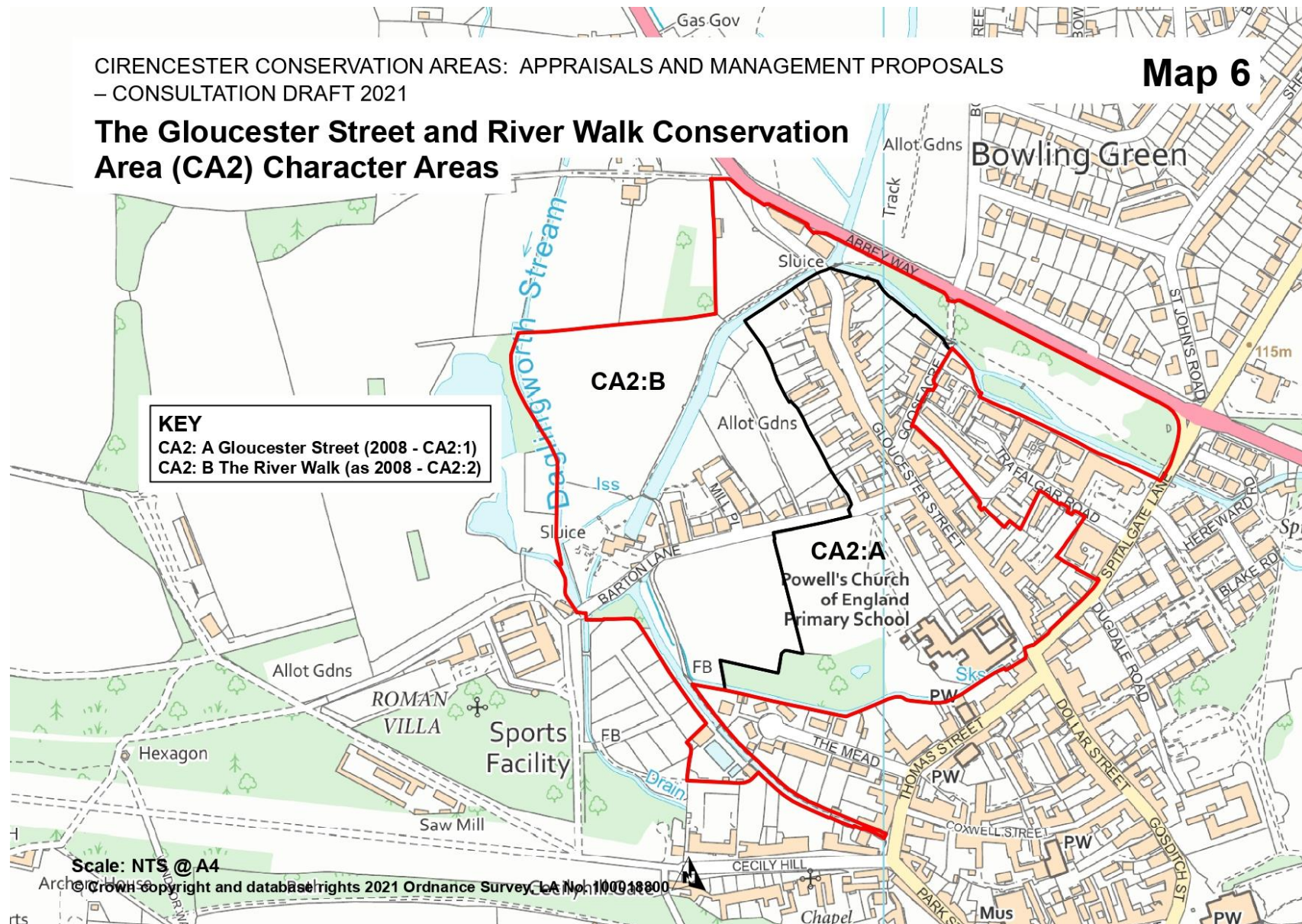
Map 4. Registered Parks and Gardens (Cirencester Park)



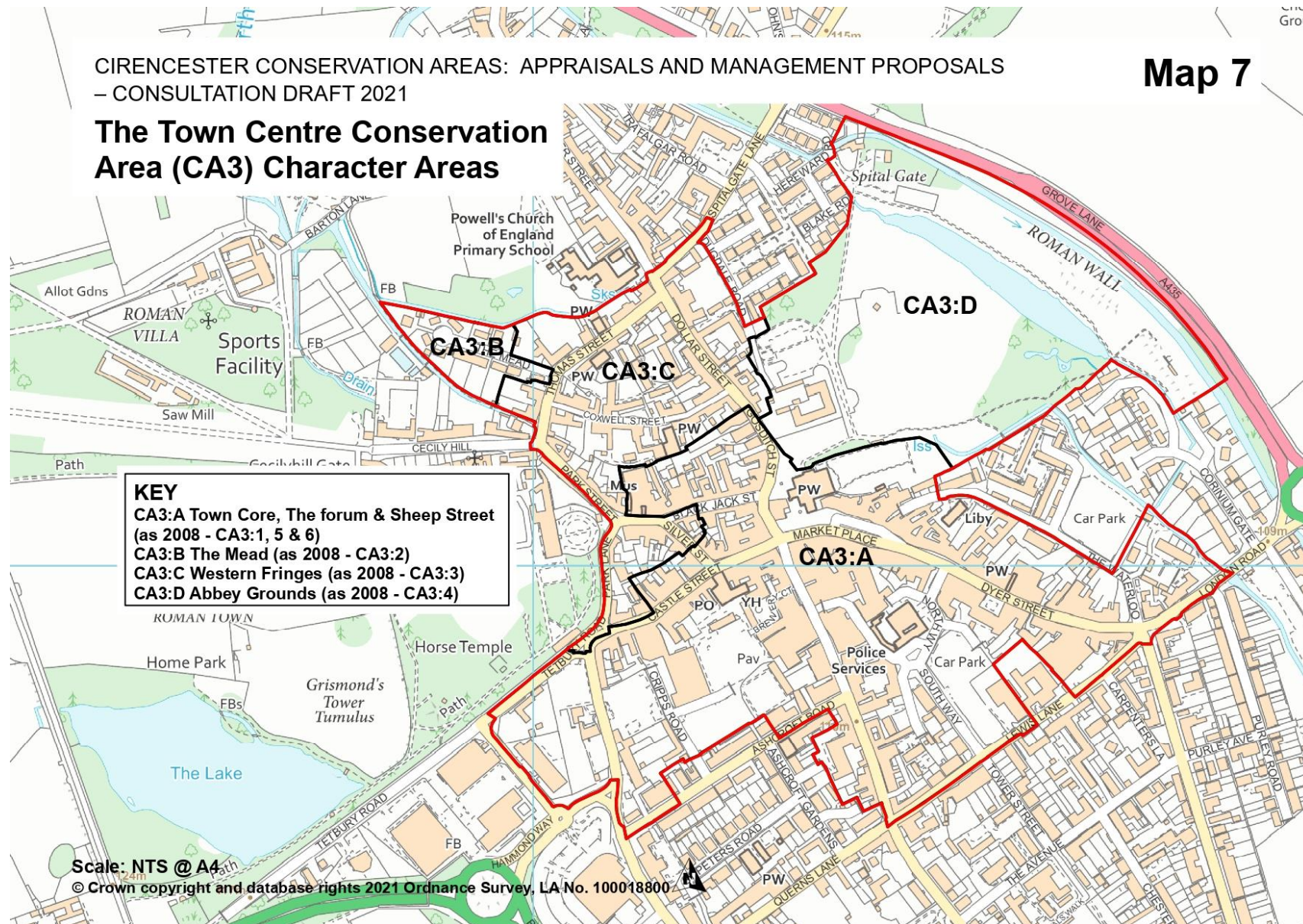
Map 5. The Park Conservation Area (CA1) Character Areas



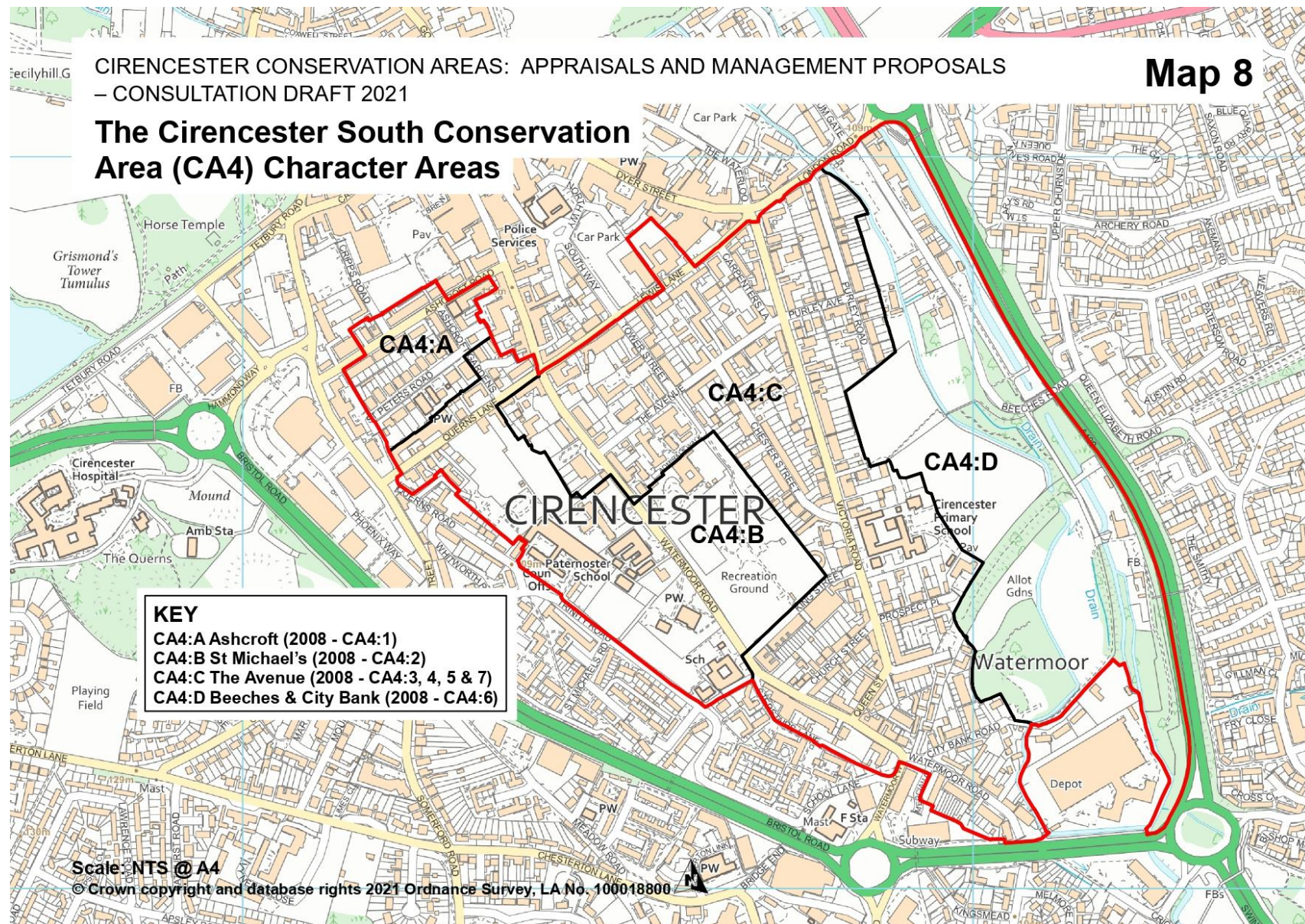
Map 6. The Gloucester Street and River Walk Conservation Area (CA2) Character Areas



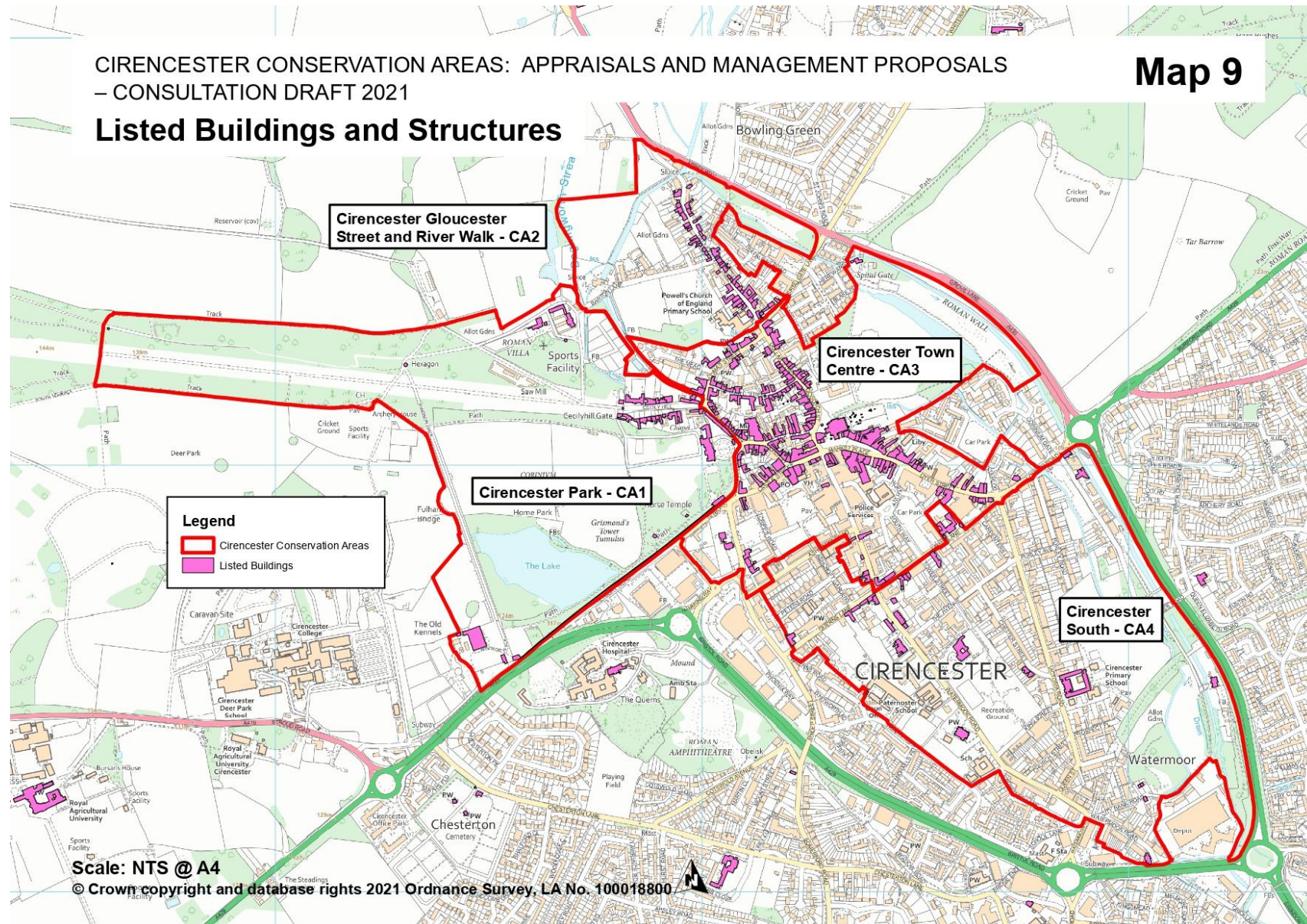
Map 7. The Town Centre Conservation Area (CA3) Character Areas



Map 8. The Cirencester South Conservation Area (CA4) Character Areas



Map 9. Listed buildings and structures



**CIRENCESTER CONSERVATION AREAS: APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS
- CONSULTATION DRAFT 2021**

Map 10

Key Areas of Negative Buildings and Public Realm

Legend

- Cirencester Conservation Areas
- Negative Buildings and Public Realm

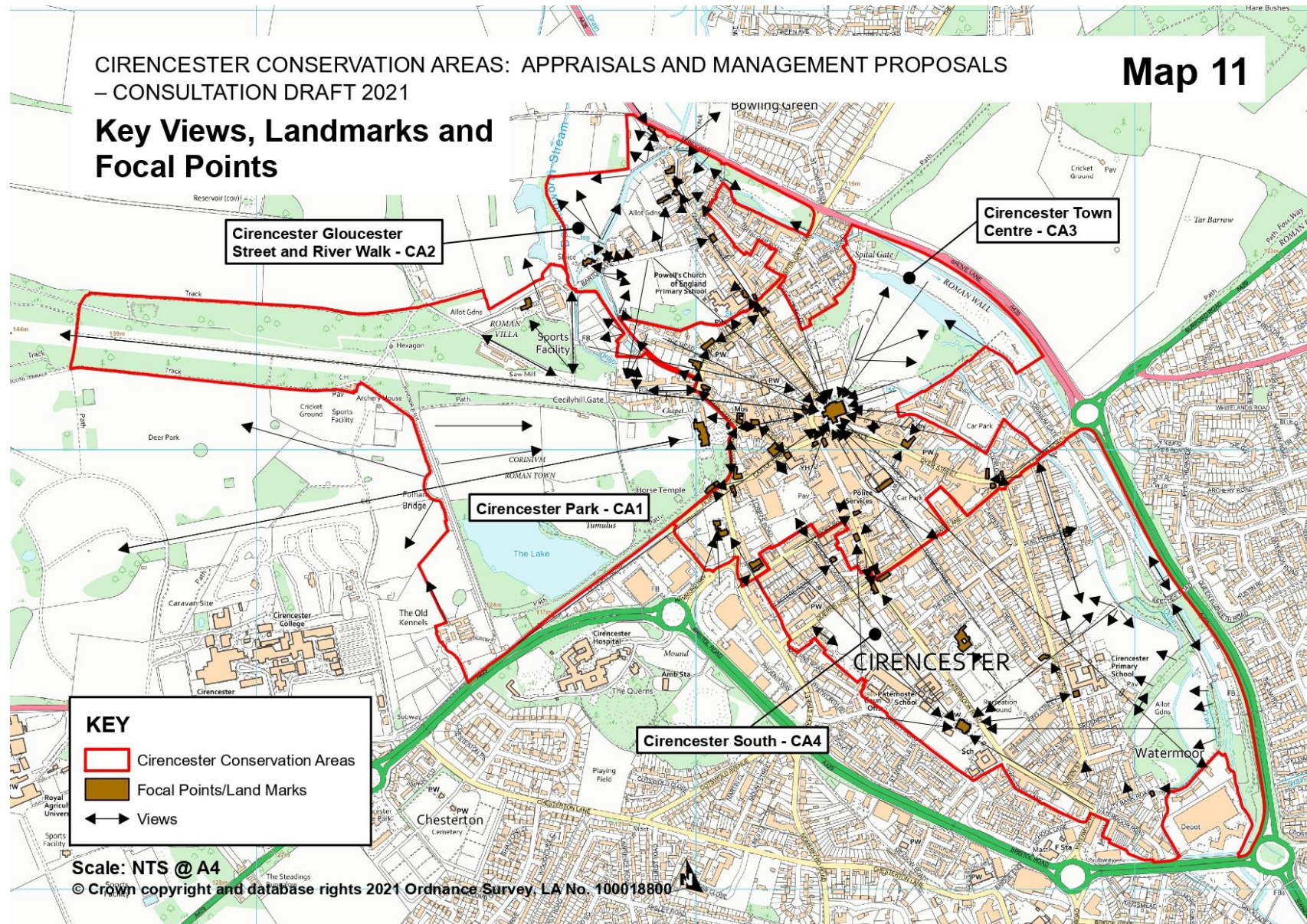
Cirencester Town Centre - CA3

Cirencester South - CA4

Scale: 1:2500 @ A4

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Map 11. Key views, landmarks and focal points



Map 12. Aerial photograph of Cirencester

