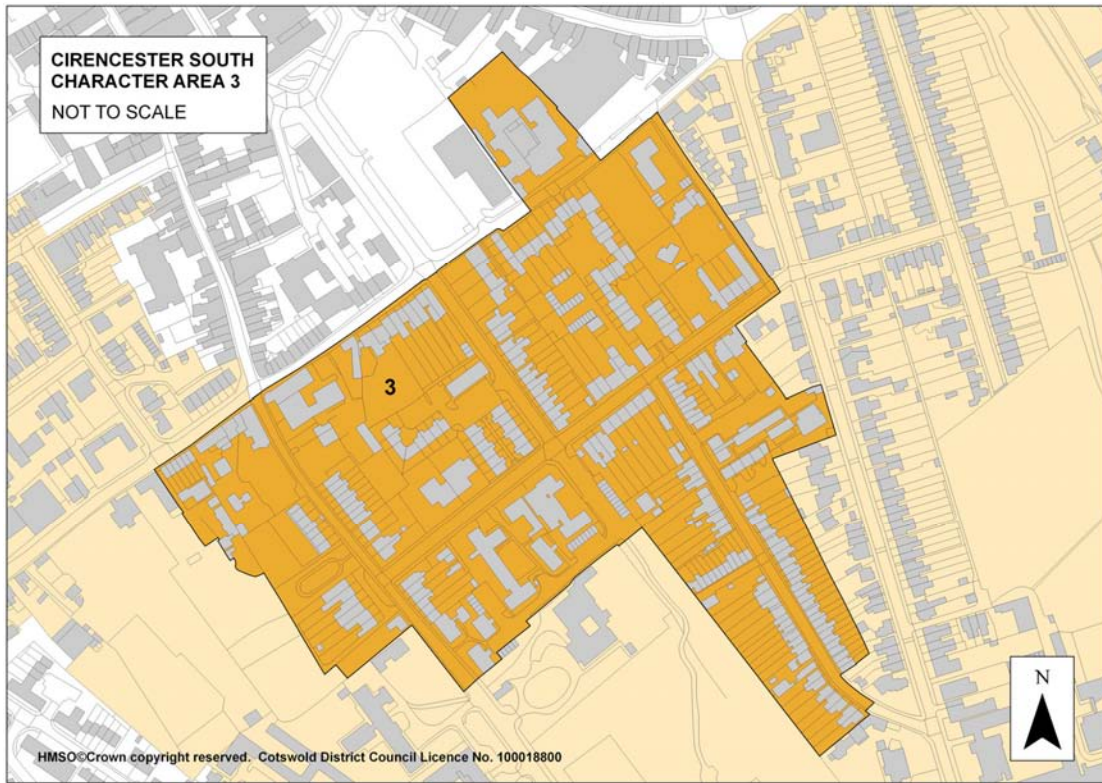


Character Area 3: The Avenue

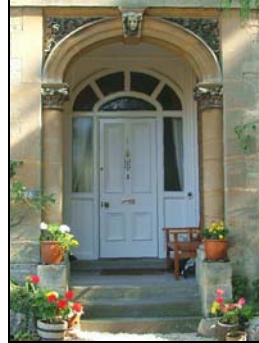


Map U



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Character Area 3: The Avenue – Key Characteristics



Character Area 3: The Avenue – Key Characteristics

- A densely-developed and compact character area, dissected by a grid of straight roads, lined with predominantly nineteenth-century two- and three-storey terraced properties, interspersed with occasional individual and semi-detached buildings, the whole set back at right angles from the road edge by narrow front gardens, within long, and in most cases, relatively narrow plots;
- Some properties built off the back edge of the pavement on long narrow plots most notably in Querns Lane and parts of Chester Street [448-49] creating more intimate and tunnel-like road spaces;
- Almost universally residential in nature with some minor office use, a medical surgery, a hotel and three public houses [426];
- Minerva Court [421] and Bingham Close [436] add modern Buildings of Townscape Merit to the high level of architectural interest evidenced by several listed buildings [422, 425 & 435] and many more buildings identified as being Positive Buildings [424 & 433];
- Containing mostly national architectural forms, often marked by simple classical proportion and restraint, but made distinctive through the use of local materials [439 & 449];
- Small-scale architectural detail and decoration to individual buildings throughout the character area and especially apparent in The Avenue [427-30] through the use of carved stone, ironwork and timber detailing to windows and doors, together with unique features such as the modern statue on The Avenue [455] and the ornate gateway to the Croft off Lewis Lane [454];
- 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 hoodmoulds [440-41];
- Residential terraces whose individual character is defined by the repetition of identical features such as timber doors and sash windows, chimney stacks and stringcourses giving a harmonious, rhythmical and cohesive character [423-25];
- Mostly simple pitched roofs but with occasional decorated timber gables to more ornate and/or historic revival style buildings [434-35];





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- Extensive use of squared ashlar limestone [439], and/or rock-faced limestone [437] 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, the whole palette of natural materials providing a complimentary and lively variety of texture and colour;
- Ashlar stone dressings in combination with brick elevations [422 & 433];
- A broad range of roadside boundary features often designed specifically as part of a terrace, or as a pair of properties, including iron railings on stone bases, rubble limestone walling with ashlar dressings and limestone gate posts [442-447 & 453] or dense cropped hedging, providing privacy and a sense of enclosure to the street scene;



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- A scattering of trees within the built form, but mostly to rear gardens and glimpsed from between buildings, with a handful of individual trees providing focal points in the street scene [442] and some set within pathways along The Avenue itself [432 & 460];
- A few small green spaces within the dense built form of the Avenue Character Area include:
 - The small graveyard to the west of Watermoor Road providing a tranquil and peaceful space with views into Important Open Space 1 to the west [457]; and

- Hidden areas of garden, such as that located between the gardens of Bowly's Almshouses on the east side of Watermoor Road and the medical surgery on The Avenue with its mature planting spilling onto neighbouring properties and softening the built form [458-60];
- Significant views northwards towards Cirencester Parish Church from Watermoor Road and most notably Tower Street [456];
- Views across St Michael's Park and towards the spire of Holy Trinity Church.



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Character Area 3: The Avenue – Negative Features & Issues

- Physical interpretation of the area is noticeably weak and poorly maintained, most obviously at the northern entrance to St Michael's Park where the outline of the Roman basilica is marked out in artificial materials, and accompanied by signage which is barely apparent and badly maintained, the whole within a space dominated by parking, and punctuated by galvanised traffic bollards and poor floorscape [461-69].
- Vacant sites, most notably the large site adjacent The Croft residential block, off Lewis Lane [472];
- Several Negative Buildings whose monolithic form, bland elevational treatment, artificial materials and broken building line significantly detract from the character of the conservation area [470-71]
- Loss of and/or replacement of details with inappropriate designs and materials, including the use of plastic for windows and doors, and artificial stone products that weather unsympathetically [473-75];
- Unattractive, often flat-roofed extensions, using unsympathetic forms and materials [481-84];
- A lack of maintenance to some buildings, evidenced in part by broken rainwater goods, and the growth of vegetation to gutters and downpipes;



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- Poor floorscape, including large areas of broken tarmac [465-66 & 471];
- Some boundary features in a poor condition, and/or lost through lack of maintenance, and/or replaced with inferior design / materials [476];
- Damage to tree routes caused by vehicles and tarmac [477];
- Traffic-related visual clutter, including signage and road markings, together with telegraph poles and wires [478-79], and traffic congestion caused by parked vehicles, most notably to Chester Street [485];



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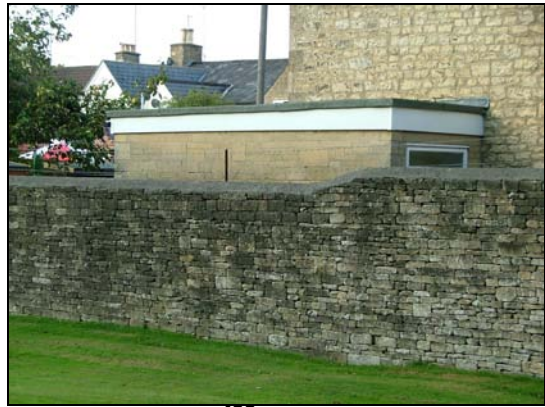
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