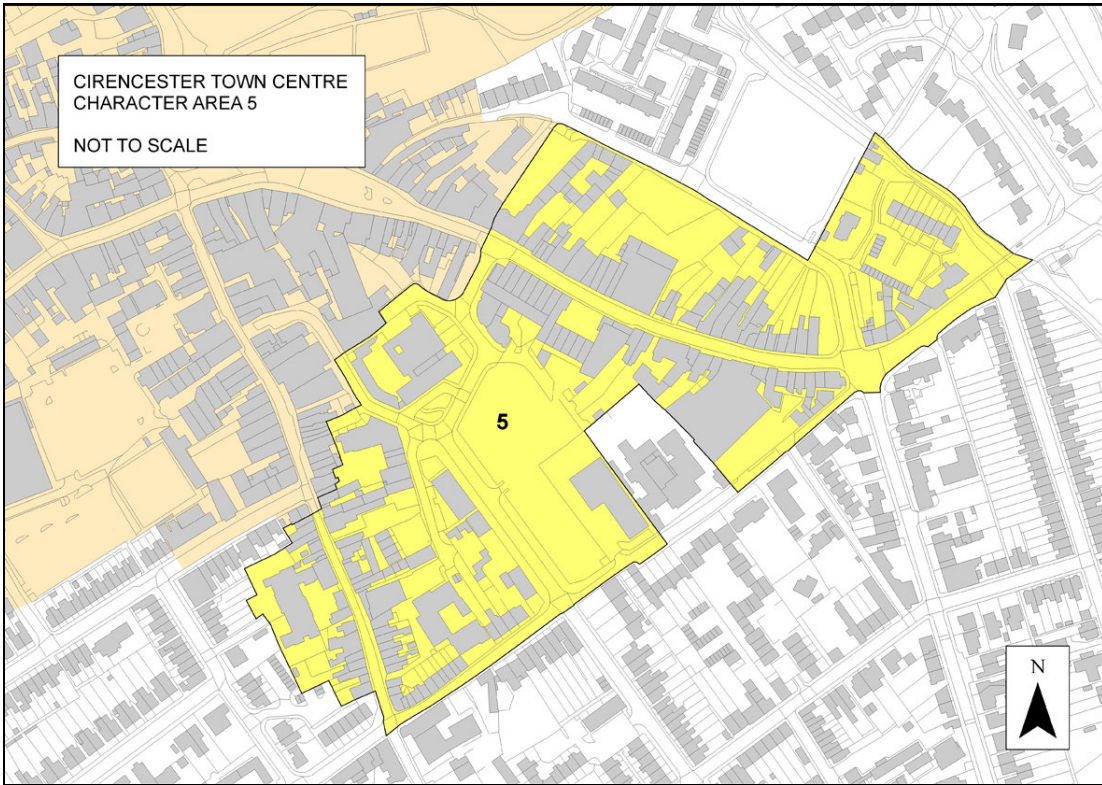


# Character Area 5: The Forum



Map W



# Character Area 5: The Forum – Key Characteristics



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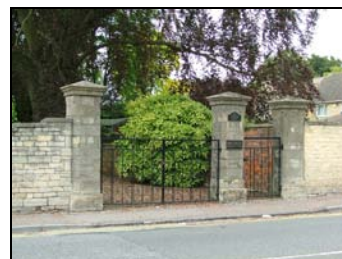
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## Character Area 5: The Forum – Key Characteristics

- A multi-faceted, predominantly retail area, containing the narrow southern half of Cricklade Street and the wider Dyer Street, together with the northern side of London Road, the whole linked by numerous pedestrian pathways and conjoined by the open expanse of the Forum car park, the whole located south of the Town Core;
- Spatially complex, the Cricklade Street section and parts of Dyer Street are characterised by predominantly historic narrow frontages, built off the back edge of the pavement, at right angles to the road, with extensions developed down long, narrow plots and some mews corridors giving access to private, or in some cases, publicly accessible courtyard “places” [508];
- Grander and larger-scaled historic buildings of later periods whose wider dimensions indicate plot amalgamation;
- Two and three-storey premises provide an almost continuous built frontage to Cricklade Street and the more historic areas of Dyer Street [505];



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- Views towards the tower of the parish church are numerous [496] with that from the Forum north along South Way being especially important [502];
- Smaller glimpsed views are prevalent and the chimneys of the former malthouse on the west side of Cricklade Street assist orientation and add a further focal point and visual interest [489-90];
- Whilst Dyer Street contains several large national chain stores, Cricklade Street is home to more specialist retailers including a saddlery and a family grocery store; both Cricklade and Dyer Streets contain several good historic shopfronts [497 & 507], and in some cases, well-designed modern replacements, together with numerous hanging signs providing detail and variety to ground and first floors [509];



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- Gabled roofs interspersed with parapet roofed buildings, often with dormers forming an undulating and varied roofline;
- 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 [487 & 494] and Welsh slate [489 & 501], the whole creating a cohesive character;
- Brick features frequently for chimney stacks and the side elevations of a number of buildings; there are also a handful of prominent buildings such as The Brewers' Arms public house [487], the retirement flats at the rear of the former malthouse [489-90] and a warehouse style building at the rear of The Wheatsheaf public house where the use of brick adds colour and variety to the street scene;
- Architectural design is rich and varied with classical motifs and proportion [513 & 515], more dominant in Dyer Street and London Road, yet sitting adjacent more rustic vernacular buildings [506];
- Individual elements of decoration, incised lettering for signage, colourful paint schemes, some narrow front gardens bordered by low walls and railings, and modulated facades all helping to create a varied urban scene;
- Use of revivalist and Arts and Crafts derived detailing including hoodmoulds and mullioned windows, tile hanging and timber-boarding [510-12 & 516];
- A number of low key buildings, some former stables and outbuildings, of rubble, brick and Welsh slate, at the rear of residential and commercial

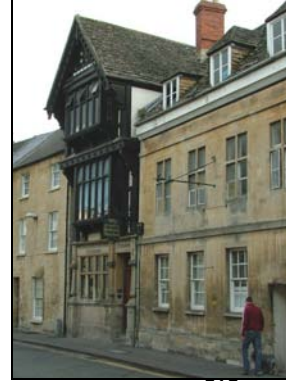
premises most notably forming the north-eastern boundary of the conservation area along Waterloo Road, are very important in creating an edge where boundary walls and gardens have been lost to car parking [501 & 522];



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- A vibrant and busy area for shoppers, visitors and workers, with al fresco dining provided at Catalpa Square [154], The Wool Market [520] and The Wheatsheaf public house on Cricklade Street adding an additional facility in the summer months;

- The convenience of the Forum car park in the centre, easily accessible for visitors to the town via London Road and Lewis Lane, ensures that even on Sundays the area is relatively lively;
- The Wool Market Arcade, whilst providing an enclosed shopping environment close to the town centre, creates an additional pedestrian link to Waterloo Road and its car park [520];
- Many residential units to upper floors, several properties divided into flats and some individual residential properties most notably to the north of London Road;



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- Limestone rubble 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, most notably to the north of Dyer Street and Cricklade Street [522-29];
- Trees are not numerous but where they are found within the character area, they form an important element:
  - Around the Forum car park trees help limit the impact of parked cars [525 & 528],
  - Trees in Catalpa Square provide shade and a welcome element of greenery in the street scene [154],

- those along the Waterloo Road help delineate property boundaries and break up areas of car parking [527],
- to the rear of London Road trees soften the impact of the residential development, and
- the mature copper beech at the east end of London Road forms a distinctive focal point [506 & 524];



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## Character Area 5: The Forum – Negative Features & Issues

- The Forum character area offers significant opportunities for enhancement in terms of the replacement of poorly-proportioned mostly 1960s and 1970s buildings which detract from its special architectural and historic character, identified by horizontal emphasis, asymmetric fenestration and inadequate modelling including large slab-like development. Found mostly in the central section of Dyer Street [531-33], opposite and including premises currently occupied by Argos amongst others, they and others are also bland, uninspiring or plainly obtrusive buildings, including those that fail to respect established building lines, such as Akeman Court, those at Jobbins Court off Cricklade Street, and others surrounding the Forum car park;



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- Significant opportunities exist to create more successful spaces through the creation of a sense of enclosure, and the introduction of measures which create active street frontage, fill unsuccessful gap sites and create new and/or enhance existing pedestrian routes [119, 535 & 543-44];
- Loss of boundary walls surrounding and defining public and private spaces resulting in a loss of privacy and enclosure, and the creation of uninspiring areas of car parking [522];





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- Dominance of vehicles, both parking and traffic movements, to the detriment of visual character and pedestrian safety;
- Visual clutter created by a jumble of street furniture and poorly-designed traffic-related features including signage and road markings, and poor floorscape mostly utilising non-contextual artificial materials [540-42];



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- Potentially unsafe and/or visually-disappointing pathways, for example at off Dyer Street to Waterloo Car Park and Jobbins Court off Cricklade Street [543-44];



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- Premises with inappropriate shopfronts and signage, often over-scaled, with deep fascias, or fascias that extend over more than one building, undermining the vertical emphasis of the townscape and individual buildings [545], and illumination including swan-neck down-lighters [295];



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- Loss of and/or replacement of architectural details with inappropriate designs and materials including use of inappropriate materials such as artificial stone products, especially for boundary walls, that weather unsympathetically [546];
- Loss of lime render to a number of buildings;
- Lack of general maintenance including the clearing of vegetation from gutters and downpipes [547-50];
- Lack of provision for rubbish storage [547];
- Extract vents from hot food outlets which are visually intrusive;
- Damaging and inappropriate installation of services [546];



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- Poor interpretation of the area's rich archaeological, architectural and historic past, for example, the crossroads of the two arterial Roman roads at the corner of the Forum car park is marked by an inconsequential plaque, set very low to the ground, within an artificial stone wall [ 551-52];



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