

### **3.4 Spatial Analysis of the Cirencester South Conservation Area**

The Conservation Area can be seen as a sequence of interconnecting spaces which have a major influence on the character of the area.

#### **Plan Form & Layout**

The plan form of the area is characterised by mostly straight roads laid out in an informal and irregular grid pattern, with Watermoor Road and Victoria Road forming the principle vehicular routes which dissect the area diagonally, almost meeting at the southern end.

#### **Character & Interrelationship of Spaces**

For the most part, dense development, predominantly in the form of terraces, or tightly-grouped semi-detached and detached buildings, line these straight roads whilst occasional twists in the road alignment, for example, Chester Street, add variety and interest to the street scene. Facing the street, such development is either built tight up against the back edge of the pavement, [e.g. Kings Road] or more usually, is divided from the footway by small front gardens, of varying depths and bordered by a wide variety of boundary treatments including iron railings, limestone or occasionally brick walls and / or dense hedging.

Long, mostly narrow, rear gardens back onto one another within each block, and in some cases form small communal gardens / allotment spaces; the best example being to the rear of the block marked by Prospect Place Victoria Road and the east end of Queen Street [Important Open Space 4 – Map O].

This development type is in marked contrast with the wide open spaces and occasional building set within generous grounds including:

- Holy Trinity Church [59];
- Watermoor House, and to a lesser extent [95],
- Cotswold District Council, formerly the Work House, off Trinity Road [116];
- Ingleside School, off Beeches Road [115],
- Watermoor Primary School, and Paternoster School off Watermoor Road;
- Cirencester County School at the southern end of Victoria Road [135]; and
- the former School on the north side of Querns Lane.

The six Important Open Spaces within the Cirencester South Conservation Area, marked on Map L below, range from informal recreation spaces such as the recreation ground and allotment gardens bordered by the former railway line and City Bank wall with its irregular shape, gently undulating form and intersected by the River Churn, and the far more regular St Michaels Park with its rectilinear shape, high limestone boundary wall and planned planting. The whole of the eastern edge of the area is characterised by tree-covered spaces, long and sinuous in nature which provide much-needed screening from the ring-road to the east and are dissected by informal pedestrian routes.

Permeability within the area is strong, with public pathways linking the main vehicular routes of the mostly small blocks to the more informal recreation areas. For example, the pathway that links the east end of Prospect Place [a cul de sac] with Queens Street and the raised bank of the former railway line, which leads across open ground to the pathway and then follows the route of the River Churn north towards Beeches Road, and south towards the raised City Bank path and City Bank Road.

Numerous small pathways within the Conservation Area are nevertheless semi-private in nature, serving the residential development of which they form part. The most notable example runs to the rear of properties on the east side of Victoria Road and Purley Road, linking London Road with the playing field and recreation ground.

Some spaces within the Conservation Area are currently in need of enhancement mostly where demolition or redevelopment has resulted in a loss of containment. Those spaces include:

- The far south of Watermoor Road where the ringroad crudely truncates it [250];
- The junction marked by Watermoor Way, Watermoor Road, Stepstairs Lane, Southgate Mews and City Bank Road which is characterised by a lack of containment, poor public realm and the open grounds and unattractive elevations of large commercial sheds; this space nevertheless has the potential to be an attractive gateway at the southern half of the town and provide a valuable amenity space for nearby residents [248-49 & 252];
- The area just north of the northern entrance to St Michaels Park where rows of domestic garages and parking areas dominate the location, and where the foundations of the basilica of Roman Corinium [268] are poorly marked out.

### **Key Views, Landmarks and Focal Points**

Views within, into and out of the area are an important feature of the Cirencester South Conservation Area. The main views and focal points are shown on the Views Analysis Map N below.

#### **Longer Views:**

- Outside the Cirencester South Conservation Area, the Cirencester Parish Church once again forms the principle landmark with long views of the tower being glimpsed from several vantage points [96]; a very important series of views of the church is seen leading from within St Michael's Park along Tower Street and South Way [85-87 below];
- Within the Conservation Area itself, Holy Trinity Church forms the principle focal point and several views focus on its spire [98 & 90];
- Other important views are along streets such as Watermoor Road, Victoria Road and Purley Road [93];



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### Views of local focal points within and outside the conservation area:

- Watermoor House forms an important focal point when viewed from the southern entrance path to St Michael's Park. The view of the house is however currently obscured by high vegetation when viewed from its gated entrance on Watermoor Road [94-95];
- The detached building at the east end of King Street forms an important focal point when viewed from the west [96];
- The remaining two chimneys of the former malthouse in Cricklade Street and the detached villa at Ashcroft Gardens form a similarly significant role when viewed along St Peter's Road [97];



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### Views across open land:

- The playing fields and recreation grounds, along the south-eastern part of the Conservation Area provide several views, most notably from high

- ground on the City Bank walk and along the railway line, as well as those views gained from pathways through the area [91-92 & 101];
- Views across and between St Michaels Park and the grounds of Holy Trinity Church emphasize visual links and enhance the legibility of the southern half of the town [103-4];
  - The allotment gardens to the north of the recreation ground form an often colourful view from the pathway to the south [102];



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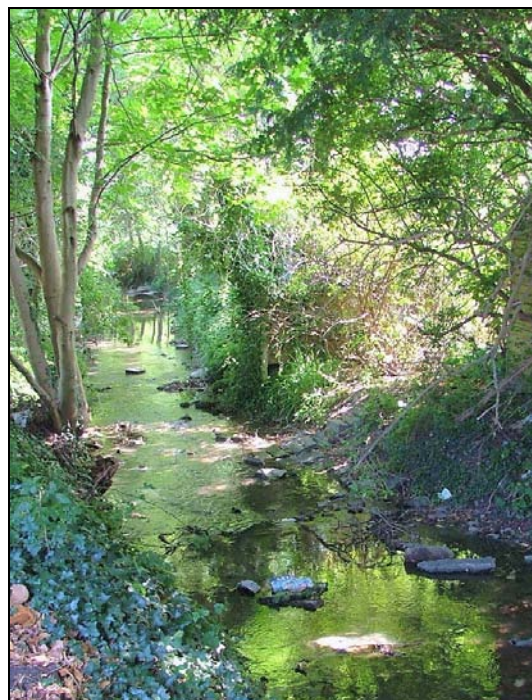
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### Smaller glimpsed views:

- Views along the path of the River Churn [106] and along City Bank [105] and the raised former railway line [107] and [98-100];
- Allotment gardens between the ringroad and City Bank walk glimpsed between the banks of trees provide another colourful view;
- Narrow glimpsed views between developments, often to rear gardens, for example, between buildings on the south side of Lewis Lane and southwest side of Watermoor Road at its northern end to the tree covered ground behind [Important Open Space 1 – Map O];
- Many views along narrow pathways running between developments and behind terraced gardens, most notably the route running along the rear of properties on the east side Victoria Road as far as London Road with offshoot pathways to Purley Road [108-10].



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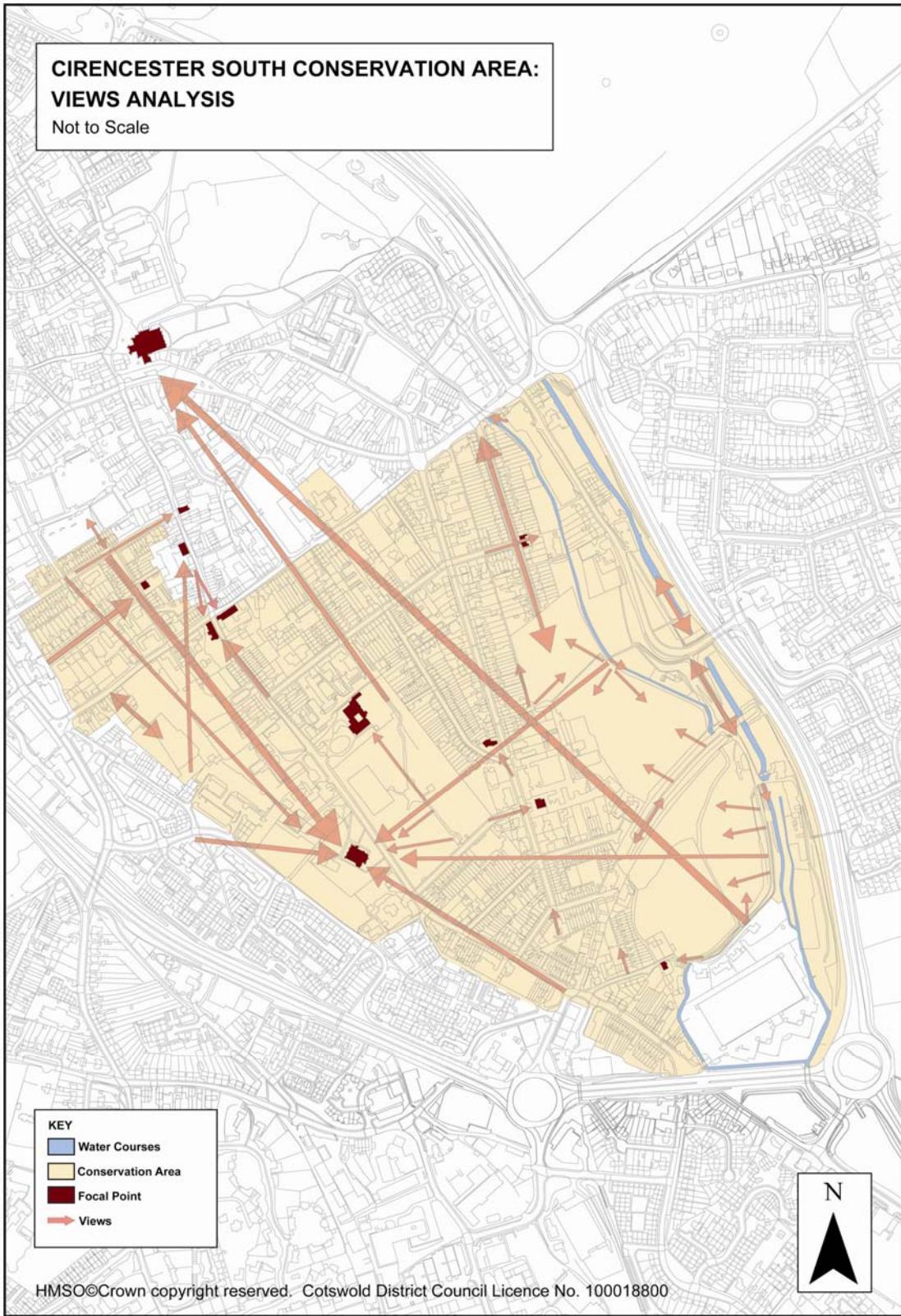
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**CIRENCESTER SOUTH CONSERVATION AREA:  
VIEWS ANALYSIS**

Not to Scale

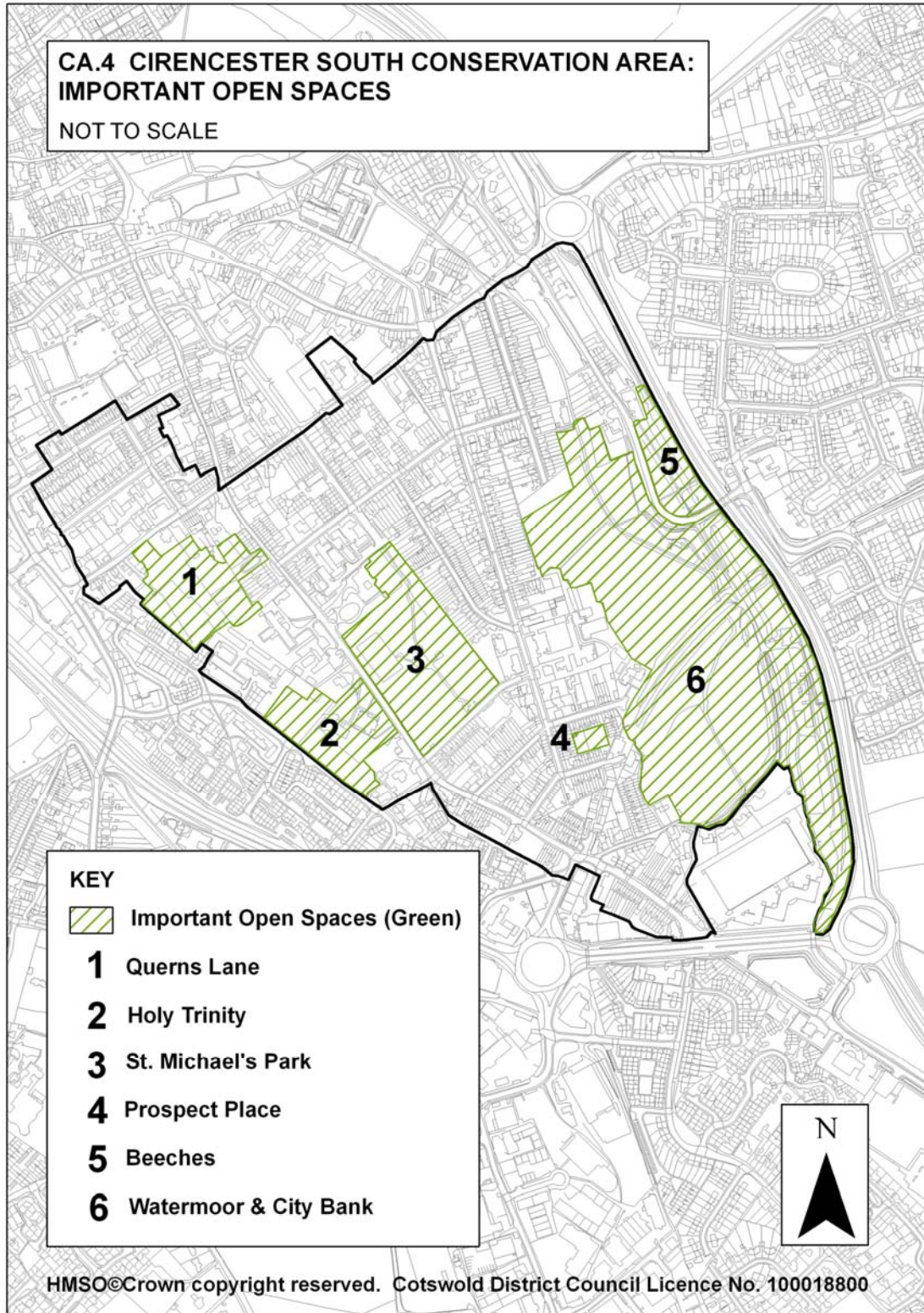


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**Map N**

## Important Open Spaces:

There are six Important Open Spaces within the Cirencester South Conservation Area. These are shown on Map O below:



Map O



### 3.5 Activity & Prevailing Uses

The Cirencester South Conservation Area is primarily residential in nature with a variety of tenure including housing for the elderly, individual family houses and other properties in multiple occupation, mostly in the form of terraces and semi-detached housing. A number of larger historic properties have been converted to flats, for example, the former mill and adjacent water works premises on Querns Lane [111]. The former school on Lewis Lane is now used for offices [134] and there are a handful of other low key buildings used for office accommodation in the area as well as the former workhouse off Trinity Road housing the headquarters of Cotswold District Council [116].



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Despite this residential bias, there are currently four schools in the area [112 & 131], three churches, two medical surgeries [122], two nurseries and two funeral parlours. Victoria Road is also home to a significant number of bed and breakfast premises although modest tourist accommodation is offered in several locations throughout the Conservation Area [118-9].

There are also four public houses [112], some of which also offer food and/or accommodation. Bingham Hall and a couple of other community hall facilities together with the Cotswold Club, located at the southern tip of Watermoor Road, serve the local community and are well-used.



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Bennett's Garage on the corner of Victoria Road and Purley Avenue is the largest of three small commercial garages in the area. Other low-key commercial / light industrial uses include the Wetpaint Art Gallery on London Road, Dike & Son Monumental Masons on Victoria Road [117], C W Neal & Son Joinery and Glass suppliers off Lewis Lane [118], Earle and Ludlow Printers off Victoria Road and Stan Gough Electricians situated at The Avenue [123]. The area readily absorbs such uses without significant detriment to its amenities or character. The only larger commercial premises in the area, occupying uncompromising shed-like buildings, are found on the northern side of Lewis Lane.



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A handful of small shops are located in the area with the greatest concentration at the southern end of Watermoor Road including the small terrace known as New Town Buildings, dated 1899, currently occupied by various take-away food outlets [119]. Regrettably some of the corner shops within residential streets are no longer in use as such [121], some having been converted to residential use, others remaining vacant.

The Conservation Area is, for the most part, a quiet and peaceful area albeit that school children have a significant and lively impact on its character during term time. Traffic can be a problem at the start and end of the day, near the schools and also at the southern end of Watermoor Road which provides vehicular access to Mitsubishi Motors and commercial premises in nearby Mercian Close.



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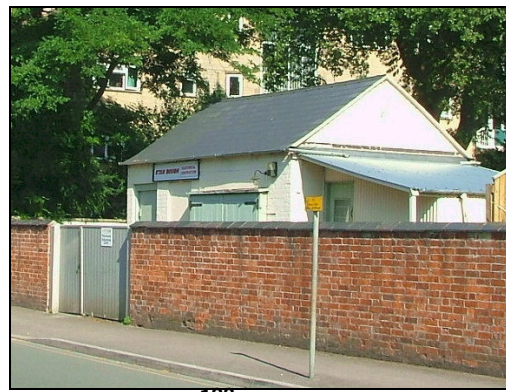
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The playing fields, together with allotments, provide a genuinely peaceful and semi-rural recreational retreat. The pedestrian route parallel to the River Churn, and including the City Bank walk, is also remarkably peaceful given its close proximity to the high levels of traffic on the adjacent ring-road. The playing fields [125] and adjoining land are used by schoolchildren for games lessons and occasionally for events such as bonfire and fireworks celebrations. There are also various recreational facilities on offer in St Michaels Park including tennis, mini golf, croquet, a barbecue area and children's play equipment [126-128].



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