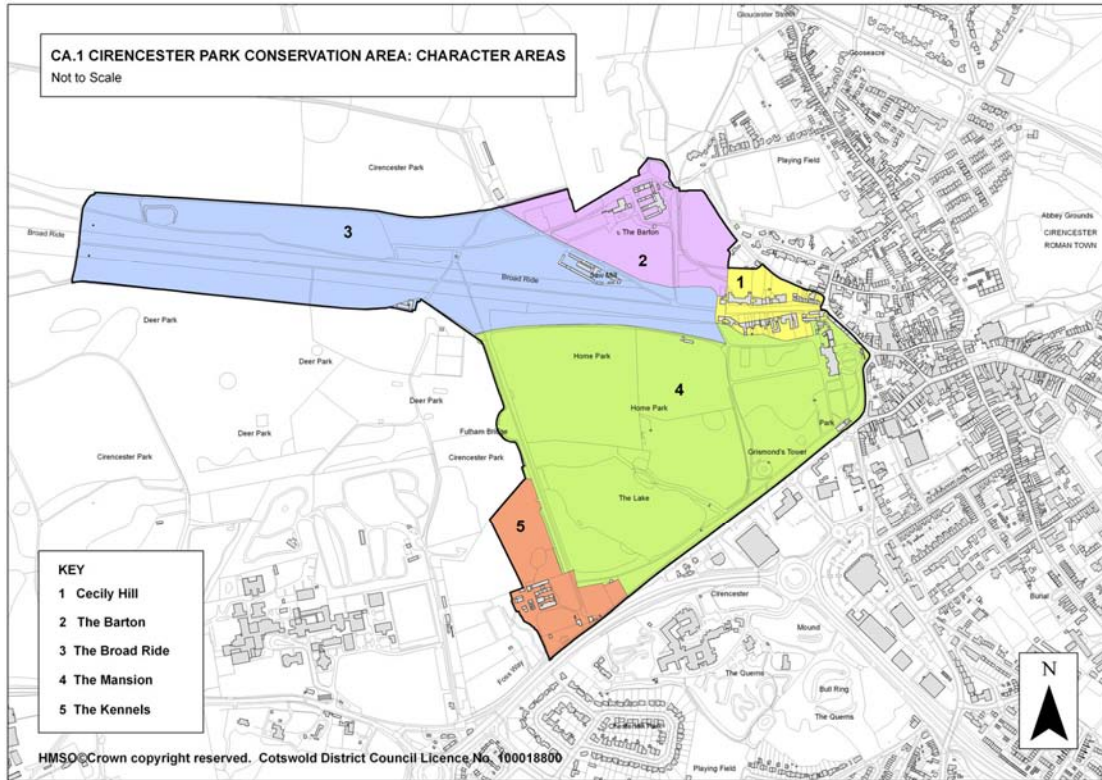


3.10 Character Areas

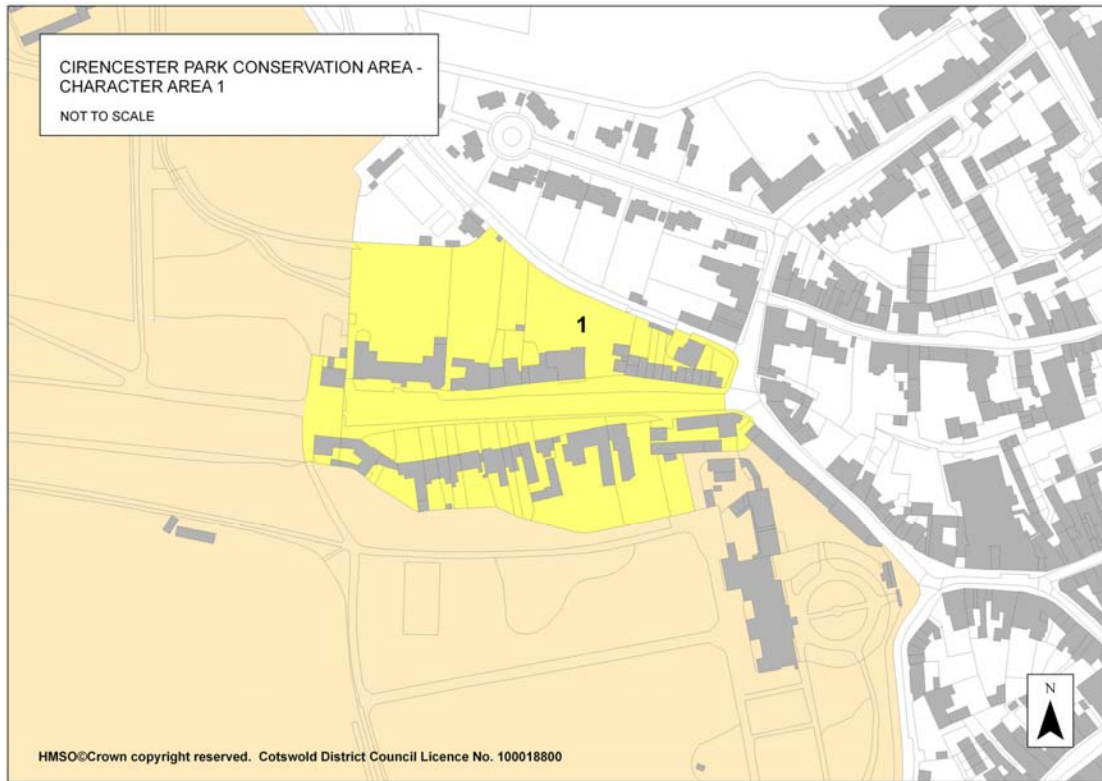
The Park Conservation Area has been divided into five character areas which have been given the following titles for ease of reference:

1. Cecily Hill
2. The Barton
3. The Broad Ride
4. The Mansion
5. The Kennels



Map P

Character Area 1: Cecily Hill



Map Q



128

Character Area 1: Cecily Hill – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 1: Cecily Hill – Key Characteristics

- A broad linear 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 by the mature and colourful gardens of smaller groups of mostly less ancient frontages on the south side; [140 & 141]
- 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; [113]
- Predominantly limestone slate roofs with some Welsh slate and clay tile;
- Cecily Hill represents a transition between urban and rural; the tightly knit historic urban town centre typified by Coxwell Street and the open green space of Cirencester Park marked by the wrought iron railings and screen;
- A mix of distinctive and imposing classically inspired “polite” architecture of the early eighteenth century onwards sitting cheek by jowl with more rustic and simplistic residential properties typical of the Cotswold style of gabled elevations including window and door moulds, small hipped and gabled roof dormers with Cotswold stone roofs and chimneys;
- The elegant Park entrance ironwork screen consisting of a pair of large eighteenth century gates, approximately 3 metres high with a horizontal panel of scrolled openwork and dog bars and overthrow surmounted by the Bathurst monogram and coronet and anthemion finials. The railings and flanking pedestrian gates are probably nineteenth century, the whole erected on this site in c1856 [122-23 & 130 & 139];
- An unusually wide pavement on the north side suitable for promenading;
- 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 three’s and providing vertical emphasis;
- An intimate scale in contrast with the vastness of the Broad Ride and the Park itself;
- High hedges are the most visible boundary treatment on the south side with limestone rubble walls forming a significant boundary treatment on the north side; [141-42];
- 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 [141-42];
- The unexpected, castellated picturesque former barracks / armoury / Castle at the top of the hill dominates short views from within the Park [143];
- A quiet residential street outside office hours but busy with the comings and goings of the Castle at the start and end of week days as a result of its use for education.



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Character Area 1: Cecily Hill - Negative Features and Issues:

- The floorscape of broken and patchy tarmac is poor [159];
- Telegraph poles with significant overhead wires add an intrusive and distracting element to the street scene [149];
- Loss of rendered finishes particularly to classical buildings such as Cecily House, and for example, 32, 38, 40 and 42 Cecily Hill [153];
- Traffic signage adds significant visual clutter there being a total of 16 identical freestanding resident parking signs [158];
- Other signage such as that attached to the ornate gates and to the former barracks is starting to detract from the character of the area [154];
- The garage-style door to one of two otherwise matching pedimented buildings on the north side is unfortunate in disrupting the design of this classically-inspired elevation [156];
- The disabled access ramp at the entrance to barracks / castle is necessary but somewhat obtrusive in design [157];
- The view from the ornate gates to the car park of the former barracks / Castle focuses on the location of the skip and refuse store; this, and the car park itself would benefit from enhancement [160];
- Traffic congestion at the top of Cecily Hill is worsened by a lack of a turning point and the dominance of vehicles in the street scene which detracts from the visual appeal of the gates and the view down the Broad Walk, as well as creating pedestrian safety issues [162-63].



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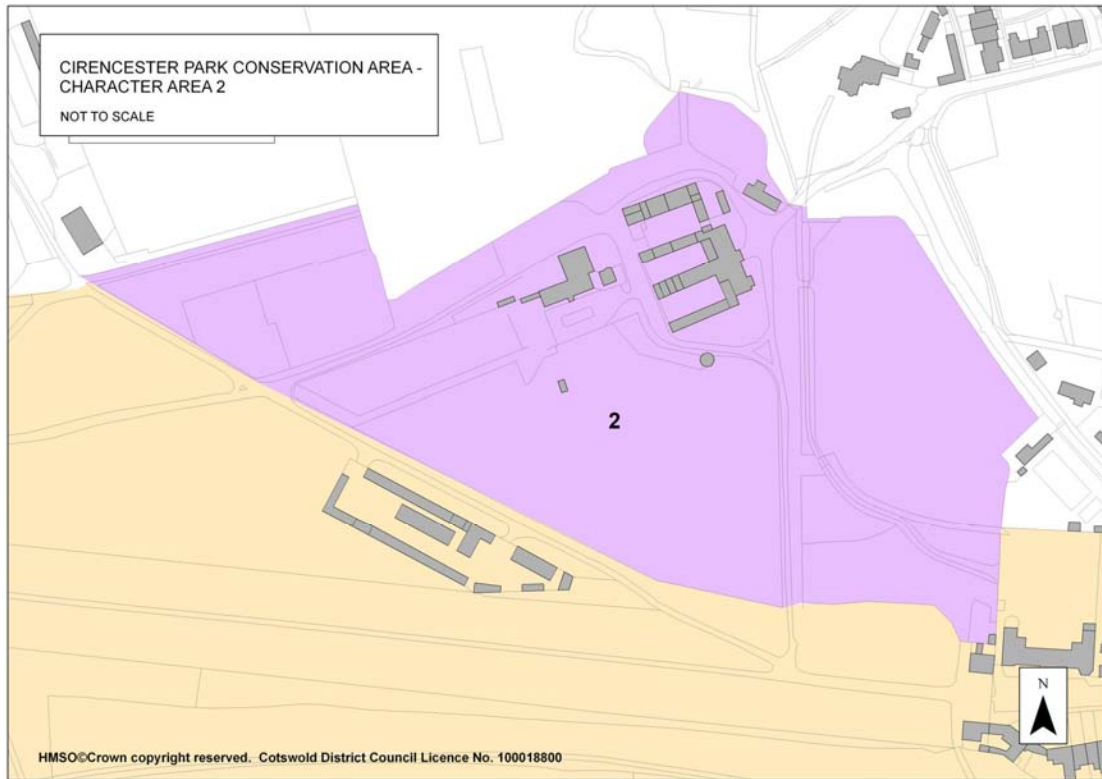


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Character Area 2: The Barton



Map R



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Character Area 2: The Barton – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 2: The Barton – Key Characteristics

- A listed farmstead group of mid- to late-seventeenth century origins, with eighteenth and nineteenth 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 [164 & 171];
- The house is a good example of Cotswold vernacular design, its principle features being:
 - coursed squared limestone rubble walls with a stone slate roof with ashlar chimney stacks
 - 5 coped gables to the front and rear
 - two- and three-light stone-mullion windows with hoodmoulds, the whole fitted with iron casements of leaded lights
 - Nineteenth-century gabled ashlar porch with stone slate roof and moulded finial.
- Late seventeenth-century or early eighteenth-century barn [listed Grade II] of coursed squared limestone rubble with a stone slate roof and of 8 bays with two gabled porches with high openings with exposed timber lintels [174];
- Barton Cottage with attached cartshed, granary and stable range enclosing a grassed courtyard, all of early eighteenth-century origins, the long range having 7 gables to front and rear, all of coursed squared limestone rubble with stone slate roof [175-77];
- Late seventeenth-century or early eighteenth-century circular dovecot approximately 4 metres in diameter with a glover at the apex of its circular stone-slate roof with two tiers of openings [166];
- Single-storey former dairy, now store, 5 metres east of the house; an early nineteenth-century building of limestone ashlar and coursed rubble sides and Welsh slate pyramidal roof [listed Grade II];
- Located at the NE corner of the conservation area less than 500 metres from the town centre yet with a very distinctly rural character;
- A very quiet and peaceful part of the Park Conservation Area with pedestrian access / egress to Barton Lane and the River Walk;
- Wild flower meadow to east of north-south pathway [167];
- Minor views towards the Broad Walk from the main drive, a further view out over the valley to the north and glimpsed views through trees towards the Parish Church [170];
- Consistent use of Cotswold stone facing and stone tiling with rich vernacular detailing.

Character Area 2: The Barton – Negative Features & Issues

- The poor condition and under-use of some of the buildings; [177]
- Many of the ancient orchard trees and park land trees will need to be replaced; [171]
- Unsightly stopping-up of the thoroughfare with timber fenced barriers at both ends of the track to the rear of the House; [180]
- Uninviting gated entrance / exit towards Barton Lane and River Walk; [179]
- Unattractive view of the rear of ancillary buildings surrounding the outdoor public pool to the east at River Walk [in CA2. Gloucester Street and River Walk Conservation Area]. [181]



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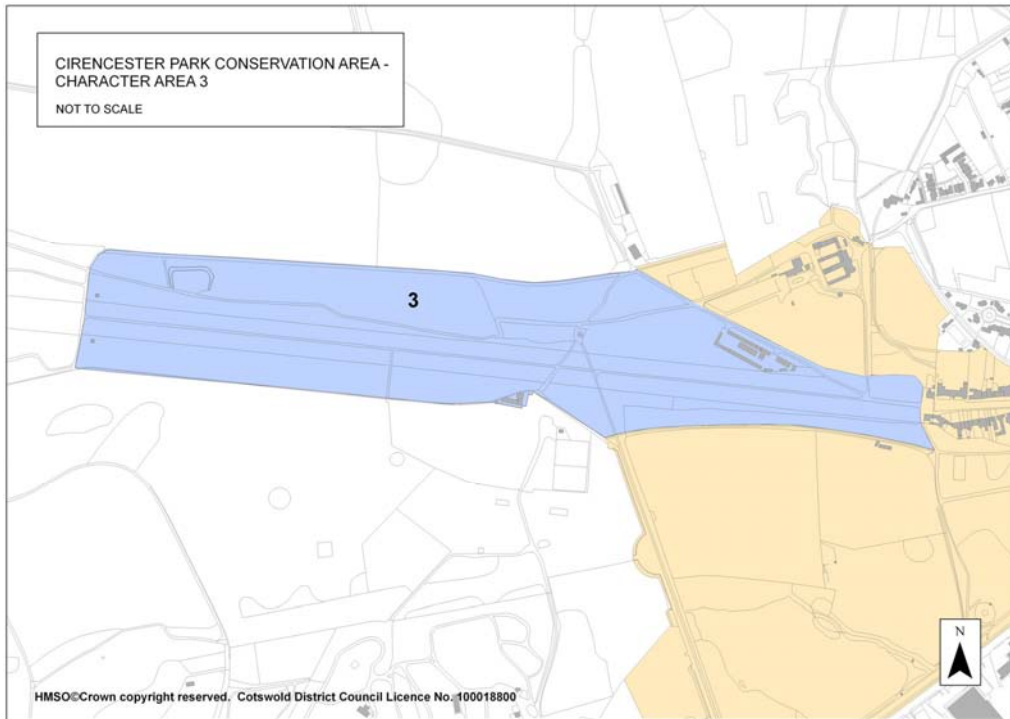


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Character Area 3: The Broad Ride



Map S



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Character Area 3: The Broad Ride – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 3: The Broad Ride – Key Characteristics

- The Broad Ride is the main axis of Cirencester Park, an exceptional early eighteenth-century designed parkland of national importance designed by the first Earl Bathurst with assistance from his friend the great English poet Alexander Pope from c.1714 onwards [184];
- The close-mown grass bands, some 5 metres wide either side of the hard surfaced Broad Ride, are flanked by a dense band of mature trees of mixed species but predominantly cedar, yew, sycamore, black pine and sequoia [182] form an impressive scene;
- That part of the Broad Ride included in the conservation area is the urban or polite element and managed accordingly; the land has a gently undulating form which creates multiple subtle variations in views;
- The Broad Ride, on an east-west alignment forms the principle route for visiting walkers and continues beyond the conservation area for eight kilometres as far as the village of Sapperton; [Frontispiece]
- Views within this character area are especially important; the alignment of the Broad Ride and the parish church of St John the Baptist is the principle view, with the route to and from the Hexagon forming a secondary but important view [184 & 186-87];
- The Hexagon, dating from c.1736 and listed Grade II*, designed by Earl Bathurst as part of the Park layout, is one of several follies built as eye-catchers or focal points within the woodland setting and is the only one to be located within the Park Conservation Area; the Hexagon is located at the north end of Windsor Walk and is of classical design on a raised plinth with rusticated tufa and limestone ashlar walls, and Welsh slate roof with limestone ball finial; it is an important element in the design of the Park [186];
- Two early to mid-eighteenth limestone ashlar piers with rustication and ball finials, approximately 3 metres high, mark the west end of the Conservation Area [188];
- The estate yard just south off the Barton, formerly the estate saw mills, enclosed by an historic limestone rubble wall, is functional and mostly well-screened by mature planting;
- The estate yard hides an eighteenth-century brick-faced forge with stone dressings, which is unlisted but of architectural and historic interest [193-96];
- The former Archery House, now used as a sports pavilion to the south of the Broad Ride, is of traditional character and appearance and has a positive impact [185];
- The informal gravelled footpath along the south side, part lined with iron railings and limestone gate piers; these are attractive features, historic and a distinctive contributory factor;
- A few timber benches of simple garden design located near the entrance to the Park at the top of Cecily Hill ensure that this part of the Park is well-used for informal recreation by those living and working in Cirencester, as well as visitors who discover the Park whilst in the town;
- The Park is understated in that there are no signposts within the town or within the Park itself; it has something of a secretive quality.

Character Area 3: The Broad Ride – Negative Features & Issues

- The estate yard largely obscures some unattractive utilitarian buildings of modern materials and design but these are very visible when the estate gates are open;
- The interior of the Hexagon has had its lime plaster removed and contains some modern painted graffiti;
- Ad hoc twentieth-century additions to the former Archery House, now a sports pavilion, detract from the otherwise positive appearance of the building;
- Many of the trees are old and will need replacement with trees of appropriate size and species as and when they die or become diseased;
- One of the pairs of rusticated pillars at the west end of the Conservation Area Boundary is obscured by vegetation;
- The brick-fronted historic forge and adjacent pitched roofed buildings within the estate yard are in poor condition and under-used; consideration should be given to a condition survey and an analysis of their architectural and historic importance for possible inclusion in the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest [193-96];
- Other structures such as the iron park railings adjacent the Archery House should also be considered for inclusion in the Statutory List [119].



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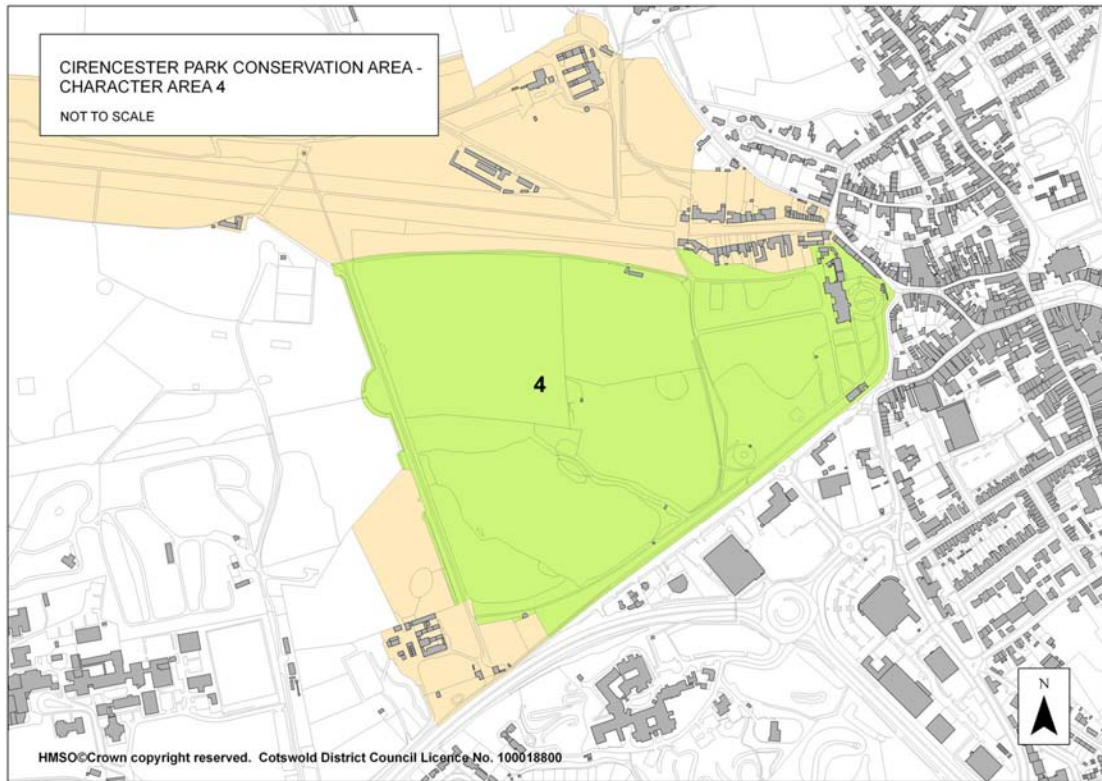


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Character Area 4: The Mansion



Map T



Character Area 4: The Mansion – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 4: The Mansion – Key Characteristics

- Early eighteenth-century house [c1715-1718] of classical proportions but very simple in design, altered in the early nineteenth-century by renowned architect Robert Smirke, and directly aligned to the Perpendicular tower of the Parish Church to the east and the Queen Anne Monument with its Doric column to the west within the Park [84 & 85];
- The Mansion House grounds incorporate the pleasure grounds including the tree-lined lake dug in c1736 - one of the earliest informal lakes in the country - the early eighteenth-century Horse Temple [listed Grade II, and originally sited near the Hexagon] and the eighteenth-century Ice House [listed Grade II*] also known as Grismond's Tower, all of which are barely visible from public view [79 & 80];
- The west elevation of the Mansion is visible, and deliberately so, from the safe distance of Fulham Bridge on Windsor Walk, a semi-circular grassed area with stone-faced ha-ha on its western edge in parallel with the whole length of Windsor Walk [197];
- A substantial three-quarter circle yew hedge of some 40ft high and believed to be the biggest and oldest in Europe, and which leaves an abiding impression of this end of the town [201];
- Classically-inspired and massive gated entrance together with adjacent small twentieth-century lodge facing Silver Street and the Parish Church [201];
- High coursed squared limestone park wall [approximately 3m high lowering to approximately 2m high] bordering the Pleasure Grounds from the eastern rusticated gated entrance facing Silver Street as far as the gated access off the old Tetbury Road at the southern end of Windsor Walk; the wall has quoins to angles and ashlar coping in Park Lane and changes to a less formal character minus coping to reflect the changing nature of the site it contains [210];
- Gun embrasures towards the east end of this high enclosing wall are positioned to enable fire down Castle Street, a relic of the Second World War;
- Nineteenth-century stables adjacent the Mansion with impressive roofline including lead-covered cupola, ashlar chimney stacks and carved finials, the whole viewed from either end of Park Street [203 & 206];
- Views from Fulham Bridge are a distinctive and impressive feature of the conservation area focusing attention on key features within the Park, most notably the mansion itself with the Parish Church tower behind, Queen Anne's Monument and surrounding pasture land, and northward towards the Hexagon [198-99];
- Avenue of mature limes along Windsor Walk with oblique views to the Parish Church across the Mansion grounds and opposite, beyond the ha-ha towards the western depths of the park [205];
- Ha-Ha and Fulham Bridge on Windsor Walk are an important element in the design of the Park providing a trompe l'oeil effect and separating pasture land from the more formal areas of the Park; both features may be considered worthy of listed status in due course [101-102];
- The raised path along the old Tetbury Road flanked by green verges and marking the southern boundary of the Conservation Area is important

visually and provides appropriate safety for pedestrians physically; the eastern end of the adjacent road leading to Park Lane and Sheep Street now forms one of the principle vehicular routes into the town [222];

- The location of Mansion adjacent the town is unusual; historically most landed gentry [Whigs] went to great pains to isolate their country seats whereas the Tory Earl Bathurst wanted to maintain the connection with the town community on which he prided himself on being a member, albeit an aristocratic one.

Character Area 4: The Mansion – Negative Features & Issues

- The whole of the Mansion Character Area is private and not accessible to the public except as viewed from Windsor Walk; as well as the Mansion itself, the Pleasure Grounds contain the tree-lined informal lake, and two listed buildings, namely the Horseguards Pavilion and the Ice House [Grismond's Tower] [79-80];
- Utilitarian timber post-and-rail fences form the boundary to the Mansion grounds where they meet with Windsor Walk. Slender metal railings of the parkland type still exist in places including near the former Archery House and a small section of such railing still exists in a small dip along the east side of Windsor Walk providing an ideal design template; [212]
- Sections of the retaining wall of the ha-ha and the high rubble wall along the old Tetbury Road are in poor condition;
- Utilitarian features such as the galvanised railings to the ramp on the south raised walk and the vandalised electricity cabinet adjacent the former Museum of Roman Antiquities have a negative impact on the special character and appearance of the character area [211];
- The stone-faced ha-ha [101 & 102] and Victorian metal bench along the old Tetbury Road [207] are of architectural and historic interest but remain unlisted.



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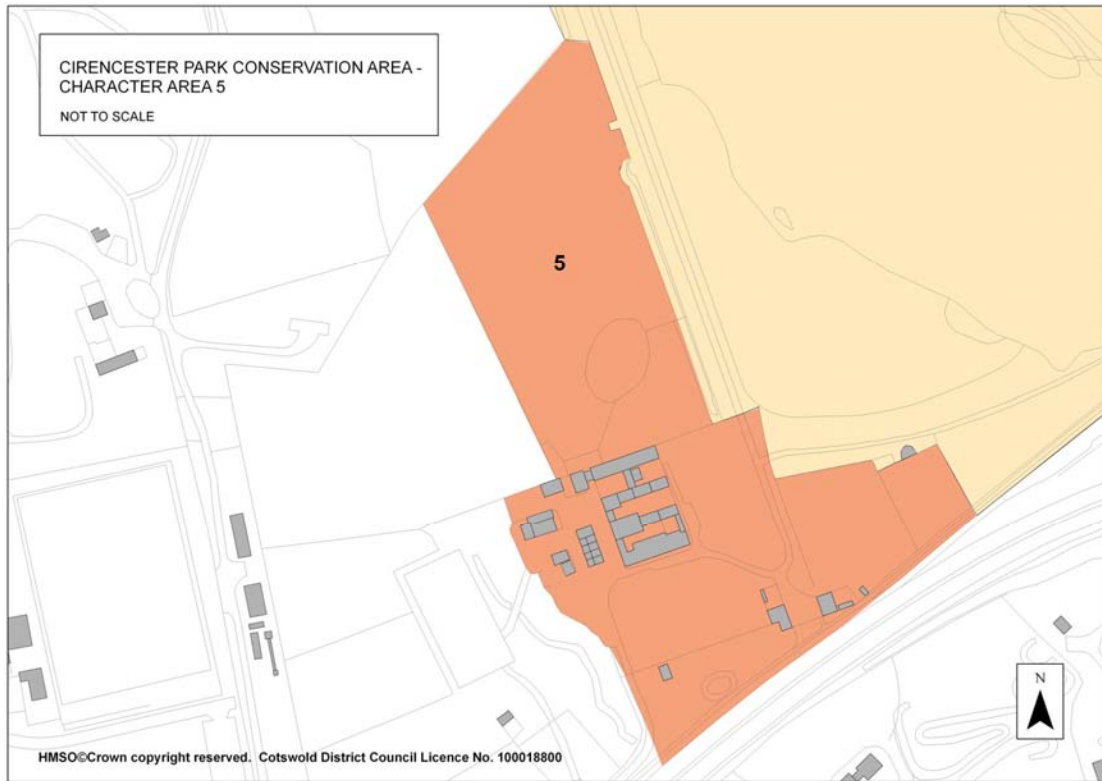


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Character Area 5: The Kennels



Map U



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Character Area 5: The Kennels – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 5: The Kennels – Key Characteristics

- Former purpose-built hunt kennels, dated 1837, with attached house serving the original deer park, and Whips Cottage, the whole now used as offices with ancillary storage buildings [215];
- Hunt kennels, designed Charles Parish and consisting of a central composition with tall gabled three-storey centre and much lower central gables to the flanking wings, all facing the Old Tetbury Road to the south [214-15];
- Domestic scale throughout consisting predominantly of two-storey buildings in combination with single storey extensions / wings;
- Two Park gate lodges of early twentieth-century date, gates and limestone piers forming a secondary entrance to the Park enabling public access from the old Tetbury Road [217 & 221];
- Materials are predominantly limestone walls with ashlar chimney stacks to clay tile roofs;
- Timber-panelled buildings adjacent Kennels [218-19];
- A small but prominent group of beech trees to north form an important backdrop to the Kennels [223];
- A key view from southern end of Windsor Walk northwards to the Hexagon;
- The area is screened from the main road by mature trees 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 [217];
- Two areas of short-cut lawn which serve as an appropriate setting to the attractive built form [217 & 223].

Character Area 5: The Kennels – Negative Features & Issues

- Noise from the Tetbury / Stroud Road - A419;
- A Neutral Building housing a commercial unit to west of The Kennels [226] represents an enhancement opportunity;
- Buildings in poor condition on extreme western boundary; [224]
- The signs attached to the gated pedestrian entrance, are currently of an acceptable form and informative, but care should be taken to ensure further signage is kept to a minimum. [225]



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