

Character Area 6: Beeches & City Bank





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Character Area 6: Beeches & City Bank – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 6: Beeches & City Bank – Key Characteristics

- A substantially green character area, long and sinuous in shape, 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;
- The area contains two adjacent Important Open Spaces divided by Beeches Road, and facilitates a range of sporting recreational pursuits whilst informal pedestrian footpaths, shaded by mature trees, provide a genuinely tranquil, if underused, retreat [601, 603 & 605] with significant archaeological and historic interest;
- Dissected lengthways by two divergent branches of the River Churn [587 & 589], the area contains two large public recreation grounds:
 - one to the north of the raised bank of the former railway line which crosses the area on a diagonal curve from east to west; this area doubles as a sports field for the adjacent Cirencester County School [598], and
 - the second lying south of the railway line and bordered to the south by the raised City Bank - the most substantial remnant of former Roman ramparts which once encircled and contained Roman Corinium [587];
- A long narrow strip of land to the south of the curving railway line is home to colourful allotment gardens protected from winds by the railway bank and a corresponding bank of trees [605];
- The southern tip of the character area follows the route of the River Churn as far south as its junction with the dual-carriageway, before it diverts under the road towards the Kingsmeadow Services on Cricklade Street, and this section also includes a small number of allotment gardens and a bridge over the ringroad, providing a vital pedestrian link to this area from the major residential development of Kingshill [608-9];
- Views are an especially important feature [the principle views are marked on Map N on page 53] and include views across open land [598], along pedestrian routes, and limited views towards Cirencester Parish Church to the northwest – just glimpsed from the raised City Bank [597] – and towards the spire of Holy Trinity Church to the west;
- The majority of the relatively few buildings contained within the character area are located at the northern end, facing London Road, whilst others line Beeches Road, with the former mill further south on the east side; a handful of largely hidden nursery-sheds are the only other buildings [609];
- Whilst few in number, many of the varied buildings in the area are Positive Unlisted Buildings or are Listed for their special architectural and historic interest, and whilst there are a handful of Neutral Buildings, the area contains no Negative Buildings;
- The local limestone predominates for building elevations, chimney stacks and boundary walls whilst the one brick terrace [596] coupled with several brick chimneys and boundary walls, and parts of the former railway line [607], add colour and variety to the various architectural forms [588 & 591] with roofs of either Cotswold limestone [592] or Welsh slate [593];
- The Character Area is predominantly residential, but also contains an art gallery, The Phoenix Centre [594], a small restaurant, a sports club and Ingleside School [590];

- Trees play a vital role in the character area, not just in screening it from the busy ring-road [604], 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 [600 & 603].



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Character Area 6: Beeches & City Bank – Negative Features & Issues

- Loss of and/or replacement of details with inappropriate designs and materials, including the use of plastic for windows and doors [610-11];
- Introduction of artificial stone products for elevations and boundary walls that weather unsympathetically, and dilute the historic character of the area [612];
- Unattractive utilitarian extensions and ancillary buildings, often highly visible from public places, for example, side and rear extensions to the former mill building [613];
- A large number of scrap vehicles surrounding the former mill [614];
- Visual clutter created by traffic-related signage and road markings, and telegraph poles and wires [615-20];
- A lack of maintenance and related vandalism [621, 624-25];



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- Poor floorscape, including very large areas of car parking devoid of landscaping [626];

- A lack of any real physical interpretation, whether of the archaeological importance of the City Bank, the ecological value of the River Churn, or the historic and architectural value of the railway line, the former mill and/or other buildings located here;
- A lack of directional signage and lighting, leading to perceptions that certain areas and pathways may be unsafe, particularly in the hours of darkness [623].



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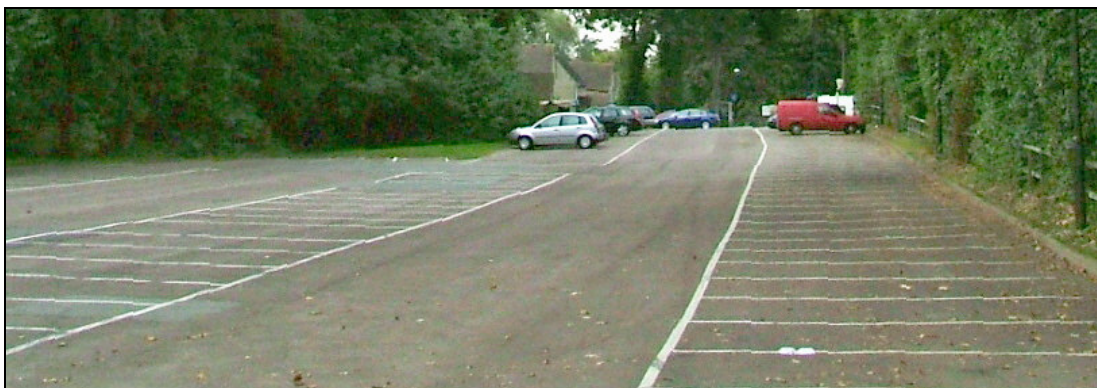
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