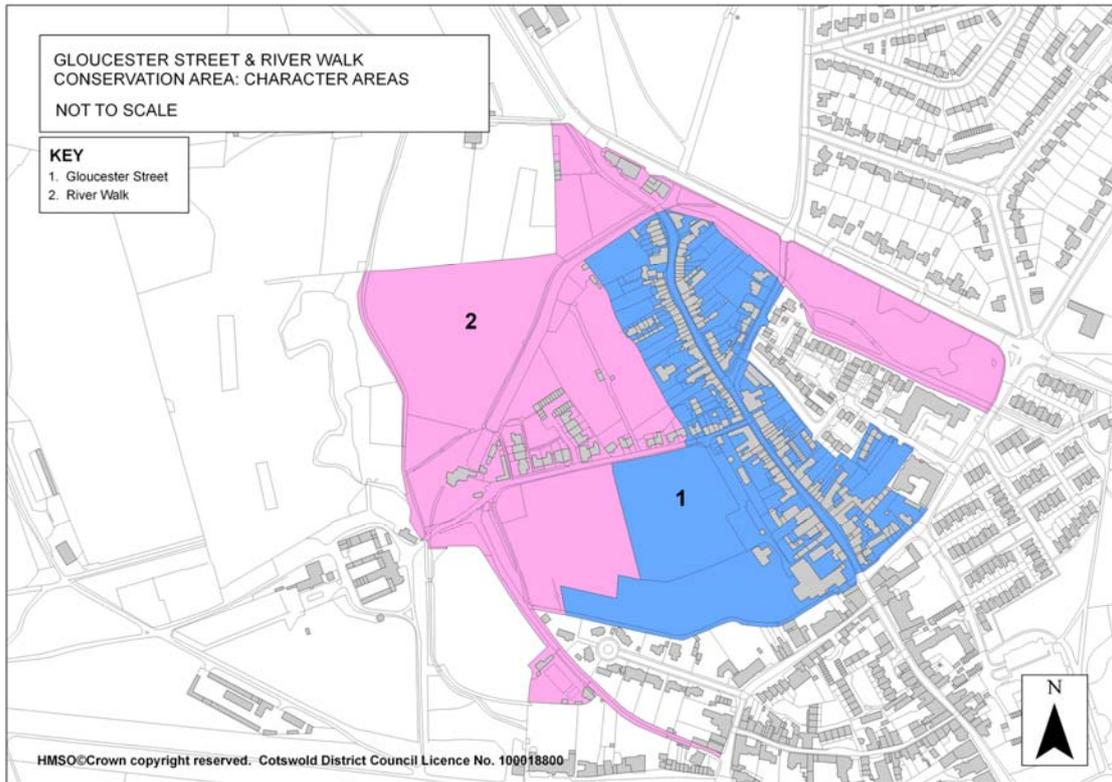


3.9 Character Areas

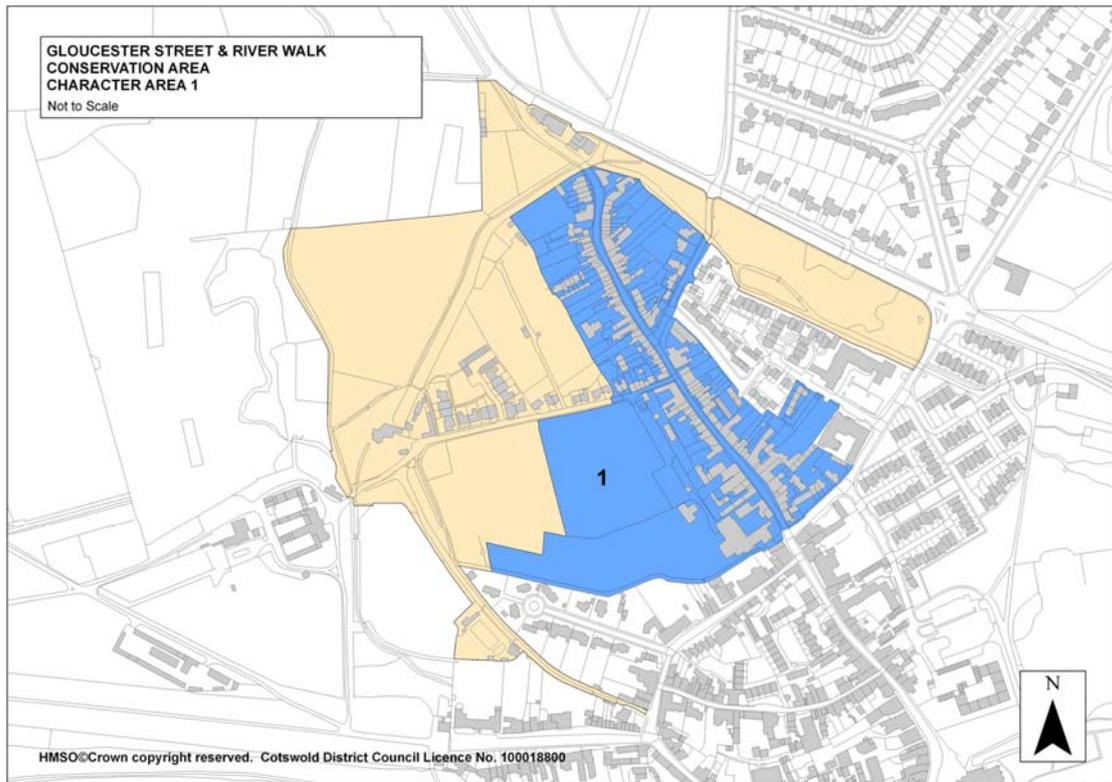
The proposed Gloucester Street & River Walk Conservation Area has been divided into two character areas which have been given the following titles for ease of reference:

1. Gloucester Street
2. River Walk



Map O

Character Area 1: Gloucester Street



Map P



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Character Area 1: Gloucester Street – Key Characteristics



Character Area 1: Gloucester Street – Key Characteristics

- A planned suburb at the north end of the town which has evolved since the medieval period and retains many good examples of the Cotswold vernacular style mostly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;
- A long narrow gently winding intimately-scaled urban space defined by predominantly two- and three-storey almost continuous historic building frontages built off the back edge of the pavement on both sides with the occasional narrow front or side garden;
- Dominant use of limestone for frontages, flank walls and garden walls and for chimneys stacks but with brick often used for tall rear chimney stacks [183] and occasionally for rear and side elevations;
- Generally rustic and simple properties typical of the Cotswold style of gabled elevations with moulded window and door surrounds, and small hipped or gabled roof dormers;
- Predominantly limestone slate roofs with some Welsh slate and clay tile and significant numbers of chimneys;
- The southern end of the street contains a handful of buildings of more polite architectural style, most notably Powell’s School, and a few buildings with Georgian facades and classical proportions albeit with few overt architectural pretensions;
- Retention of a number of historic corridor mews or “places”, indicative of the network of former tradesmen’s and artisan’s premises located at the rear of dwellings facing onto Gloucester Street itself;
- Good examples of Arts and Crafts style properties representative of the type popular throughout the Cotswolds in the early part of the twentieth century, displaying many of the characteristic features of their more historic neighbours and thereby enhancing the special character and appearance of the conservation area [79-80, 89 & 90];
- A number of Buildings of Townscape Merit – modern buildings which fit comfortably into their historic surroundings, mostly as a result of appropriate design, scale and massing, materials and detailing [120];
- A quiet residential street outside office hours due in part to a lack of through-traffic but becoming more vibrant during school term time;
- The adjacent school playing fields to the west provide an appropriate setting and resource for the school separated from Character Area 2 [River Walk] by a mature line of trees;



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Character Area 1: Gloucester Street - Negative Features & Issues:

- The floorscape is poorly designed and maintained; floorscape materials are in places discordant and/or unfit for purpose [187];
- Loss of boundary features at the junction of Gooseacre Lane and Gloucester Street resulting in a loss of enclosure [194-95];
- Poorly designed and maintained barrier near Gooseacre Bridge [197];
- Telegraph poles with overhead wires add an intrusive and distracting element to the street scene especially in Gooseacre Lane [193];
- Traffic signage adds significant visual clutter in places and is especially intrusive at the southern end of Gloucester Street [192];
- Unattractive 1970s flats and garages accessed from Trafalgar Road and via a narrow corridor off Gloucester Street detract from the special architectural interest of the proposed conservation area and present an unappealing and potentially unsafe route for pedestrians [128-130];
- The visually-intrusive electricity sub-station at the Barton Lane entrance to Powell's School [189];
- The occasional off-street car parking area involving the loss of traditional boundary walls [196];
- Replacement of architectural details with inappropriate designs and materials [198 & 199];
- Loss of lime render to a number of buildings;
- Painting of timber lintels and doors, and the occasional elevation, using shiny oil-based paints is historically inaccurate, visually unappealing and damaging to historic fabric [191];
- The dominance of vehicles in the street scene [190];



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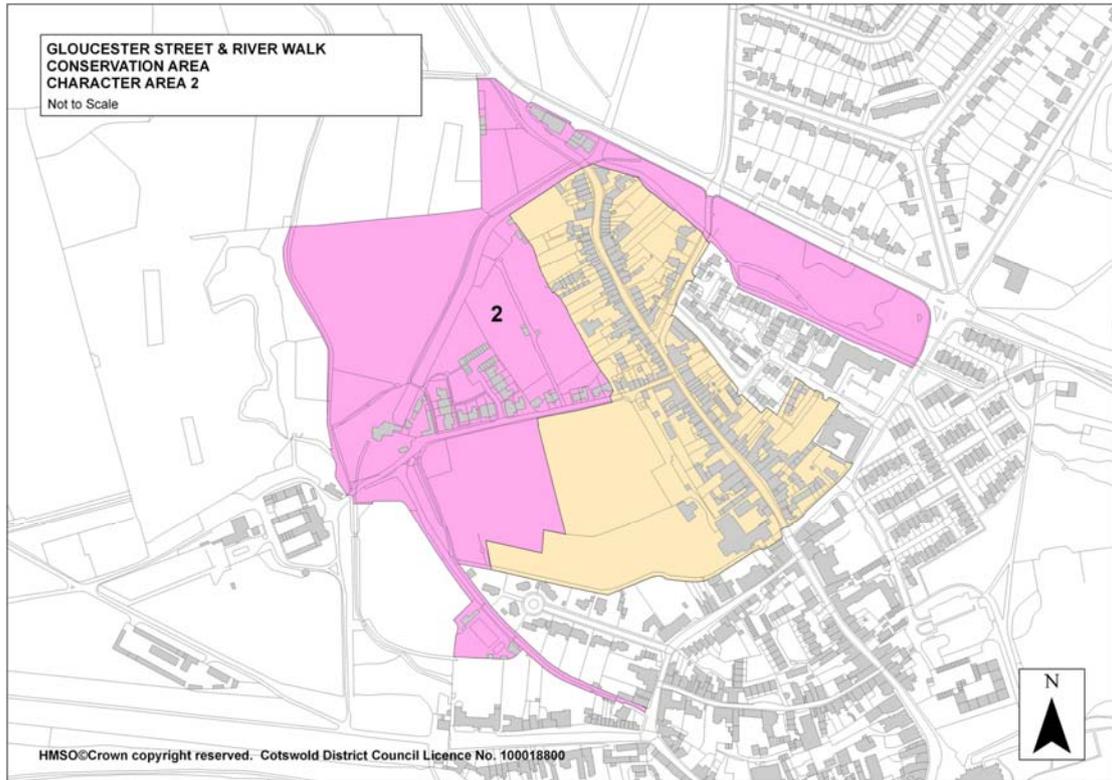


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Character Area 2: The River Walk



Map Q



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Character Area 2: The River Walk – Key Characteristics



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Character Area 2: The River Walk – Key Characteristics

- A tranquil informal recreational facility encircling the northern section of the compact town of Cirencester with views over open pasture and encompassing the route of the River Churn;
- The River Walk route can be divided into three linked parts:
 1. **Thomas Street to Barton Lane - The River Walk proper:**
Travelling in a north-westerly direction from Thomas Street, the River Walk is a tightly-enclosed urban space bordered by high walls with the Gunstool stream flowing alongside before the views open up about half way along its length to both east and west across pasture land; it is this section which gives access to the public outdoor swimming pool which during the summer months provides vibrant activity to this otherwise quiet area [201 & 203];
 2. **Barton Lane to Gloucester Street Bridge:**
The River Walk from the Barton Mill House to Gloucester Street appears instantly rural being characterised by open land bordered by tree banks with only occasional glimpses of buildings to the south and east; at its start it takes in the narrow lane formed by the high wall of the adjacent agricultural-type buildings of Barton Mill House on one side and the gardens of Mill Place on the other. This section is made more distinguished by the ornate trellis-patterned bridge near the mill house and the stone Gloucester Street bridge at the east end of the mill pound [205-207, 212 & 213];
 3. **Gloucester Street Bridge to Spitalgate Lane:**
The character of this third section known as the Jack Gardner Memorial Garden, which might not ordinarily be considered part of the “River Walk” itself, is more of an urban park and is an especially important open space in providing a green barrier between the busy Abbey Way and the residential areas to the west and north; it too is used for informal recreation and contains trees donated by residents and a small island created by the divergent route of the river. A number of weeping willow trees reinforce the waterside character of this part of the walk [209 & 211].
- The outdoor public pool – one of the earliest in the country - provides an unusual urban feature whilst its “Castle” backdrop [former militia barracks on Cecily Hill] is instantly memorable [202];
- Barton Mill House whilst physically altered, together with the mill pound and associated bridges, is of historic interest;
- The new development known as Mill Place has been thoughtfully designed and enhances the special character of the proposed Conservation Area [210];
- Views throughout the character area are a key feature [Map L]; the clock tower of the modern fuel garage at the northern tip of the proposed Conservation Area is important in announcing the town;
- Allotment gardens form a pleasant open space and additional recreational activity;
- All the green open spaces of the River Walk character area are important to the setting of both Gloucester Street and the town itself.

Character Area 2: The River Walk – Negative Features & Issues

- Some boundary features are in a poor condition [217-19];
- Part of the wall bordering the mill pond near Gloucester Street Bridge has been very poorly repaired using concrete blocks [216];
- The large canopy and extensive brightly-coloured signage to the modern fuel station at the northern end detracts from the special architectural and historic character of the proposed Conservation Area [127];
- The dominance of vehicles at Gloucester Street Bridge where an otherwise visually-appealing setting is made unattractive and unsafe for pedestrians accessing the River Walk [190];



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