

## 6A BLACKBIRD LEYS

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Photo 1: Feeder roads with flat roofed houses and off street parking.



Photo 2: Variation in scale and orientation of buildings.



Photo 3: Pedestrian alleys and a lack of clarity between fronts and backs.



Photo 4: District centre with shops, flats and public buildings.



Photo 5: Large open areas in central open space with belts of mature trees.



Photo 6: Green corridor between old and recent development areas.



Photo 7: Winding streets and housing courts in a more recent development area.



Photo 8: Small open spaces within the housing areas.

The later development area south of Northfield Brook, is a maturing residential area, which is built with more attention to architectural detailing and better finishes to the public realm. The presence of vernacular buildings of local stone, the grand avenue of horse chestnuts along Windale Avenue and the Northfield Brook corridor contribute to a higher landscape quality in these areas.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate (low in 1960's area, but some fine aspects of landscape quality in more recent developments).
Biodiversity	Low - unrecorded sites of local interest only
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low
Open Space	Moderate

### Sensitivity to change

The area is not highly sensitive to change because it does not have a high historic integrity or biodiversity and is not highly visible. However, it does fall within the view cone of the viewpoint at Garsington and is therefore visually sensitive. Recent development has been positive with attention to local architectural styles and clarity of ownership. The most sensitive areas are the Northfield Brook corridor and settings to historic buildings. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- incremental erosion of quality and potential vandalism to areas in the public realm;
- erosion of access and ecological connectivity along the brook corridors as a result of built development;
- ageing and subsequent loss of mature trees;
- planting of small ornamental trees which are out of scale with the large open spaces and do not contribute to a unified street scene;
- fly tipping, polluting run-off from adjacent housing and lack of management of the wetland corridors.

### Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities

The core objective should be to enhance the quality of the public realm, in particular through helping develop clarity of ownership of open spaces or common areas.

Protection of the mature trees and natural features within the open spaces will also be an important objective.

Key areas to consider for policy development and townscape enhancement may include:

- enhancing the physical fabric of the public realm within 1960's housing areas;
- enhancing and diversifying the extensive open space through tree and shrub planting, and considering setting grass cutting regimes to enhance biodiversity of the grassland resource;
- planting of large trees such as oaks and horse chestnuts to provide the next generation of trees and replace species such as silver birch, which have a short life span;
- considering the limited use of species such as pine, which are characteristic of the sandy soils in this area;
- maintaining the ecological character of the brooks running through Blackbird Leys Park and Spindleberry Park by managing them as wetland landscapes;
- improving access and ecological connectivity along the brook corridors for example to the currently undeveloped open land to the west and east for example around Minchery Farm;
- developing a sustained programme of community participation in the design and management of open spaces;
- considering the views from Garsington in planning any new development.

## 6B WOOD FARM

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### Description

Wood Farm is a residential area with a large central area of woodland which connects to adjacent rural areas and woodlands including Shotover and Brasenose Wood. The housing is laid out in a series of mostly short closes or crescents with many surviving mature trees within the developed area. The housing is generally at a low density and comprises a mix of post-war housing styles including three storey blocks of flats, short terraces, semi-detached houses and single storey buildings.

The layout of the housing includes a number of problems associated with housing development of this era, including exposed back garden fences and a lack of clarity with regard to the ownership of open areas.

It lies on the eastern outskirts of Oxford, on the lower wooded clay slopes of Shotover Hill. The pattern of ancient woodland on the slopes of Shotover can be clearly seen infiltrating the residential area - many wide grass verges and public open spaces support oaks of ancient wood pasture and Magdalen Wood, originally part of Royal Shotover Forest, provides a wildlife haven in this urban area. It also provides a buffer against the busy ring road, which forms a boundary to the east. The estate is sheltered in the shadow of Shotover Hill which forms a rural wooded backdrop to the estate.

### Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying Landscape Type	Lower clay slopes of the <i>Enclosing Limestone Hills</i> - gently sloping topography at the foot of Shotover.
Evolution of townscape	City estate on former Shotover fringe woodland, incorporating Magdalen wood common.  Post 1960s with much older landscape elements.
Archaeological and historic interest	Magdalen Wood is an area of ancient oak woodland, formerly part of Shotover Royal Forest when it was managed as wood pasture, and now managed by Oxford City Council.  There are historic links to Royal Forest of Shotover.
Street and block pattern	Curvilinear street layout with many cul-de-sacs and crescents.
Private/public realm interface	Some confusion with regard to exposed back garden fences and open space which is neither clearly in the public or private realm.
Massing and enclosure	Relatively low density built development with large areas of open space. Spatial characteristics are predominantly quite open, although the mature trees create a soft enclosing element.
Architecture and built form	Short terraces of 2 storey houses, three storey blocks of flats, single storey buildings, and one tower block.  Free standing garages are also a feature in some locations.

	Common materials include red and yellow brick, and light painted render with clay tile roofs.
Streetscape	Wide streets often with open grass areas around flats, or low brick boundary walls to housing, with a variety of fences and hedges.
Open space	Wide grass verges and public open spaces support ancient oaks. Many mature trees are features of the landscape. Magdalen Wood, originally part of Royal Shotover Forest, provides a wildlife haven in this urban area.
Biodiversity	Woodland and scrub and smaller areas of calcareous grassland and small ponds are of local ecological significance and designated as SLINC, although the ring road has effectively cut these habitats off from the neighbouring Shotover Park.
Land use, culture and vitality	Residential.
Access and traffic	Pedestrian paths connect housing with woodland areas.
Views and visual patterns	Shotover Hill forms a rural wooded backdrop to the residential estate. Skyline views are diverse including roofs, chimneys, mature trees, hills and woodland beyond.
Designations	Magdalen Wood is a SLINC Brasenose Wood is a SSSI and part of the Green Belt

### Evaluation of character and quality

This area is distinctive, in its close relationship of residential areas to the ancient woodland, and visual and historical connections with Shotover. The natural areas are important components in the local environment. The area is an interesting and diverse suburb, although some aspects of the layout of the housing detract from an otherwise attractive environment.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	High in woodland areas
Historic Integrity	High in respect of connection to Shotover and retention of woodland
Re-creatability	Moderate - landscape framework if ancient
Intervisibility	Low - no views of historic core
Open Space	High

## 6B WOOD FARM

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Photo 1: Mature trees surviving by flats with shared open space.



Photo 2: More recent brick housing with development on one side of the street only.



Photo 3: Back gardens facing the public domain.



Photo 4: Access areas where the distinction between public and private is unclear.



Photo 5: Mature ancient woodland as a focus for the developed area.

### **Sensitivity to change**

This area is moderately sensitive due to the important woodland and mature tree cover it contains. New development and changes to buildings or garden boundaries will affect the nature and quality of the public realm. The diversity in garden boundaries is one of the most evident ways in which change has taken place to date. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- incremental erosion of quality and potential vandalism to areas in the public realm;
- ageing and subsequent loss of mature oaks;
- planting of small ornamental trees and ornamental shrubs that do not respect the native vegetation;
- deterioration in garden boundaries.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The core objective will be to conserve the trees and woodland areas, and to maintain the open spatial character of the area and its connectivity to woodland and rural areas to the east. Key areas to consider for policy development and townscape enhancement may include:

- planting of native tree species such as oaks to ensure continuity in future tree cover;
- enhancing ecological and landscape character of school and recreation grounds to reflect the underlying landscape;
- guiding further development or infill to complement the distinctive spatial character of the area and its close association with tree cover;
- preparing design guidance for boundary details;
- enhancing links to Shotover Hill by providing footbridges over the Eastern ByPass.



## 6C HORSPATH ROAD AREA

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### Description

This is a predominantly residential settlement with post-war housing and clusters of predominantly post 1990 housing around cul-de-sacs, and a number of institutional and office buildings. There is much diversity in the housing style and materials, although most of the housing is brick and two storey, with a number of three storey blocks of flats. The density of developed areas is high, with a wide diversity in streetscape character, from the enclosed housing courts, to wider main thoroughfares, with the Eastern By-Pass creating a strong boundary to the area. The area has few open spaces and little vegetation.

The area lies on a level plateau of Wheatley Limestone (coral rag) on the *Settled Plateaux* landscape type. This creates a level area with views eastwards, to the Shotover Country Park and Cowley Industrial works.

### Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying Landscape Type	<i>Settled Plateaux.</i>
Evolution of townscape	Previously known as Cowley Field - arable fields and furlongs according to maps from 1605 and 1777. New housing development has been built on the former Bullington Green.
Archaeological and historic interest	Little evident interest.
Street and block pattern	Street pattern typified by curving streets and short cul-de-sacs.
Private/public realm interface	Generally clear pattern, although there are some areas around commercial buildings where the sense of ownership is not clear.
Massing and enclosure	A high density urban environment with little green space. Generally 2 or 3 storey.
Architecture and built form	There is much diversity in architecture, with brick as the predominant building material.
Streetscape	Streetscape is generally open and lacking in street trees.
Open space	The older development to the south of the site exhibits more greenspace than the later development to the north. Generally the post 1990 properties have small private gardens and one significant communal greenspace – the recreation ground off Hollow Way. The flats to the south of the site have communal greenspaces separating the buildings from the roads.  Tree planting is generally restricted to private gardens. The new development does not generally include street trees, and those present are immature.
Biodiversity	This area may have been an important connection between Shotover Country Park and the golf course and parkland to the west, but recent residential infill has left mature trees as the only ecological

## 6C HORSPATH ROAD AREA

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Photo 1: A diverse range of post-war housing types.



Photo 2: Recent housing developments in discrete pockets.



Photo 3: Institutional buildings and student housing adjacent to housing areas.



Photo 4: Wide streets on the edge of the area.



Photo 5: Back garden fences exposed to the public realm.

	interest of this area and has effectively closed this link. Recent residential developments offer poor wildlife habitat in the form of short mown amenity grassland and mainly young ornamental trees.
Land use, culture and vitality	Generally quiet residential suburb with the by-pass audible in the background.
Access and traffic	The cul-de-sacs do not allow easy access or orientation through the area.
Views and visual patterns	The varying orientation of buildings creates some lack of orientation, with short views, except at the edge of the area where there are longer views to the east.
Designations	None.

### **Evaluation of character and quality**

Horspath Road Area is an area with a diverse series of development styles, which has few distinctive or unifying features. The individual pockets of new development are generally well detailed, contrasting with brick terraces and flats of lower architectural interest. The lack of strength of character suggests that this is an area of low to moderate townscape quality.

### **Indicators of landscape value**

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low
Open Space	Low

### **Sensitivity to change**

This area has a low sensitivity to change. The area has developed in a piecemeal manner, and although some individual pockets of housing are well designed, the area has been, and continues to be, sensitive to uncoordinated infill development or redevelopment. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- incremental erosion of quality and potential vandalism to areas in the public realm;
- planting of small ornamental trees and ornamental shrubs that do not respect the native vegetation;

- new development that could sever the visual link between Shotover and Southfield golf course;
- any loss of mature vegetation that is already scarce.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The core objective will be to enhance the quality of the streetscape, and to plan new development in such a way that a stronger townscape identity evolves. Key areas to consider for policy development and townscape enhancement may include:

- planning for new development in such a way that it addresses issues of orientation, and helps contribute to the establishment of a clearer townscape character;
- increasing tree planting to help soften the starkness of recent development and enhance streetscape quality;
- improving the ecological value of the playground by the introduction of edge planting or a nature area within the site;
- promoting a wooded character in any greenspace in an attempt to marry the townscape with surrounding wooded areas;
- enhancing visual and physical connectivity between the open spaces of Shotover and Southfield;
- conserving the Corner House and its setting as a landmark feature.

## 7 OPEN HILLS (WITH INSTITUTIONS)

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### Generic Description

This landscape/townscape character type is defined by its prominent hillsides and open, undulating topography. It coincides with the *Settled Plateaux* landscape character type: lower Corallian platforms of sand and calcareous sandstone, incised by narrow valleys, with a steep scarp at their western edge. The Coral Rag, which is quarried from these areas, is typical of the buildings in this landscape type and the sandy soils are reflected in the vegetation, including gorse and pine.

The scarp slopes characteristic of this type form important green backdrops to the City of Oxford, for example South Park (*Headington Hill*) and Southfield golf course (*Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex*). Narrow valleys containing tributary brooks are features of the type and often form part of the open areas surrounding these institutional buildings, for example the Lye Valley adjacent to the Churchill hospital (*Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex*). Large scale institutional buildings, often of modern style and materials, are set within extensive open grounds, often on hill tops and on sites with an historic connection. For example, the *John Radcliffe Hospital Complex* occupies the hill top that was formerly the Headington Manor House Estate. These open hills contrast with the surrounding densely developed urban areas..

### Key Characteristics

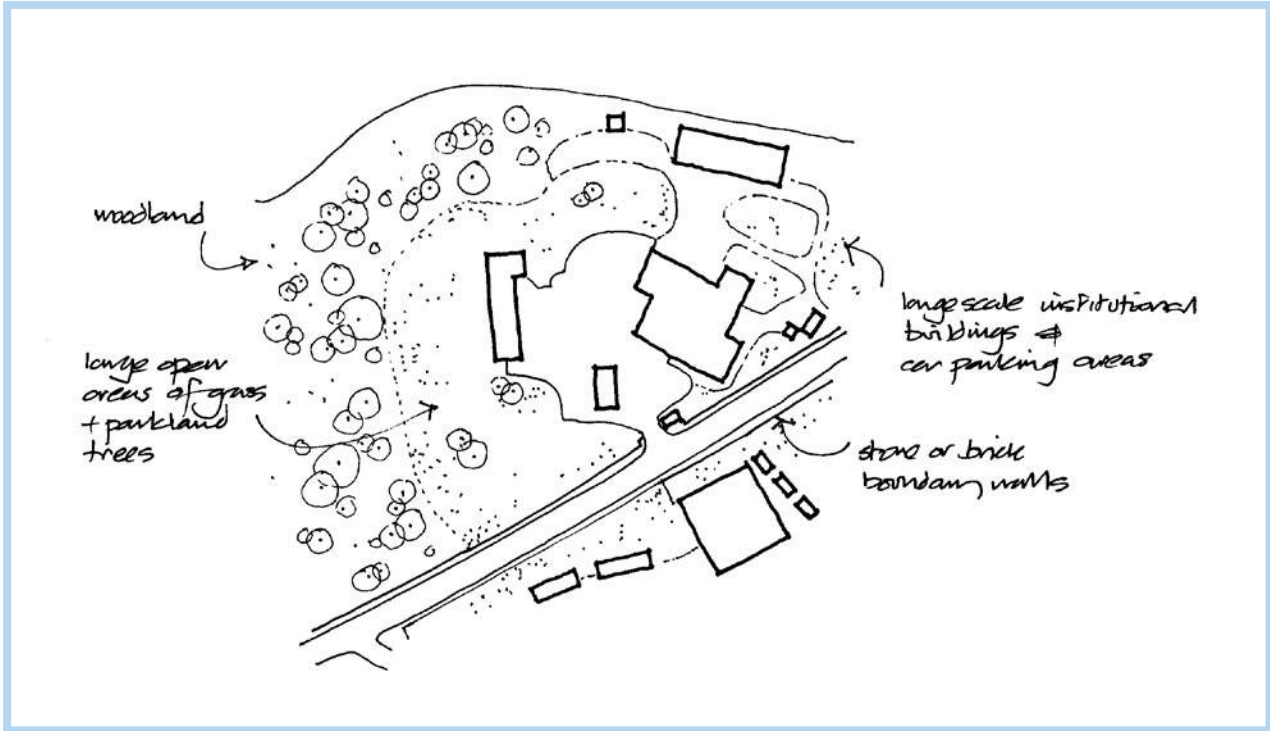
- large scale institutional buildings, often of modern style and materials, set within extensive open space;
- often sited on hill tops, on sites with an historic connection;
- occur on the *Settled Plateaux* landscape character type to the east of Oxford;
- scarp slopes form areas of open space and important green backdrops to the City of Oxford;
- narrow valleys containing tributary brooks are features of the landscape;
- views over the city of Oxford.

### Character Areas

- 7A Headington Hill
- 7B Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex
- 7C John Radcliffe Hospital Complex

## 7 OPEN HILLS

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Generic example of spatial characteristics.

## 7A HEADINGTON HILL

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### Description

Headington Hill is a landmark which rises steeply from the Cherwell Valley and forms a distinct open area within the *Settled Plateaux* landscape type. The earliest known land use of the character area known as Headington Hill was pasture while the areas surrounding it were in arable cultivation. Headington Hill has remained as a large area of open space within the city. Evidence of medieval strip farming remains in South Park.

The influence of the estate landscapes associated with Headington Hill Hall (originally 1771 and re-built in 1861) is strong in this area. The landscape is characterised by single estate buildings and institutional complexes standing within parkland or private grounds. The density of built development is low, although buildings are not distributed evenly throughout the area; built development is focussed at the top of the hill. Large scale buildings (up to 3-4 stories) are typically set within open grounds with generous gaps between adjacent buildings. The great sense of space is enhanced by its hill top location.

Each building has its own individual style, often ornate and with detail. The lavish 'Italianate' Headington Hill Hall designed in 1861 and constructed from yellow brick with stone was the focal point of the area, although today it lies hidden behind mature trees and stone walls and belongs to Oxford Brookes University. Late 19th century houses including Langley Lodge, 1879, and Fairfield House, 1895, have become colleges/schools (now Plater College and Rye St Anthony School) and Headington Girls School, a neo-Georgian red brick building, was added in 1928 (*photo 1*). Oxford Brookes University campus now forms the focal point of the area, although it is the least impressive architecturally. A group of large red brick, exposed concrete frame or curtain-wall buildings built between 1953 and the present day occupy an area at the top end of South Park (*photo 2*).

Headington Road, the main route between Oxford and London, divides the area in two; to the north is Headington Hill Park and to the south is South Park. But it is the leafy lanes of Cheney Lane and Pullens Lane, notable for their lack of kerbs or road markings, that convey the rural character of the area. Cuckoo Lane, an extension of Woodlands Road in Headington, is a pedestrian/cycle route enclosed by mature vegetation that further enhances the sense of rurality of this landscape (*photo 3*). Stone boundary walls are features of the public realm, enclosing private grounds (*photo 4*).

Open space is a major feature of this area. The high proportion of public greenspace is provided by South Park, a spacious open park with mown grass and mature trees on a steep hillside (*photo 5*), and Headington Hill Park, a designed landscape park of Headington Hill Hall with many ornamental trees planted in the 19th century. The woodland, mature trees and areas of rough grassland within South Park and Headington Hill Park are a significant wildlife resource. This is a relatively rural area in the middle of the city where one can find tranquillity and vast amounts of

greenspace. Chiang Yee in *The Silent Traveller in Oxford* describes Headington School as having an 'atmosphere of spacious dignity'. This could be applied to this whole area covering Headington Hill.

The major land uses are institutional and recreational and the comings and goings of many students provide a sense of vitality to the area around the University. South Parks is a popular location for festivals, fairs etc and during bank holidays the area becomes full of people.

Headington Hill provides a green setting to east Oxford where woodland and mature parkland trees form the skyline. There are contrasting views throughout the area, from the framed views along Cuckoo Lane and short distance views within wooded parkland to the open, panoramic views from South Park. There are important historic views from South Park across the 'dreaming spires' of the city down below (photo 6). Many artists, including J M W Turner have painted this famous view.

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled Plateaux</i> - Headington Hill is a prominent hill, enclosing Oxford to the east of the Cherwell.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Estate landscapes associated with the former house (Headington Hill Hall 1861) and parkland of Morrells' estate are strong.  Former medieval fields on Headington Hill have remained open (now South Park and Headington Hill Park)  Late 19th century houses including Langley Lodge, 1879, and Fairfield House, 1895, have become colleges/schools (now Plater College and Rye St Anthony School).  20th century additions including neo-Georgian Headington School for girls on the London Road and Oxford Brookes University campus.
Archaeological and historic interest	Evidence of medieval strip farming remains in South Park.  Former house and parkland of Morrells' estate, mostly preserved open space and institutional use.  Wrought iron bridge linking Headington Hill Park and South Park.
Street and block pattern	Single estate buildings and institutional complexes.
Public/private realm interface	There is confusion over which is public and which is private space, particularly with respect to playing fields on the edges of public parks and the grounds of the institutions.  Access in and around Oxford Brooked campus is semi-private.
Massing and enclosure	Average density is low, although distributed unevenly throughout the area - built development is focussed at the top of the hill leaving the hillsides as open space.  Large scale buildings (up to 4-5 stories) are typically set within open grounds with generous gaps between adjacent buildings. Brookes campus is the exception.  Great sense of space, enhanced by its hill top location.
Architecture and built form	The lavish 'Italianate' Headington Hill Hall designed 1861 and



## 7A HEADINGTON HILL

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Photo 1: Headington Girls School, a neo-Georgian building was added in 1928.



Photo 2: Oxford Brookes University campus now forms the focus for the area.



Photo 3: Framed views along the pedestrian/cycle route, Cuckoo Lane.



Photo 4: Stone walls are typical boundary features.



Photo 5: South Park, a spacious open park with mown grass and mature trees.



Photo 6: The view of Oxford from Headington Hill, painted by JMW Turner.

	<p>constructed from yellow brick with stone.</p> <p>Plater College (1879) termed an 'unpleasant house' by Pevsner.</p> <p>Headington Girls School, a neo-Georgian re brick building built in 1928.</p> <p>Oxford Brookes is a group of large red brick, exposed concrete frame or curtain-wall buildings built between 1953 and the present day.</p>
Streetscape	<p>Rural lanes such as Cheney Lane and Pullens Lane are features - typified by lack of kerbing or road markings</p> <p>Rural footpaths such as Cuckoo Lane are rural, gravel laid paths with lined by grass and enclosed by mature vegetation</p> <p>Stone boundary walls are features of the public realm, enclosing private spaces - seen along Headington Road, Pullens Lane, Cheney Lane.</p> <p>Mature trees are features of many streets.</p>
Open space	<p>There is a high proportion of greenspace in this character area which has a great influence on the character of the area.</p> <p>South Park is a spacious, open park with mown grass and mature trees on a steep hillside. Evidence of strip farming has survived from the medieval period.</p> <p>Headington Hill Park is a designed landscape park with many ornamental trees planted in the 19th century- formerly the grounds of Headington Hill Hall.</p> <p>School grounds are often remnant designed landscapes from the late 19th century and include mown grassland, mature specimen trees and shrub beds.</p> <p>Ragstone walls form the boundary to open spaces.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>The woodland, mature trees and areas of rough grassland within South Park and Headington Hill Park are a significant wildlife resource. Parkland with mature trees is recognised as a UK BAP priority habitat.</p>
Land use, culture and vitality	<p>Major land uses are Institutional and recreational.</p> <p>Many students provide a vitality to the area around the University.</p> <p>This is a relatively rural area in the middle of the city where one can find tranquillity and vast amounts of greenspace.</p> <p>Many artists, including J M W Turner have painted the famous view from South Park across the dreaming spires.</p> <p>South Parks is a popular location for festivals, fairs etc.</p>
Access and traffic	<p>Headington Road is a major through-route and key approach to the area. It divides the area in half - a wrought iron bridge links the two halves across the road.</p> <p>Cheney Lane and Pullens Lane are quiet, rural lanes for local traffic only.</p> <p>Cuckoo Lane is a major pedestrian/cycle route.</p>
Views and visual patterns	<p>There are contrasting views throughout the area, including framed views along Cuckoo Lane and open, panoramic views from South</p>

	<p>Park.</p> <p>Headington Hill provides a green setting to east Oxford where woodland and mature parkland trees form the skyline.</p> <p>There are important historic views from South Park across the 'dreaming spires' of the city down below.</p>
Designations	<p>Locally important wildlife corridor</p> <p>The majority falls within Headington Hill Conservation Area</p>

### **Evaluation of character and quality**

This area is distinctive for its topography, open spaces, parkland and mature trees. Its character is strongly influenced by Headington Hill Hall and the parkland of Morrells' estate, although the overall image is collegiate. South Park and Headington Hill Park are important open green spaces as a backdrop to the city and the wooded skyline they provide. Topography is important in allowing visual links with the historic core, including the famous Turner view from South Park. This area provides a first impression, or a gateway, to the city's collegiate character.

The parkland with mature trees, old buildings, rural lanes, boundary walls and historic depth convey a sense of quality, stability and historic continuity. Despite the presence of the post-war Brookes University campus, that is dominantly red brick, concrete and steel, perception of landscape quality remains high.

### **Indicators of landscape value**

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate - local interest including UK BAP priority habitat
Historic Integrity	High - impressive survival of historic features; Conservation Area designation
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High - famous views across Port Meadow to skyline of spires and domes
Open Space	High - large area of public open space

### **Sensitivity to change**

This area is sensitive to change as a result of its historic integrity, important habitats (including UK BAP priority habitat of parkland with mature trees, its prominent position on Headington Hill (visible from the Cherwell Valley) and its gateway location to the city from the east. Part of the area also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoint identified at South Park and this heightens its sensitivity.

Headington Hill has retained a large amount of open space. Since the medieval period, the land remained in agricultural use until 1771 when the first Headington Hill Hall was built and some of the estate's pasture was converted to parkland. The area south of the Headington Road remained in agricultural use until the early 20th century when it was purchased by the Morrell Estate and turned into South Park. The vast majority of the area has remained as public open space with a low density of built development. 20th century additions, including the neo-Georgian Headington School for girls on the London Road and Oxford Brookes University campus, have provided landmark buildings at the top of the hill.

The parkland with mature trees, old buildings, rural lanes, boundary walls and historic depth are crucial to the character of Headington Hill and threats to this local character could arise as a result of:

- infill development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this distinctive area;
- new built development that blocks historic access routes such as Cuckoo Lane;
- road works that affect the rural character of Cheney Lane and Pullens Lane;
- maturing and eventual loss of woodland and parkland trees as a result of old age;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- new built features that would block views of the historic core from the hill.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to conserve the open parkland character, historic depth, wooded skyline and panoramic views. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- encouraging the maintenance of historic features such as stone boundary walls, estate lodges and buildings;
- resisting small scale residential development in this dignified, spacious landscape;
- considering a long-term re-planting plan for trees to maintain the well wooded character of the hill;
- conserving Cuckoo Lane as a green route from Headington to the Cherwell Valley;
- maintaining the rural character of the lanes and footpaths;
- conserving and managing the open spaces to maintain the diversity of planting types;
- consider planting more trees along Headington Road to enhance the eastern approach to Oxford;

- conserving views of the historic core from South Park;
- maintaining a higher proportion of open space to built development;
- consider using furniture such as lighting to enhance the historic streetscape character of the area.

## 7B SOUTHFIELD PARK AND HOSPITALS COMPLEX

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### Description

The open hill to the south of Warneford Lane forms part of the *Settled Plateaux* landscape type, a landscape characterised by hills of sand and calcareous sandstone, incised by narrow valleys, with a steep scarp at their western edge. The *Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex* is a hill with a flat plateau top, incised by the wooded brook corridors of Boundary Brook and the Lye Valley. The plateau top was formerly common land while the slopes of the hill formed part of the medieval open field system. Extensive remains of Roman potters' workshops including kilns have been found in the grounds of the Churchill hospital indicating the site's importance as an early settlement site.

The area is dominated by open space within which large scale, grand buildings are located. The late 19th century hospital buildings of Warneford Hospital, Park Hospital and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, set within spacious grounds and bounded by estate walls, provide a landscape structure (*photo 1*). Today, the highest density of built development is focussed on the hill top in the north-east corner of the site where the Churchill Hospital, set up in 1942 as an emergency wartime hospital for US servicemen, commands a hilltop position. Its large complex form of interconnected buildings is rarely higher than two stories.

Single estate buildings or institutional complexes set within open grounds is the typical pattern of built form (*photo 2*). Properties lining Old Road and The Slade are large detached properties with large plot size that reflect this grandness of scale. However, the edges of the area have been impinged upon by small pockets of high density post-war residential terraces and flats along crescents and in cul-de-sacs at New Headington, Southfield Park and on Roosevelt Drive.

There is a low density of streets - roads tend to follow edges of the area with access roads into areas of development. The oldest street is Old Road, a wide road with mature streetscape bordered by limestone boundary walls and overhanging mature vegetation. The hospital access road, by contrast, is a tarmac road with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal street lights that appears at odds with its rural setting (*photo 3*). Residential roads tend to be quiet, spacious roads with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal tree planting (ornamental cherries) on verges.

The architecture is typically grand with the late 19th century building of Warneford Hospital built of ashlar limestone blocks in the style of a country house and Park Hospital originally a grand house in a 28 acre park. Materials of light brick and limestone pick up light reflection and stand out against their green backdrop (*photo 4*). The Churchill hospital is a group of large red brick, exposed concrete frame or curtain-wall buildings and the post war estate of New Headington is rendered domestic architecture typical of that era. Stone boundary walls are features of the public realm, enclosing private spaces.

The vast area of greenspace, including large scale open hillsides and small scale secret valleys, forms a semi-natural backdrop to the encircling development. The area is broken up into distinct units as follows with poor inter-visibility between them. Southfield Golf Course is a large area of open grassland managed for recreation that contrasts with the secretive and hidden Lye Valley (*photo 5*). This is the only truly natural feature left in this area and provides important habitats along its course. It supports some rare fen vegetation and has a high nature conservation value that is reflected in its Nature Reserve, SSSI and SLINC status. The wet woodland along its course is also a UK BAP priority habitat. The tree cover forms an important wooded skyline and provides a sense of enclosure. Oriel Wood is a broadleaved woodland with areas of wet grassland and scrub and abundant bluebell in the ground flora. This woodland is also designated as a SLINC.

### Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled Plateaux</i> - open hills enclose Oxford to the east.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	<p>Part of former common land around Churchill Hospital still remains as open space.</p> <p>Historic cross-roads of Old Road and Windmill Road in NE corner still survives.</p> <p>Late 19th century hospital buildings and estate walls along Warneford Lane/Old Road provide sense of historic landscape structure.</p> <p>20th century additions include Churchill Hospital and the residential areas of New Headington and Southfield Park.</p>
Archaeological and historic interest	<p>Open space of Headington's South Field, with hospitals on former common land (Town Furze).</p> <p>Extensive remains of potters' workshops including kilns found in the grounds of the Churchill hospital</p>
Street and block pattern	<p>Built development is focussed on the hill top in the north-east corner (around the Churchill Hospital).</p> <p>Low density of streets - roads tend to follow edges of the area with access roads into areas of development.</p> <p>Single estate buildings and institutional complexes set within open grounds are the typical pattern.</p> <p>Properties lining Old Road and The Slade are large detached properties with large plot size.</p> <p>Small pockets of high density post-war residential terraces and flats along crescents and in cul-de-sacs at New Headington, Southfield Park and on Roosevelt Drive.</p>
Public/private realm interface	<p>There is some confusion over which is public and which is private space around flats and in the grounds of institutional buildings.</p> <p>Stone walls have traditionally provided the boundary between the public and private realms in this area.</p>
Massing and enclosure	<p>Large scale buildings are typically set within open grounds with generous gaps between adjacent buildings.</p> <p>Churchill hospital is a large complex form of interconnected</p>



## 7B SOUTHFIELD PARK

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Photo 1: Mature trees and boundary walls provide a landscape structure.



Photo 2: 19th Century hospital buildings and their grounds contribute strongly to the character of the area.



Photo 3: The hospital access road has concrete kerbs and municipal lights.



Photo 4: Light coloured materials are typical of the buildings, reflecting the light from a distance.



Photo 5: The Lye valley is a secretive, hidden valley that supports rare habitats.



	<p>buildings, but rarely higher than 2 stories, with an encircling access road.</p> <p>Small pockets of complex, high density development with cul de sacs and short crescents are located around the edges of the area.</p> <p>Great sense of space, enhanced by its hill top location.</p>
Architecture and built form	<p>Late 19th century buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warneford Hospital built 1813, altered in 1877 - all ashlar blocks of limestone in the style of a country house.</li> <li>• Park Hospital - originally a grand house in a 28 acre park built in the 1880s.</li> <li>• Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre- built 1872 of red brick on an isolated site.</li> </ul> <p>All hospital sites accommodate new development and extensions.</p> <p>Churchill hospital is a group of large red brick, exposed concrete frame or curtain-wall buildings of complex interconnecting buildings built since 1942.</p> <p>Post war rendered domestic architecture of post-war estate of New Headington.</p>
Streetscape	<p>Great variety in streetscape character and detail:</p> <p>Hospital access road is a quiet tarmac road with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal street lights in a rural setting.</p> <p>Old Road is a wide, busy road with mature streetscape bordered by limestone boundary walls and overhanging mature vegetation, including some large horse chestnuts.</p> <p>Post war residential roads are quiet, spacious roads with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal tree planting (ornamental cherries) on verges.</p> <p>Stone boundary walls are features of the public realm, enclosing private spaces.</p>
Open space	<p>There is a high proportion of greenspace in this character area including large scale open hillsides and small scale secret valleys, forming a semi-natural backdrop to the encircling development.</p> <p>The area is broken up into distinct units as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southfield Golf Course is a large area of open grassland managed for recreation with small areas of shrubs and trees where course allows. There is limited public access along public footpaths.</li> <li>• Lye Valley and Boundary Brook form incised, wooded valleys with important wet woodland, fen vegetation and secretive character. Mature willows and alder are features. Footpaths allow public access.</li> <li>• Oriel Wood is a broadleaved woodland with exotic species, areas of wet grassland and scrub. Bluebell abundant in the ground flora.</li> <li>• Areas of grassland surrounding the hospitals and adjacent to Boundary Brook are remnant common land and have public access to them.</li> <li>• Large gardens of houses along Old Road, containing many trees,</li> </ul>

	contribute to the private open space.
Biodiversity	The fen is a nationally rare habitat, which supports the uncommon species of invertebrate, grass of Parnassus and common butterwort. Neighbouring areas support wet woodland, a UK BAP habitat, scrub and tall herbs. An important area of aquatic, wetland, grassland and woodland habitat.
Land use, culture and vitality	Major land uses are institutional (hospitals are centres of activity within a relatively rural environment) and recreational (golf, informal walking, allotments).  This is a relatively rural area in the middle of the city where one can find tranquillity and a semi-natural environment.
Access and traffic	Old Road is an important arterial road from which many people view the area.  Few access roads into the site, but there are several points of access along footpaths including around edges of golf course and along Boundary Brook.
Views and visual patterns	Open space breaks into several units which are not inter-visible.  Views from the hospital site, over valley, to adjacent housing areas on the skyline, for example The Slade.  Panoramic views from the golf course over Cowley and Florence Park.
Designations	Oriel Wood SLINC Lye Valley SLINC and SSSI

## Evaluation of character and quality

This area is distinctive for its topography, semi-natural environment, secret valleys, and mature trees. Its character is strongly influenced by the presence of historic hospital buildings of Warneford Hospital, Park Hospital and Nuffield Hospital and it provides a green backdrop to east Oxford.

The area is perceived as being of high landscape quality as a result of the mature vegetation, historic buildings, wetland habitats, and the sheer size of the greenspace in this area of the city. Despite the post-war housing at Girdlestone Road and modern but functional hospital blocks, landscape quality remains high.

## Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High - international importance of the Lye Valley
Historic Integrity	Moderate - survival of open space and site of Roman Kiln remains
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Moderate - views across East Oxford, but no direct views to historic core

### **Sensitivity to change**

This area is moderately sensitive to change. Although it is ecologically sensitive and is located in a prominent, elevated position, it has an enclosed character provided by vegetation. The open space is divided into compartments that vary in their sensitivity.

This area has remained predominantly open since the medieval period. The common land, known as Town Furze, was developed post-war for residential housing and the Churchill Hospital, but the former open field systems of the hillsides have remained largely open and the streams still run their natural courses. The development of the golf course and sports grounds has resulted in changes in the appearance of the open space over the years and restricted public access. The incremental development of residential housing has resulted in progressive erosion of open space on the edges and inward facing developments have changed the relationship of built form to open space.

The grandness of scale, historic buildings and designed grounds, boundary walls, secretive valleys, semi-natural vegetation and public accessibility define the character of this area and threats to this local character could arise as a result of:

- infill development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this distinctive area;
- maturing and eventual loss of old trees in hedgerow boundaries, stream edges and woodlands;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- built development or car parking that results in polluting surface water run-off into Boundary Brook.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to maintain the perception of the extent, diversity and naturalness of the remaining open space and enhance the legibility and access to the open space. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- maintaining grandness of scale, resisting small scale residential development, and intimate relationship between built form to open space;
- considering a long-term re-planting plan for trees to maintain the well wooded character of the hill, distinguishing between areas where native species would be appropriate (valleys and boundaries) and areas where ornamental planting may be appropriate (designed grounds);

- encouraging parkland character through tree planting and new boundary walls;
- using the Boundary Brook corridor as a model for reinstating its route through other parts of the city;
- encouraging the maintenance of historic features such as stone boundary walls and buildings;
- ensuring new built development makes use of the natural enclosure within the site to integrate it into the area - ensuring a full landscape and visual impact assessment is undertaken for any new built development;
- conserving the high recreational and nature conservation value of the Lye Valley as a public open space and the footpath to Cowley Marsh;
- enhancing public access to open space;
- managing the open spaces to maintain the diversity of planting types;
- consider using kerbing, planting and furniture such as lighting to enhance the streetscape character of the area.

## 7C JOHN RADCLIFFE HOSPITAL COMPLEX

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### Description

The prominent hill above Headington Village forms part of the *Settled Plateaux* landscape type, a landscape characterised by hills of sand and calcareous sandstone, incised by narrow valleys. The *John Radcliffe Hospital Complex* is a discrete area on this hilltop, enclosed by high stone walls and mature vegetation associated with the former Manor House estate.

The former open space of Headington Fields and the Manor House grounds still survives in part, forming the setting for the hospital complex. The estate landscape associated with the former Manor House (late 18th century) contributes strongly to character of the area, but the 20th century addition of the new Radcliffe Infirmary (relocated from Woodstock Road in 1963) now dominates the space (*photo 1*). The main hospital building is a white multi-storey block, but the hospital has many annexes that are built from a variety of materials including yellow brick, red brick, concrete and glass. The historic Manor House is now the Manor Surgery, a late 18th century ashlar constructed country house.

There is a high proportion of open space that forms a setting to the hospital complex. This includes remnants of Headington's open fields in the north of the site and the designed grounds of the Manor House in the south of the site that provide open semi-improved, species rich grassland with specimen trees and ornamental shrubs (*photo 2*). Working allotments to the west that provide recreational space and a mosaic of habitats with ruderal species and flowering herbs suitable for a range of invertebrates and birds. Hospital car parks and mown grass verges around and between the hospital buildings also provide open space, albeit of a lower quality (*photo 3*).

Although the site is well screened by boundary walls and vegetation (*photo 4*), the hill top location provides sense of space and exposure, and views out to the north (*photo 5*). There are also views over central Oxford from the main hospital building. Conversely, the hospital building acts as a prominent landmark when viewed from the north, for example from Elsfield (*photo 6*) or the northern by-pass as the incinerator chimney is visible from the adjacent Headington Village over the boundary wall.

### Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled Plateaux</i> - Headington Hill is a prominent hill, enclosing Oxford to the east.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Former open space of Headington Fields and Manor House grounds survives in part.  Estate landscape associated with the former Manor House (late 18th century) is still apparent and contributes strongly to character.  20th century addition of the new Radcliffe Infirmary (relocated from Woodstock Road) now dominates the space.
Archaeological and historic	Late 18th Century Manor House, estate trees and boundary walls.

interest	
Street and block pattern	A self-contained space, well screened by boundary walls and hedges. Contains a single hospital complex with encircling access road.
Public/private realm interface	Access in and around the hospital complex is semi-private. The public/private interface is not always clear.
Massing and enclosure	Large scale building blocks with linked annexes set in open grounds. Hill top location provides sense of space and exposure.
Architecture and built form	18th century Manor House is of light coloured ashlar stone construction, two and a half stories with a three bay pediment and clay tiled roof.  Main hospital building is a white multi-storey block. Annexes are a variety of materials including yellow brick, red brick, concrete and glass.  Limestone walls, approximately 2m high, bound the site.
Streetscape	Internal roads around the hospital quiet tarmac roads with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal street lights.
Open space	There is a high proportion of open space that forms a setting to the hospital complex. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remnants of the designed grounds of the Manor House in the south of the site;</li> <li>• open fields in the north of the site;</li> <li>• working allotments to the west that provide recreational space for the local population;</li> <li>• hospital car parks and mown grass verges around the hospital buildings.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	Manor House grounds provide open semi-improved, species rich grassland with musk mallow and sheeps bit, with specimen trees and ornamental shrubs. Parkland with mature trees is recognised as a UK BAP priority habitat.  Allotments provide a mosaic of habitats with ruderal species and flowering herbs suitable for a range of invertebrates and birds.
Land use, culture and vitality	Major land use is institutional with smaller areas of recreational (allotments).  Working hospital with many comings and goings.  Forms part of one of the largest medical research complexes in Europe.
Access and traffic	Internal access roads for the hospital only.
Views and visual patterns	Site is well screened by boundary walls and vegetation, although the incinerator chimney is visible from the adjacent Headington Village over the boundary wall.  Prominent multi-storey building with its incinerator chimney is a landmark on top of the hill, prominent in views from surrounding rural areas to the north e.g. Elsfield and northern by-pass.  Magnificent views from hospital building towards central Oxford.
Designations	None

# 7C JOHN RADCLIFFE HOSPITAL

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Photo 1: The multi-storey JR building dominates the space.



Photo 2: The grounds of the former Manor House contribute strongly to the character of the area.



Photo 3: Hospital car parks and grass verges also provide open space, albeit of low quality.



Photo 4: The site is enclosed by boundary walls and mature vegetation.



Photo 5: Views from the north of the site.



Photo 6: The hospital is prominent in the the view from Elsfield.

## Evaluation of character and quality

This area is distinctive due to its topography and prominence of the John Radcliffe Hospital which has become a landmark of Oxford. The presence of the Manor House and associated estate planting and stone walls further enhance the unique nature of this site.

Landscape quality is perceived as being moderate largely as a result of the old Manor House, stone boundary walls and historic depth they convey.

## Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low - unrecorded sites only
Historic Integrity	Moderate - survival of historic features associated with Manor House
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate - views from upper stories of hospital building across skyline of spires and domes
Open Space	Moderate - moderate sized area of (mostly private) open space

## Sensitivity to change

The John Radcliffe is in a sensitive location as a result of its prominent hill top setting and importance in the setting to Headington Village. However, the site is enclosed by stone walls and mature vegetation ensuring that its sensitivity to changes at ground level is reduced. The historic connections of the site and biodiversity interest in the remnant parkland make the southern half of it more sensitive to change than north. Overall sensitivity to change may be described as moderate.

The former open space of Headington Fields and the Manor House grounds were first encroached upon by the construction of the maternity buildings of the John Radcliffe Hospital in 1963. Since then the hospital has gradually increased in size to accommodate annexes. The estate of the Manor House with mature trees, old buildings, boundary walls and historic depth are crucial to the character of the John Radcliffe Hospital site. However, the lack of clarity of use of the open spaces leaves them open to other uses. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- infill development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this distinctive area or encroaches on the setting of the old Manor House;
- maturing and eventual loss of woodland and parkland trees as a result of old age;



- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- further increases in traffic and car parking spilling into green spaces.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy is to consolidate the purpose and use of the open spaces around the hospital and to integrate any new development in such a way that it does not detract from the landscape setting. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- consolidating the function and use of spaces around the hospital;
- conserving the stock of ornamental trees and shrubs that give the Manor House grounds their 18th century parkland landscape character;
- considering a long-term re-planting plan for trees to maintain the well wooded character of the hill;
- considering a transport strategy to alleviate parking problems;
- considering less intensive grassland management of open spaces around the hospital site to provide a greater diversity of habitats;
- encouraging the maintenance of historic features such as stone boundary walls and buildings;
- consider enhancing public access to the hilltop site with opportunities for views over the surrounding landscape to the north;
- consider using furniture such as lighting to enhance the historic streetscape character of the areas around the Manor House;
- ensuring any new built development undergoes a full visual impact analysis.

## 8 20TH CENTURY FRINGE BUSINESS, RETAIL AND INDUSTRY

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### Generic Description

Oxford is a city with few areas of industrial activity. The notable exception to this rule is the Cowley Motor Works and other large scale industrial units, on the south east edge of the city. Other land uses within this landscape type include smaller industrial estates, retail parks and business parks. The architecture of these areas varies from the massive and monolithic, dating from the 1930's onwards, to more recent white collar working environments with a high-tech image.

These industrial, retail and business sites are located on the outskirts of the city, in the flat areas of the *Settled Plateaux* and the *Pastoral Floodplains*. They tend to lack a sense of place or local distinctiveness as a result of mass produced building materials, standard layouts, styles and details.

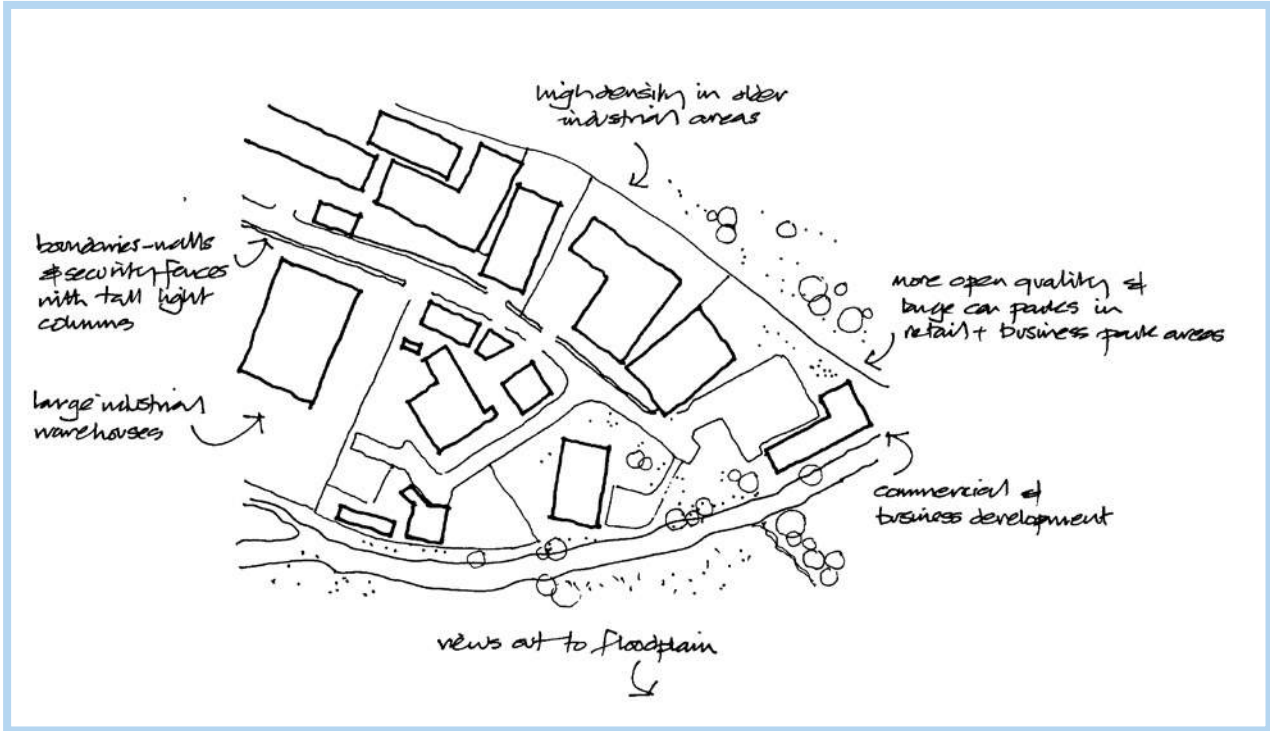
### Key Characteristics

- large scale industrial, retail and business buildings, including contemporary architectural style and materials;
- more recent areas often set within landscaped car parks or grounds;
- mass produced building materials, standard layouts, styles and details;
- occur on large scale flat areas on the outskirts of Oxford;
- 'out of town' retail sites with large open car parks.

### Character Areas

- 8A Cowley Motor Works
- 8B Littlemore Business and Science Parks
- 8C Botley Industrial and Retail Parks

## 8 20TH CENTURY FRINGE BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND RETAIL



Generic example of spatial characteristics.

## 8A COWLEY MOTOR WORKS

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### Description

This area is focused on the Cowley Motor Works, but includes a number of other large scale retail, business and industrial estates including Horspath Road Industrial Estate, County Trading Estate, Chiltern Business Centre and the Oxford Business Park. The ring road passes through the area, dividing the industrial areas from business uses.

After the First World War, Morris bought up cheap areas of land in Cowley, creating a large scale industrial area on the east of Oxford. The factory formerly covered a much larger area than it does today, with areas to the west of the existing works now housing the recently completed Oxford Business Park.

This area remains the largest industrial area of Oxford, dominated by the motor works. There is little greenspace, although landscaping in the Oxford Business Park adds planting of ornamental species. The path of a Roman Road passes through the area. The Cowley Motor Works has become a major landmark of Industrial Oxford.

### Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying Landscape Type	<i>Settled Plateaux</i> - large scale industrial area on flat sandstone plateau.
Evolution of townscape	Industrial area of remaining motor works (and former Morris works) on former arable land of Cowley and Horsepath Fields.
Archaeological and historic interest	Path of old Roman Road passes along the eastern boundary of the Motor Works
Street and block pattern	Large scale industrial land uses. Retail park with large open car park areas.
Private/public realm interface	In some areas used for parking and access, it is unclear what is private and what is public land.
Massing and enclosure	Large, monolithic industrial sheds, with large open areas for parking and service yards.
Architecture and built form	Main building of the Cowley Motor Works. Other modern industrial units of a variety of styles, colours and materials.
Streetscape	Ornamental planting in new business park areas. Large scale service access road layouts and high street lighting columns.
Open space	Few public spaces. Sports Ground and Allotments east of Roman Way.  New planting on Oxford Business Park provides some characteristic planting, including presence of pines, reflecting sandy soils.
Biodiversity	Undeveloped areas and brownfield sites can support a range of mobile and specialist wildlife associated with bare ground and ruderal grassland and scrub.

	Long grass, ruderal habitats and native scrub vegetation along railway and road embankments. Important wildlife corridors in an otherwise hard built urban environment.
Land use, culture and vitality	Industrial, retail and business. Active working environment by the busy ring road.
Access and traffic	The ring road passes through the area, dividing the old Cowley Motor site into two parts.
Views and visual patterns	Cowley Motor Works dominates the area with the clock tower of the original Works a major landmark of Industrial Oxford.  Views to rural area adjacent.
Designations	Sports grounds on the Oxford Road form part of the Green Belt.

### **Evaluation of character and quality**

This area is a distinctive large scale industrial zone on the eastern edge of the city, dominated by the Cowley Motor Works. The clock tower of the original Motor Works is a landmark feature. Many of the older industrial areas are utilitarian in character, providing service and car parking needs to the large industrial units. By contrast, the more recent business parks and retail areas have attempted to develop a more attractive working and retail environment through the use of contemporary architecture and well planned landscapes.

### **Indicators of landscape value**

Landscape Quality	Low
Biodiversity	Low - unrecorded sites of local interest only.
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low - no views of historic core
Open Space	Low

### **Sensitivity to change**

The area has a low sensitivity to change despite its visibility from the ring road and residential areas in nearby parts of Oxford. Recent change to the area has been positive, in the introduction of high quality architectural and landscape development. However, there may be pressure in the future for significant change through redevelopment and the expansion of the business parks. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

## 8A COWLEY MOTOR WORKS

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Photo 1: Large scale of industrial plant at Cowley Motor Works.



Photo 2: Contemporary business development alongside older industrial areas.



Photo 3: Generous landscape context to new business parks.



Photo 4: Open car park areas in retail park.

- deterioration of the existing built fabric;
- new tall built features that would overshadow adjacent urban areas;
- industrial development that encroaches on the historic route of the Roman Road (Blackberry Lane);
- loss of habitats along railway and road embankments.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The core objective will be to improve the environment of the existing industrial areas, and to plan carefully where new development and redevelopment is expected.

Key areas to consider for policy development and townscape enhancement may include:

- planting native trees to screen or soften the industrial areas in views from surrounding high ground - oak, pine, silver and downy birch and holly may be appropriate species;
- developing nature corridors along the railway and linking to open areas within the industrial zone;
- planting with native species around recreation/sports grounds to enhance nature conservation value of edges;
- leaving aside some areas of longer grass for less frequent mowing to provide wildlife habitats.

## 8B LITTLEMORE BUSINESS AND SCIENCE PARKS (MINCHERY FARM)

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### Description

This area, on the southern urban fringe of the city, comprises a number of areas of commercial development. The area is crossed by the rail line to the north, the A423(T) to the west and a new link road to the south, with modern residential development at Blackbird Lees to the east. The railway effectively severs this fringe area from the main urban area of Oxford.

The area contains a range of contemporary developments including the new football stadium, science and business parks and redevelopment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century hospital site. These isolated developments are set within a semi-rural landscape which still retains a structure of hedgerows, trees and watercourses (Northfield and Littlemore Brooks), the latter being particularly important ecological features which thread through the neighbouring urban fabric.

A traditional stone farm complex remains at Minchery Farm, which includes the site of a Benedictine nunnery founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. However, much of the land, formerly in agricultural use, is no longer actively farmed – consisting of rank, unmanaged grassland. Views to new construction, traffic noise and degraded elements such as fly tipping contribute to its urban fringe character.

### Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying Landscape Type	<i>Settled Plateau</i> transitional to <i>Clay Vale</i> to the south.
Evolution	Recent edge of city development with new distributor roads and development areas, superimposed on the rural landscape.
Archaeological and historic interest	Historic stone farm complex at Minchery. Remains of Benedictine nunnery founded in the 12th century. Redevelopment of 19 <sup>th</sup> century Littlemore Hospital.
Street and block pattern	New distributor roads with sweeping curves and roundabouts.
Private/public realm interface	Lack of management of open areas leading to abuse such as fly tipping.
Massing and enclosure	Large scale, low density developments.
Architecture and built form	Large scale, visually prominent modern developments including the new Oxford stadium, science park and reuse of the Littlemore Hospital. Architectural forms include cantilevered stadium and modern business park, with glass walls and buff brick.  The main 19 <sup>th</sup> century hospital is a collection of large turreted stone buildings, with a low rise, 1950's brick clinic on the western side of the Sandford Road. The traditional Cotswold stone building at Minchery Farm is on the site of a small Benedictine nunnery



## **8B LITTLEMORE BUSINESS AND SCIENCE PARKS**



Photo 1: New business development within a rural context.



Photo 2: Large scale of new distributor roads.



Photo 3: Re-developed Littlemore Hospital.



Photo 4: New stadium building in a changing urban fringe area.



Photo 5: Abuse of the urban fringe area.

	(Littlemore Priory) founded in the 12 <sup>th</sup> century. There are associated derelict red brick farm buildings.
Streetscape	Wide new roads with high lamp columns at roundabouts and ornamental shrub planting.
Open space	The hospital redevelopment includes modern landscaping and high security lighting, tall metal fences and CCTV. Unmanaged farmland at Minchery Farm and valley of the Northmoor Brook. The hedgerows and mature trees provide a strong rural framework.
Biodiversity	The hedgerow network, small watercourses (Northfield and Littlemore Brooks) are important linear ecological networks set within a context of rough unmanaged grassland.
Land use, culture and vitality	Retains elements of a quiet rural area punctuated by isolated areas of new development. Proximity to main roads means traffic noise is dominant.
Access and traffic	Well used lane network providing recreational access by foot and bike out from main urban area (Littlemore).
Views and visual patterns	Open views across rural areas, and prominent landmark buildings such as the stadium.
Designations	Littlemore Railway Cutting is a geological SSSI.

### Evaluation of character and quality

The area presents a new character to this edge of Oxford, previously comprising the 19<sup>th</sup> century hospital and Littlemore village, set within an unspoilt rural area. Today, the area retains a rural character with its framework of hedgerows, watercourses and historic farm buildings, but is changing fast with the development of the new business parks. Whilst the new development is of high quality, the area is clearly one in a state of change.

The Northfield Brook and surrounding undeveloped areas represent significant aquatic and wetland habitats that occur on the margins of the existing Science Park, including areas of reedbed, a UK BAP habitat, around Minchery Farm.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	High includes SSSI and UK BAP habitat
Historic Integrity	Moderate - remains of 12th century nunnery
Re-creatability	Moderate - some parts of the area are non-recreatable
Intervisibility	Low - no views of historic core

Open Space	High - currently a large amount of open space
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### **Sensitivity to change**

The natural features and historic integrity make this area moderately sensitive to change. However, it is not highly visible. The most sensitive areas are the course of Littlemore Brook and the remains of the 12th century nunnery. The area is currently in a state of flux with much new building taking place. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that results in obstruction/diversion of public rights of way;
- encroachment of built development and fragmenting of the ecological networks of Littlemore and Northfield Brooks;
- loss of mature trees as a result of old age or new building works;
- encroachment of new built development on the historic site at Minchery Farm;
- refuse dumping and general misuse of this fringe area.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The core objective will be to conserve the natural and historic features, integrating new development sensitively into its rural context.

Key areas to consider for policy development and townscape enhancement may include:

- planting new trees using existing native and parkland species of the area;
- retaining the ecological networks, notably the Littlemore and Northfield Brooks as linear green space running through development;
- retaining some of the hedgerow framework including retention of mature hedgerow trees;
- developing opportunities for connectivity e.g. with Spindleberry Nature Park in Blackbird Lees;
- conserving the important archaeological resource at Minchery Farm and developing opportunities for enhancement and education;
- maintaining a 'quiet' through route for cyclists and good access for pedestrians.

## 8C BOTLEY INDUSTRIAL AND RETAIL PARKS

### Description

This area of retail parks and light industrial units is located to the west of the historic city core, along the Botley Road. The area falls into two parts – the older Osney Mead Industrial Estate, and the more recent retail park at the western end of Botley Road, which forms a ‘gateway’ to the city.

The older, Osney Mead industrial estate, comprises a number of large commercial units located along a single feeder road. The Botley Road area comprises large scale retail warehouses with open car parking areas, and typically, large name signs on the buildings.

This is a busy area with high traffic levels on Botley Road, contrasting with the adjacent floodplain.

### Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying Landscape Type	Predominantly <i>Rivers and Pastoral Floodplain</i> .
Evolution of townscape	1950's, 1960's and 1970's industrial development at Osney Mead. Recent 1980's development at west end of Botley Road
Archaeological and historic interest	The area comprises peripheral development on former floodplain meadows.
Street and block pattern	Central feeder road in Osney Mead area with plots of varying size and orientation.  Central parking area to Botley Road retail park, or access to parking areas adjacent to Botley Road.
Private/public realm interface	Strong boundaries in Osney Mead area; less clear relationship of public parking areas with service zones in Botley Road back areas.
Massing and enclosure	Large scale industrial and retail development, with extensive car parking.
Architecture and built form	Large scale, particularly those buildings forming the retail park – brightly coloured, illuminated signs and fronted by extensive car parks. The buildings at Osney Mead are of a more modest scale and include two to three storey utilitarian buildings, predominantly brick. The estate includes the distinctive Oxford Mail and Times building, which is surrounded by a high wall of cream coloured brick.
Streetscape	Design is utilitarian on the industrial estate.
Open space	Avenue of mature lime trees along Botley Road. Absence of public greenspace.
Biodiversity	The industrial and retail estates have few areas of open land and consequently have very little wildlife interest, although proximity to

## **8C BOTLEY INDUSTRIAL AND RETAIL PARKS**



Photo 1: Mix of industrial and commercial units at Osney Mead.



Photo 2: Osney Mead located at the edge of the floodplain.



Photo 3: Open areas of car parking and dominant signage at Botley Road.

	the extensive natural greenspace of the floodplain may enhance ecological potential. The southern boundary of the Osney Mead estate is marked by the Bulstake Stream, an important tributary of the Thames.
Land use, culture and vitality	Industrial or Retail, including extensive areas for car parking (includes the Park and Ride site).
Access and traffic	Easy vehicular access.  Footpath land cycle link to edges of Osney Mead estate.
Views and visual patterns	Frequent views to the surrounding lush green floodplain landscapes (willows, poplars ditches and electricity pylons).  The pylons, industrial buildings and their roofs are highly visible from elevated areas to the west, such as from North Hinksey.
Designations	None.

### Evaluation of character and quality

The area is significant edge to the City of Oxford – the retail parks on Botley Road form a first impression on the approach to the city from the west. The area bears little reference to the unique character of Oxford and presents a standard, ubiquitous image common to many towns throughout England, and as such is a poor gateway to the city.

The intact avenue of mature lime trees along the Botley Road is an important unifying feature and helps create a ‘green’ approach to Oxford. The glimpses to the surrounding floodplain landscapes are vital in creating a sense of place.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Low
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low - no views of historic core
Open Space	Low

### Sensitivity to change

This area is moderately sensitive to change due to its importance as a key gateway to the city centre and position on the edge of the Thames floodplain. Recent commercial development has been of a high standard, although the retail warehouses

continue to dominate the character of Botley Road. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that encroaches into the Thames floodplain and obstructs connectivity;
- the dominance of signage in the landscape;
- ageing and subsequent loss of the avenue of lime trees along the Botley Road;
- new ornamental landscapes that do not relate to their floodplain context;
- potential vandalism to areas in the semi-public realm.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall objective will be to consider opportunities to enhance the landscape and townscape quality of this key gateway to Oxford, including, where appropriate, restoration of the underling character of the floodplain.

Key areas to consider for policy development and townscape enhancement may include:

- planting native trees to screen or soften the industrial areas in views from surrounding high ground, for example at Raleigh Park - willows may be appropriate species;
- considering views from Raleigh Park in planning any new development in this area;
- ensuring development does not encroach further onto the floodplain and threaten the integrity of these important landscapes;
- enhancing the character of the Botley Road through a co-ordinated programme of streetscape improvements, including proposals for renewing the framework of street trees which are an important feature of this area and control of signage and streetscape clutter;
- enhancing the character of the retail and industrial landscape schemes, for example to include species characteristic of the adjacent floodplain landscapes.

## 9 RIVERS AND PASTORAL FLOODPLAINS

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### Generic Description

This landscape/townscape character type is defined by the alluvial floodplains of the main river valleys and tributary valleys through Oxford. This landscape/ townscape type coincides with the *Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains* landscape type at 1:25,000, but has been drawn accurate to 1:10,000 for this assessment.

The tranquil pastoral scene of open meadows with cattle grazing amongst the silhouettes of mature floodplain trees is common to all of the floodplains and these rural scenes form a contrast to the adjacent urban landscapes. Boathouses, locks and pubs are landmarks in these riverside landscapes. They are often the site of allotments, playing fields and large scale business/retail parks because they provide the open space required for such land uses.

The character of these river floodplains varies in different valleys and along different stretches of the same river. For example, the *Thames (Isis)* is a popular recreational landscape with rowing facilities, the Thames towpath and popular pubs whereas the *Cherwell* is a much more rural area with a greater sense of enclosure.

### Key Characteristics

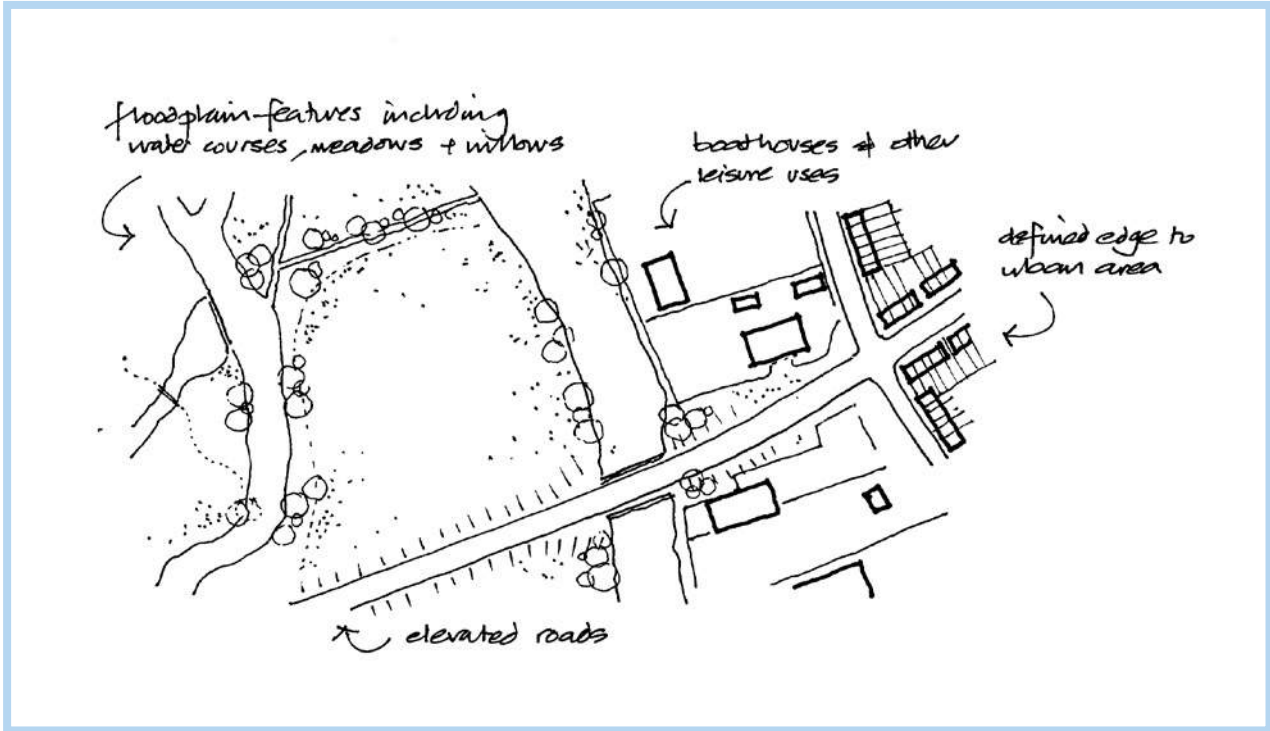
- flat, wide alluvial floodplains of the river that flow between the hills enclosing Oxford;
- tranquil pastoral floodplains with cattle often a feature of the scene;
- boathouses, locks and pubs are features;
- allotments, playing fields and associated buildings are often found in the open floodplain;
- views across the open landscape to adjacent urban areas.

### Character Areas

- 9A Thames (Isis) - north
- 9B Cherwell Valley
- 9C Bayswater Brook
- 9D Thames (Isis) - south
- 9E Hinksey/Bulstake Streams



## 9 PASTORAL FLOODPLAINS



Generic example of spatial characteristics.

## 9A THAMES (ISIS) - NORTH

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### Description

The gently meandering course of the River Thames on the north-west of Oxford, known locally as the River Isis, is bordered by large, historic floodplain commons where cattle and ponies graze in the shade of floodplain trees (*photo 1*). This peaceful floodplain lies to the west of the historic core of Oxford, providing a contrast in scale and character to the busy centre, and is part of the iconography of Oxford celebrated in numerous landscape paintings. The historic meadows, pastures and commons around Port Meadow, Godstow, Binsey and Medley are a strong influence on the character of the area today. Port Meadow is a landscape that has changed little since prehistoric times (*photo 2*). Bronze Age people buried their dead here and during the Iron Age people lived on the meadow during the summer and grazed their livestock on the rich pasture. Coppiced willows, growing alongside watercourses, are features of the floodplain. Some of the historic events that have defined the *Thames (Isis) - North* are the informal 17th century enclosure of fields west of the Thames, the arrival of the Oxford Canal in 1790 and the railway in the 19th century. More recently, the arrival of the northern ring road, gravel workings, industrial workshops, allotment gardens and residential housing have affected the tranquillity of the area.

The area has a very low density of built development and is characterised by scattered farm buildings and historic sites including the ruins of the 12th century Godstow Abbey, the site of St Margarets Well and the rural oasis of Binsey (*photo 3*). Buildings are typically isolated farms and rural stone built pubs at river crossing points. The trout is one of Oxford's most famous pubs, most recently popularised by television through the *Inspector Morse* series by Colin Dexter, valued for its peaceful riverside setting. Local rubble limestone buildings, boundary walls and bridges are features of the rural built environment and boat moorings are common features along the course of the river. Enclosed farmland around Binsey and Godstow is small-moderate sized fields (mixed crop and pasture) bounded by hedgerows (*photo 4*). Historic buildings sheltered by small deciduous groves punctuate the landscape. Small brooks and ditches thread their way through the farmland.

The Oxford Canal, which defines the eastern edge of the floodplain was brought to Oxford in 1790 and its corridor now has a character of its own - colourful barges and industrial land uses border the canal (*photo 5*). The canal has helped to contain urban sprawl, preventing westward expansion into the remainder of the floodplain. Narrow rural lanes (Binsey Lane and Godstow Road) are characterised by lack of kerbing, road markings or street lighting.

The long management history, rare plant and bird populations establish the commons as having exceptionally high ecological value. The continuity of grazing management by the Freeman (and from the 16th century the Commoners of Wolvercote) has created a unique flora on the thin dry gravelly soils to the north. Here, the vegetation is akin to a limestone grassland. The meadows are regularly flooded and support a diverse wetland flora (*photo 6*).

Port Meadow is one of the County's most popular haunts for birders. Annual winter floods bring spectacular flocks of wildfowl and waders. Lapwing and Golden Plover can number over a thousand whilst Teal, Widgeon and Canada Goose are often seen in their hundreds. Port Meadow is a magnet for migrating birds and almost every regularly occurring British species of wader and freshwater wildfowl have been recorded along with many Gulls, Terns, and song birds.

Access to the area is via Binsey Lane from the south, via Walton Well Road or Aristotle Lane (across the Canal) from the east, or Godstow/Wolvercote in the north. The west is bounded by the busy ring road.

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Pastoral Floodplains</i> - the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	<p>Port Meadow is a landscape that has changed little since prehistoric times. Bronze Age people buried their dead here and during the Iron Age people lived on the meadow during the summer and grazed their livestock on the rich pasture. Medieval commons have survived.</p> <p>Benedictine Nunnery of Godstow founded in 1133 with a medieval bridge approach.</p> <p>Rural Oasis of Binsey originated from St Margaret's Church in the 12th century. Church Farm built 16th century.</p> <p>Commons were gradually enclosed by informal 17th century enclosure of fields.</p> <p>Opening of the Oxford Canal in 1790 and the railway in the 19th century influenced the character of the eastern edge of the area.</p> <p>20th century additions include the northern ring road, gravel workings, industrial workshops, allotment gardens and, most recently, residential housing.</p>
Archaeological and historic interest	<p>Bronze and Iron Age burials and settlements are well preserved and clearly visible from the air or in some cases on the ground as shallow circular ditches and banks.</p> <p>Godstow Abbey ruins.</p> <p>Site of St Margarets Well.</p> <p>Historic meadows, pastures and commons around Port Meadow, Godstow, Binsey and Medley.</p> <p>Historic 'groves' adjacent to settlements.</p> <p>Castle Mills Stream and the Oxford Canal.</p>
Street and block pattern	Scattered, isolated historic stone buildings including farms, pubs and churches.
Public/private realm interface	Clear division between public and private spaces. A large proportion of this character area is in the public realm.
Massing and enclosure	<p>Very low density of built development.</p> <p>Scattered farm buildings and historic sites.</p> <p>Great sense of exposure, particularly to the east of the Thames where there is very little enclosure in the form of built development</p>

## 9A THAMES (ISIS) NORTH

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Photo 1: The River Thames (or Isis) is bordered by large, historic floodplain commons.



Photo 2: Port Meadow has changed little since prehistoric times. There are long distance views to the spires and domes of Oxford.



Photo 3: The rural settlement of Binsey is typical of the floodplain - note the use of thatch.



Photo 4: Enclosed farmland to the west of the river is mixed crop and pasture, divided by hedgerows.



Photo 5: The Oxford Canal (built 1790) corridor has a unique character.



Photo 6: The meadows are regularly flooded and support a diverse wetland flora.

	or field boundaries.
Architecture and built form	Buildings are typically historic churches, farm buildings and rural stone built pubs at river crossing points.  Historic stone bridges over rivers.  Local rubble limestone buildings and boundary walls.
Streetscape	Narrow rural lanes (Binsey Lane and Godstow Road) are characterised by lack of kerbing, road markings or street lighting.  Lanes are no-through roads.
Open space	This area is dominated by its open greenspace including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic common land untouched by the plough for centuries and rich in history.</li> <li>• Neutral grasslands (Hook Meadow and the Trap Grounds, Wolvercote Meadows) bordering the large pastures of Wolvercote and Port Meadow.</li> <li>• Canal Corridor and Oxford Canal Marsh providing a green corridor running along the edge of the floodplain including the Oxford Canal Walk.</li> <li>• Enclosed private farmland around Binsey and Godstow with hedgerows, small deciduous groves, brooks and ditches.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	<p>The floodplain meadows of the Upper Thames at Oxford are some of the finest examples of traditionally managed grassland in the country. Port Meadow and Pixey Mead are designated as of international importance (candidate Special Area of Conservation) for their grassland communities and the numbers of water fowl that over-winter. Much of the remaining grassland on the Thames floodplain is designated as of at least local importance (SLINC).</p> <p>Neutral grasslands (Hook Meadow and the Trap Grounds, Wolvercote Meadows) are a series of unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland with fen, reedbed, ditches and watercourses provide other habitats. Designated as a SSSI and containing a significant proportion of lowland hay meadow, a UK BAP Priority Habitat.</p> <p>The Canal Corridor and Oxford Canal Marsh provides supporting a range of aquatic habitats and animals, including water vole. The marshland was previously cattle grazed wet meadow and sedge dominated fen an important wildlife corridor with some areas designated SLINC.</p> <p>Deciduous groves (Godstow Holt and Medley Manor Wood) include both wet and drier wood types. Species include herb Paris, cowslip hairy brome, giant fescue, field maple and guelder rose. Designated SLINC and containing Wet Woodland, a UK BAP Priority Habitat.</p> <p>Neutral grassland (Godstow Bridge Meadow, Godstow Nunnery Meadow, Lower Wolvercote Meadows, Meadow next to Lower Wolvercote SSSI and Line Ditch) - unimproved and semi-improved neutral grasslands, predominately cattle grazed. Scrub, wet grassland, ditches, sedge-dominated wetland and pollarded trees on the banks of the River Thames provide additional habitats. Designated SLINC.</p>

Land use, culture and vitality	<p>Major land uses are agricultural and recreational.</p> <p>Cultural traditions of the Curator of Port Meadow and Freemen of Oxford who impound all grazing animals once a year.</p> <p>Damp mists of winter make it a melancholy, but evocative part of Oxford while in midsummer it comes alive with people who use the area for boating, swimming, walking and the pic-nics by the riverside.</p>
Access and traffic	<p>Good access to large areas of public open space by foot as a result of the long surviving commons and the Thames National Trail.</p> <p>Dead-end lanes ensure the area is remote to traffic.</p> <p>Thames National Trail and the Oxford Canal Walk are popular walking routes.</p>
Views and visual patterns	<p>Open, unrestricted views across Port Meadow to the spires of central Oxford.</p>
Designations	<p>Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Scheduled Ancient Monument and together with the nearby Yarnton and Pixey Mead a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) under the European Habitats Directive. There are also a number of local nature conservation designations.</p> <p>Area is designated as part of the Green Belt.</p> <p>Conservation Areas around Godstow and Binsey.</p> <p>Godstow Abbey and ditches around Port Meadow are SAMs.</p>

### Evaluation of character and quality

This area is highly distinctive as a result of its flat topography, expansive open space, riverside and canalside walks and species rich, traditionally managed, grasslands. Its character is strongly influenced by the history of land management and the richness of wildlife.

The long management history and survival of historic features result in a landscape of exceptional quality illustrating a high survival of floodplain features. The area has a strong visual and cultural unity and a high functional integrity.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High - international interest (cSAC, SSSIs)
Historic Integrity	High - impressive survival of historic features; SAMs; Conservation Areas
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High - views across Port Meadow to skyline of spires and domes

## Sensitivity to change

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its flat, open character allowing long views and the role it plays in the rural setting of Oxford. It is particularly sensitive as a result of its impressive historic remains, international ecological importance and open character. It also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoints identified from Wolvercote Common and the A34 and this heightens its sensitivity tall built elements.

Although Port Meadow is a landscape that has changed little since prehistoric times, pressures on other parts of the area are high as a result of the proximity of the city - built development, communication routes and industry have all had their place in the history of the floodplain. The flat nature of the floodplain has allowed westwards expansion of the city, bringing with it industrial estates, housing estates and retail parks, which have influenced its open and rural character.

The flat topography, expansive open spaces, riverside and canalside walks and species rich, traditionally managed, grasslands are crucial to the character of the *Thames (Isis) - North* and threats to this local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities and local vernacular of this distinctive area;
- intensive grassland management for recreation rather than nature conservation;
- abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime;
- road works that affect the rural character of the lanes;
- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation, particularly floodplain trees;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- expansion of large car parks and industrial uses into the open space provided by the floodplain or new built features that would affect the open expansive character or block views of the historic core from the floodplain.

## Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities

The overall strategy should be to conserve the open expansive nature of the floodplain, the rural character, historic depth and ecological habitats as a setting to central Oxford. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- conserving the semi-natural habitats and traditional management of the commonland and meadows;

- resisting built development, car parks or industrial land uses which would impinge on the open rural character and tranquillity of the floodplain;
- encouraging management of the water levels of the Thames to ensure floodplain grassland habitats are maintained;
- maintaining access to, and along, the canal corridor - any new development along the canal should make best use of the canal and maintain an open setting to the canal;
- considering opportunities to plant rare floodplain trees such as black poplar;
- maintaining important and famous views of Oxford across the floodplain, such as those from the edge of Wolvercote Common and the A34;
- conserving the balance of tranquillity and recreational use;
- maintaining access roads as no-through roads and conserving the rural character of these lanes through minimising the presence of signage, line painting, street lighting and concrete kerbs.



## 9B CHERWELL VALLEY

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### Description

The alluvial floodplain of the River Cherwell is different, but no less important, than that of the Thames. The course of the Cherwell is of a smaller scale, and less visible, than that of the Thames. It flows a wooded course through a mixed agricultural landscape of small, regular fields divided by hedgerows. Most land alongside the river is privately owned, although public footpaths do access certain stretches of the river. This results in a more peaceful, remote character than the Thames to the west of Oxford (*photos 1 and 2*).

Historic meadows and pastures (New Marston Meadows, Burnt Hill Meadows, Northern Bypass Meadows, Park Farm Meadows, Great Meadow, Long Meadow and Angel and Greyhound Meadow) strongly influence the character of the valley. Angel and Greyhound meadow (*photo 3*) used to grow fodder for two coaching inns, the Angel and Greyhound, both on the High Street. The mixed agricultural landscape today is characterised by small regular fields, a result of enclosure during the 18th century.

The area is notable for its absence of settlement. The most prominent built features are the bridges across the Cherwell (*photo 4*). Magdalen Bridge is a historic crossing point of the Cherwell, the present day bridge resulting from a re-building programme between 1772-1782. Other bridges include the graceful high arched footbridge into University Parks (built 1923) and the modern road bridges carrying northern ring road and Marston Ferry Road and over the Cherwell.

The Cherwell passes to the east of the historic core of Oxford, which is dominated by the University. This has an impact on the character of the floodplain - College grounds and sports fields and the University Botanic Gardens are familiar features of the Cherwell floodplain close to the centre of Oxford. The area has a strong visual and cultural unity - the Cherwell is well known for its flat-bottomed punts (*photo 5*).

The network of floodplain grasslands within the Cherwell valley are of national ecological significance, and are predominantly of a type that is now rare in both Britain and Europe, and a UK BAP Priority Habitat (*photo 6*). The nationally scarce fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, occurs in the valley. In addition to the aquatic habitats of the river Cherwell, hedgerows, ditches and the Peasmoor Brook provide further linear wildlife habitats.

### Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Pastoral Floodplains</i> - the alluvial floodplain of the River Cherwell.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Historic Meadows and Pastures (New Marston Meadows, Burnt Hill Meadows, Northern Bypass Meadows, Park Farm Meadows, Great Meadow, Long Meadow and Angel and Greyhound Meadow) strongly influence the character of the valley close to the city centre.  The mixed agricultural landscape of small, regular fields are a result

	<p>of 18th century enclosure.</p> <p>There has been progressively greater access across the Cherwell resulting in increasing number of features along the river.</p> <p>20th century additions include the northern ring road, sports fields and pavilions and increased access bridges across the Cherwell.</p>
Archaeological and historic interest	<p>Historic meadows and pastures. Angel and Greyhound meadow used to grow fodder for two coaching inns, the Angel and Greyhound, both on the High Street.</p> <p>King's Mill is an historic building at a crossing point of the Cherwell.</p>
Street and block pattern	Notable for absence of settlement.
Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via footpaths.
Massing and enclosure	Hedgerows and vegetation alongside the River Cherwell provide a sense of enclosure within the area.
Architecture and built form	<p>Bridges are the most notable built features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magdalen Bridge over the Cherwell, historic bridge crossing bridge re-built in its present form 1772-1782.</li> <li>• Graceful high arched footbridge provides access into University Parks across the Cherwell (built 1923)</li> <li>• Modern road bridges carrying northern ring road and Marston Ferry Road and over the Cherwell.</li> </ul> <p>Few buildings - isolated rural stone farm buildings (Park Farm and King's Mill) and sports pavilions of various designs.</p>
Streetscape	Notable for the absence of streets.
Open space	<p>This area is almost entirely open greenspace - most land is privately owned with little access except for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angel and Greyhound Meadow is leased by the city, from Magdalen College, for the use of the public.</li> <li>• Sunnymead Recreation Ground is a popular riverside area with open public access - includes Sunnymead bathing place.</li> </ul> <p>Magdalen Meadows are unimproved neutral grassland meadows. The sports fields are managed as recreational open spaces with less ecological interest.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Unimproved neutral grassland, herb rich meadows, species rich hedgerows and wetland habitats.</p> <p>Unimproved and semi-improved neutral meadows, drier grassland and swamp managed as summer pasture and hay meadows. Sites support fritillary, scarce Diptera and damselfly. Breeding lapwing, lesser-spotted woodpecker and kingfisher.</p> <p>Victoria Arms Spinney: a small area of wet woodland with field maple, red currant and song thrush recorded.</p>
Land use, culture and vitality	Peaceful, rural landscape dominated by meadow and pasture with some playing fields and gardens close to the city centre.
Access and traffic	<p>Cycle tracks and footpaths only - no roads.</p> <p>Road bridges over the Cherwell bring some traffic intrusion into the</p>

## 9B CHERWELL

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Photo 1: The Cherwell has a more peaceful & backwater character than the Thames.



Photo 2: Tarmac footpaths access some stretches of the river.



Photo 3: Angel & Greyhound meadow used to grow fodder for two city inns, the Angel and the Greyhound, on the high street.



Photo 4: The most prominent built features are the bridges across the Cherwell.



Photo 5: The Cherwell is well known for its flat-bottomed punts.



Photo 6: Floodplain grasslands are rare and are a UK BAP priority habitat.

	<p>rural landscape.</p> <p>Riverside walks provide public access to the riverside.</p>
Views and visual patterns	Views constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation alongside the Cherwell.
Designations	<p>Marston Meadows are a designated SSSI and UK BAP priority habitat (lowland hay meadows). Other unimproved meadows are designated of local importance (SLINC).</p> <p>Historic meadows and pastures (New Marston Meadows, Burnt Hill Meadows, Northern Bypass Meadows, Park Farm Meadows) are designated SSSI or SLINC and are UK BAP priority habitat lowland hay meadows.</p> <p>Victoria Arms Spinney, designated SLINC, contains Wet Woodland, a UK BAP Priority Habitat.</p> <p>Angel and Greyhound Meadow, Long Meadow, Great Meadow, Magdalen Gardens and Merton College Sports Ground form part of the city centre Conservation Area.</p> <p>Area is designated as part of the Green Belt.</p>

### Evaluation of character and quality

This character area has an extremely important role in the setting to Oxford. It is one of the major floodplains that defined the historic growth of the city and provided the unique juxtaposition of urban and rural environments at the centre of the city. The area is highly distinctive for its rural character, historic meadows and pastures, wet woodland habitats and remote sense of tranquillity.

The intact rural environment, rich ecological habitats and functional integrity results in a high quality landscape.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High - national interest in SSSIs
Historic Integrity	High - historic meadows form part of a Conservation Area
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Moderate - views of historic core skyline between gaps in vegetation
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace

## **Sensitivity to change**

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its intact nature, tranquil character and the role it plays in the rural setting of Oxford. Its sensitivity is further enhanced by its high ecological value. It also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoints identified at South Park and Elsfeld and this heightens its sensitivity tall built elements.

Since the 18th century enclosures this area has seen very little change, although conversion of floodplain meadows into close mown amenity playing fields has had an impact on the landscape and ecological character of the floodplain. The rural character, historic meadows and pastures, wet woodland habitats and remote sense of tranquillity are crucial to the character of the *Cherwell Valley* and threats to this local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities and local vernacular of this distinctive area;
- intensive grassland management for recreation rather than nature conservation, threatening the survival of traditional herb rich meadows;
- abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime;
- increases in traffic resulting in polluting run-off from roads;
- infrastructure improvements that would affect the rural character of the lanes and new crossing points of the river that could intrude into the rural character of the landscape;
- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation, particularly floodplain trees.

## **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to conserve the rural character, historic meadows and pastures, wet woodland habitats and remote sense of tranquillity as a setting to central Oxford. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- conserving the historic meadows and pastures of the Cherwell floodplain and preserving traditional management techniques;
- resisting built development in the floodplain which would impinge on the open rural character and tranquillity of the floodplain;
- resisting infrastructure improvements which would further fragment the floodplain. Bridges are more suitable than embankments to maintain visual and ecological connections along the floodplain;
- conserving the historic field patterns and managing hedgerow boundaries to conserve these as wildlife habitats;

- maintaining important and famous views of Oxford across the floodplain, such as the views from South Park and Elsfield;
- enhancing access to, and along, the river without threatening the rural, tranquil character of the landscape;
- considering opportunities to plant rare floodplain trees such as black poplar.

## 9C BAYSWATER BROOK

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### Description

Bayswater Brook is a tributary of the Cherwell. The Bayswater Brook floodplain is separated from the Cherwell floodplain by the post-war development of New Marston. This open, rural landscape lies at the bottom of Headington Hill, where the clay of the footslopes meets the alluvium and first river terrace deposits of the floodplain.

The area south of Bayswater Brook, as far west as Northway School, is part of the former Headington Meads - an area of traditionally managed meadows (*photo 1*). This is now pasture and forms the footslopes to Headington Hill. The area north of Bayswater Brook and around the Marston Junction is part of the former Marston Field, an area of open arable land (*photo 2*). Much of the Bayswater Brook Valley continues to be in arable use. As a result the landscape is open and intensively farmed and the course of Bayswater Brook is not an obvious feature in the landscape.

The floodplain is fragmented by the ring road and Marston Junction where typical urban fringe land uses including sports grounds, playgrounds, paddocks and allotment gardens are found (*photo 3*). The area forms a rural setting to Barton and Headington on the wooded ridgeline above the valley (*photo 4*).

### Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Pastoral Floodplains</i> - the alluvial floodplain and first river terrace of Bayswater Brook.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	<p>Area south of the brook is part of the former Headington Meads - an area formerly managed as meadows that are now pasture, forming the footslopes to Headington Hill.</p> <p>The area north of Bayswater Brook and around the Marston Junction is part of the former Marston Field, an area of open arable land during the medieval period.</p> <p>The present field pattern dates from parliamentary enclosure.</p> <p>20th century additions include the northern ring road, football ground, cycle speedway, adventure playground and sports ground.</p>
Archaeological and historic interest	Area south of Bayswater Brook as far west as Northway School is part of the former Headington Meads - shown as meadow on 1802 map.
Street and block pattern	Notable for absence of settlement.
Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with restricted access via footpaths.
Massing and enclosure	Hedgerows and vegetation alongside the Bayswater Brook provide a sense of enclosure within the area.
Architecture and built form	<p>No vernacular buildings.</p> <p>Modern sports centre and football stadium are only buildings.</p>

## 9C BAYSWATER BROOK

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Photo 1: The area south of Bayswater Brook is part of the former Headington Meads.



Photo 2: The area to the north of Bayswater Brook is open arable fields.



Photo 3: Urban fringe land uses, including sports grounds, dominate the area around Marston Junction.



Photo 4: The area forms a rural setting to Barton and Headington on the ridge above.



Streetscape	Absence of streets. Northern bypass (dual carriageway) and junction with Marsh Lane is only infrastructure.
Open space	This area is almost entirely open greenspace - most land is privately owned.  Pastoral fields south of the brook are small scale unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland meadows, divided by hedgerows. Important in the setting of Headington Hill. Hedgerow boundaries and trees contribute to the wooded character of the ridge.  Arable farmland is open, large scale fields divided by low, gappy hedgerows. Although not typical of the floodplain landscape, it contributes a rural setting to Oxford.  Public open space in the form of allotment gardens, sports grounds and playground.
Biodiversity	Semi-improved neutral grassland pasture, species rich hedgerows, wetland and aquatic habitats are important features, although there are no designated sites of ecological importance.
Land use, culture and vitality	Arable and pasture farmland with sports fields close to Marston.  Rural area affected by traffic noise associated with the northern bypass.
Access and traffic	Northern bypass is a busy dual carriageway. Junction connects to Marsh Lane.  Public footpath along part of the Brook, but access generally poor and fragmented by dual carriageway.
Views and visual patterns	Views constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation alongside Bayswater Brook.  Views across the area from Marston junction of the northern bypass.  Views to Barton and Headington on the wooded ridgeline above the valley.
Designations	Area around Marston Junction is designated as part of the Green Belt.

### Evaluation of character and quality

This character area performs an important role in the setting of Headington. It is distinctive as a result of its rural character, its notable lack of development and historic connections to Headington Meads. However, fragmentation of the area by the northern by-pass, the invisible course of the river and the lack of floodplain features means the integrity of the landscape has been lost and landscape quality is perceived as being moderate.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low - local interest only

Historic Integrity	Moderate - fields are part of former Headington Meads
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low - no views of spires and domes of the historic core
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace as a setting to Headington

### **Sensitivity to change**

Despite the poor condition of landscape features, this area is moderately sensitive to change as a result of its rural character and the role it plays in the rural setting of Headington Village. It also lies under the viewcone of the key viewpoint identified at Elsfield and this heightens its sensitivity to tall elements.

Since parliamentary enclosure the most notable change in the landscape was the introduction of the northern ring road that has fragmented the landscape and the 20th century additions of the football ground, cycle speedway, adventure playground and sports ground. The rural character, notable lack of development and historic connections to Headington Meads are crucial to the character of the *Bayswater Brook* and threats to this local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities and local vernacular of this distinctive area;
- intensive grassland management for recreation or intensive agriculture rather than nature conservation, threatening the survival of traditional herb rich meadows;
- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation, particularly floodplain trees.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to conserve the rural character, historic field patterns and undeveloped floodplain as a setting to Headington Village. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- conserving the historic integrity of hedgerows south of Bayswater Brook;
- conserving the rural setting of Barton, Headington and Marston;
- enhancing the setting of Bayswater Brook through creation of meadows and pastures and maintaining them through traditional management techniques;
- enhancing the visibility of Bayswater Brook as a landscape feature through planting of floodplain trees along its course;

- maintaining important and famous views of Oxford across the floodplain, such as the view from Elsfield;
- managing existing amenity areas for wildlife, diversifying margins of sports grounds by less frequent mowing and introducing traditional management techniques such as the pollarding of willows and encouraging establishment of unimproved herb rich grassland.

## 9D THAMES (ISIS) - SOUTH

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### Description

Flat, wide alluvial floodplain of the southern part of the River Thames as it flows through Oxford, known locally as the River Isis. This part of the Thames floodplain forms a setting for the oldest part of Oxford. Oxford derived its name from a group of ox-herders who forded the river (hence Ox-Ford) near Christchurch meadow and established the first recorded settlement. Christchurch Meadow, with its open character and silhouetted floodplain trees is the archetypal English river scene (*photo 1*) and forms a setting for some of the oldest of the Oxford Colleges, Christchurch and Merton, as well as Oxford's cathedral. The view from the towpath back towards the city centre is a well documented view and encompasses most people's impression of the city of Oxford. Grandpont Causeway, a section of the stone bridges which crossed the river in the eleventh century, is a scheduled ancient monument and defines the western edge of the area. To the north the remains of the medieval city walls (also a scheduled ancient monument) marks the boundary between floodplain and city (*photo 2*).

The southern part of the Thames (Isis) is greatly influenced by the University and its rowing culture with a large number of boathouses scattered along the towpaths which border its banks (*photo 3*). It is a busy stretch of river, particularly during regattas when the banks can be full of spectators. Pubs, such as the Isis Tavern, and the Iffley Lock provide focal points for activity. The river is wide at this point and is a prominent feature in the floodplain. The remainder of the floodplain is a mixture of pastures, paddocks, allotments and playing fields with minor tributaries winding their way through the landscape. Unimproved neutral grasslands are important ecological features of the floodplain and include areas of lowland hay meadows, a UK BAP priority habitat (*photo 4*). Iffley Meadows is notable for its carpets of fritillaries in the spring, the largest population in the region. Donnington Bridge provides the only road crossing of the river and the railway bridge, at Grandpont Nature Park, is a landmark feature (*photo 5*).

### Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Pastoral Floodplains</i> - flat, wide alluvial floodplain of the River Thames (Isis) south of Folly Bridge
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Historic Meadows and Pastures (Christchurch Meadow, Merton Field) strongly influence the character of the valley close to the city centre.  20th century additions include the sports fields and pavilions and boat houses.
Archaeological and historic interest	Christchurch meadow is an important historic, ecological and amenity resource and forms a setting to the oldest part of the city.  Grandpont Causeway runs along the edge of Christchurch Meadow and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.  Medieval city walls (also an SAM) border Merton Field

## 9D THAMES (ISIS) SOUTH

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Photo 1: Christchurch meadow is the archetypal English river scene.



Photo 2: The ancient city walls mark the boundary between the floodplain and the city to the north (photo shows Merton College).



Photo 3: The southern part of the Thames is influenced by the University and its rowing culture - boathouses border its banks.



Photo 4: Unimproved neutral grasslands are important ecological features of the floodplain.



Photo 5: The railway bridge crossing the Thames at Grandpoint Nature Park is a landmark.

Street and block pattern	Scattered settlement of schools, pubs and boat houses.
Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via footpaths.
Massing and enclosure	Open meadows and low density of built development create sense of exposure. Vegetation provides enclosure, particularly in summer.
Architecture and built form	Pubs, locks and boat houses of varying styles and materials. All have views out onto the river. Local rubble stone buildings and boundary walls. Donnington Bridge is a modern road bridge across the floodplain.
Streetscape	Notable for the absence of streets.
Open space	This area is almost entirely open greenspace - much land is privately owned with good access via footpaths. Floodplain Meadows (Iffley Meadows, Long Meadow, St. Hilda's College Meadow) are unimproved neutral meadows and pastures within a network of river channels, willow lined ditches and hedges. Iffley Meadows supports the largest population of fritillary in the region, in addition to adders tongue, great burnet and ragged robin. Aston Eyot and the Kidneys is a mix of improved and semi-improved grassland with scrub and bounded by woodland.
Biodiversity	Unimproved neutral grasslands, with national and local nature conservation designations, including areas of UK BAP priority habitat lowland hay meadows. The traditionally managed lowland hay meadow of St Hilda's College Meadow is a UK BAP habitat and is designated as a SLINC. Iffley Meadows has the largest population of fritillary in the region.
Land use, culture and vitality	Peaceful, rural landscape dominated by meadow and pasture with activity centred around the river and Oxford's rowing culture.
Access and traffic	Donnington Bridge is the only bridge over the floodplain and is therefore a site of traffic congestion. A large number of public footpaths, including the Thames National Trail, allow good access to the river and its setting. Tow paths are well used by cyclists.
Views and visual patterns	Views across open meadows, but constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation alongside the river. View across Christchurch Meadow towards the city centre is notable
Designations	Floodplain Meadows (Iffley Meadows, Long Meadow, St. Hilda's College Meadow) are designated SSSI and SLINC and contain UK BAP priority habitat, lowland hay meadows. Aston Eyot and the Kidneys is a site of local ecological importance, designated SLINC and BBOWT nature reserve. Grandpont Causeway and city walls SAMs Area is designated as part of the Green Belt. Christchurch Meadow forms part of a Conservation Area

## Evaluation of character and quality

This character area has an extremely important role in the setting to Oxford. It is one of the major floodplains that defined the historic growth of the city and provided the unique juxtaposition of urban and rural environments at the centre of the city. The area is highly distinctive for its rural character, historic meadows, rowing culture and views to the historic core.

The intact survival of historic features, rich ecological habitats and functional integrity results in a landscape of exceptionally high quality.

## Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High - SSSIs indicate national value
Historic Integrity	High - historic meadows, Grandpont Causeway, city walls, Christchurch Meadow Conservation Area
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High - views across Christchurch Meadow to historic core
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace

## Sensitivity to change

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its historic integrity, tranquil character, rich biodiversity and the role it plays in the rural setting of Oxford. It also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoints identified at Nuneham Courtney and across Christchurch Meadow towards the city and this heightens its sensitivity to tall built elements.

Since the 18th century enclosures this area has seen very little change, although conversion of floodplain meadows into close mown amenity playing fields has had an impact on the landscape and ecological character of the floodplain. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities and local vernacular of this distinctive area;
- intensive grassland management for recreation rather than nature conservation;
- abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime;

- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation, particularly floodplain trees;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- new built features that would affect the open expansive character or block views of the historic core from the floodplain.

## **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to conserve the area's historic integrity, tranquil character, rich biodiversity and the role it plays in the rural setting of Oxford. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- conserving the historic meadows and pastures of the Thames floodplain and preserving traditional management techniques;
- resisting built development in the floodplain which would impinge on the open rural character and tranquillity of the floodplain or that would impinge on views of the historic core;
- resisting infrastructure improvements which would further fragment the floodplain - bridges are more suitable than embankments to maintain visual and ecological connections along the floodplain;
- maintaining access to, and along, the river;
- considering opportunities to plant rare floodplain trees such as black poplar.
- maintaining important and famous views of Oxford across the floodplain, such as that from the Christchurch Meadow to Christchurch Cathedral and the old town walls and the longer distance view identified from Nuneham Courtney.



## 9E HINKSEY AND BULSTAKE STREAMS

### Description

Flat, wide alluvial floodplain of the southern part of the River Thames – comprising the streams and tributaries bordering the south-west side of Oxford. It is separated from main river corridor (9D: *Thames (Isis) South*), which runs through the city, by development along the intervening river terraces. The area has its own distinct character and is thus described separately.

The floodplain contains the meandering watercourses of the Hinksey and Bulstake streams and is crossed by a network of rush-filled ditches (*photo 1*). The presence of these small watercourses is indicated by lines pollarded willow, bands of osiers and low scrub (*photo 2*). They are set within large fields of pasture, and rough grassland with mixed scrub, some of which is grazed by horses. In addition there are a number of open water bodies including Hinksey Lake and smaller pools arising from gravel extraction on the west side of the railway. Transmission lines are a very prominent feature of this area – with both electricity pylons and telecommunications infrastructure (*photo 3*). The lines of consecutive vertical structures are very prominent within this flat open landscape. Other dominant features are the railway line (*photo 4*) bordering Hinksey Lake, to the east and the A34 to the west, with the hum of traffic noise having an impact on the qualities of peacefulness and remoteness of this area. A network of tracks and footpaths with foot bridges provides access into the area, often hidden amongst vegetation (*photo 5*).

The area excludes the historic floodplain villages of North and South Hinksey, which lie beyond the administrative boundary of the city to the west – although these are essentially part of the local character. Elsewhere, built development is largely absent, apart from pavilions associated with sports and recreational use (*photo 6*). The close mown grass and infrastructure associated with these land uses are dominant in some areas, obliterating the underlying floodplain character.

The area is critical in forming part of the landscape setting to the historic core, painted by Turner and celebrated in the poetry of Matthew Arnold.

### Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>River and Pastoral Floodplain</i> - the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Historic Meadows and Pastures strongly influence the character of the floodplain.  20th century additions include the railway, electricity pylons and ice rink and activities including gravel extraction.
Archaeological and historic interest	Historic meadows, pastures and commons.  The pollarded trees and ditches are important historic landscape features.
Street and block pattern	Notable for its lack of settlement - sports pavilions and the ice rink are only built features.

## 9E HINKSEY/BULSTAKE STREAMS

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Photo 1: The floodplain is crossed by a network of rush filled ditches.



Photo 2: Watercourses are lined by pollarded willow, osiers and low scrub.



Photo 3: Pylons and transmission lines are prominent.



Photo 4: The railway line fragments the area.

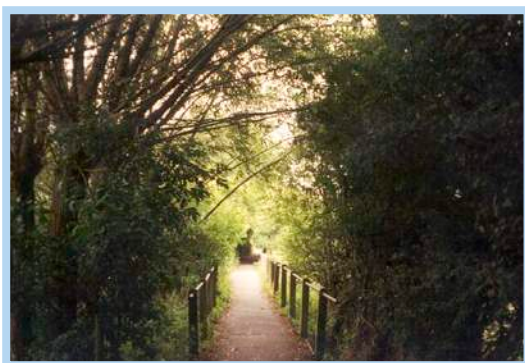


Photo 5: A network of tracks and footpaths with footbridges provide access to floodplain.

Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via footpaths. Recreation grounds provide public open space.
Massing and enclosure	Low density of built development. Vegetation provides a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer.
Architecture and built form	General absence of built development, apart from pavilions associated with recreational facilities. The wider floodplain includes traditional villages, with vernacular stone buildings and walls (traditional villages of North and South Hinksey are beyond the city boundary). Electricity power lines are prominent.
Streetscape	Notable for the absence of streets.
Open space	Large amount of open space with good access, including rights of way and permitted paths, plus large areas of public open space as a result of the long surviving commons. Grandpont Nature Park - a nature park, created on site of former Oxford Gas works – rough neutral and acidic grassland and scrub managed for wildlife with public access to the Thames. Large number of playing fields and recreation grounds border the area e.g. to the south of New Botley and adjacent to the Ice Rink, plus central cricket ground. Botley Meadow (Osney Mead) - a large area of remnant floodplain meadow, traditionally managed by light grazing horses and a hay cut. Hinksey Pools, Hinksey Stream and Hinksey Lake contain aquatic habitats, which include a narrow pool, where the northern end is used for fishing and southern end undisturbed with reeds and scrub, marginal aquatic vegetation and a larger lake.
Biodiversity	Predominately semi-improved pasture, meadows and scrub. Aquatic habitats, including streams, ditches and standing water are notable and are an extremely valuable wildlife habitat. Spraggelsea Mead and Deans Ham include allotment gardens and local areas of wildlife value. Botley Meadow (Osney Mead) supports great burnet, ragged robin and fritillary and is an important ornithological site, with kingfisher, reed bunting and sedge warbler all recorded. Hinksey Pools, Hinksey Stream and Hinksey Lake contain aquatic habitats, and bittern and water vole have previously been recorded.
Land use, culture and vitality	The area has a timeless quality – historic meadows, pastures and commons.
Access and traffic	Tranquil, rural landscape – impinged on by A34 (noise) and rail line. The area offers public access into the floodplain and beyond. The most notable is the ‘Matthew Arnold’ path – a popular walking route from the city via a footbridge over Hinksey Lake and linking with wider public access including the Chilswell valley walks to Boars Hill. Vitally important in contributing to experience of – rural in close proximity to city – a key characteristic of Oxford.
Views and visual patterns	Views across meadows are constrained by layers of hedgerows and

	mature vegetation alongside the river.
Designations	<p>Botley Meadow (Osney Mead) is designated SLINC with large areas of UK BAP habitat lowland meadow.</p> <p>Hinksey Pools, Hinksey Stream and Hinksey Lake are important areas of ecological interest, designated as SLINC and supporting UK BAP priority species and habitats.</p>

## Evaluation of character and quality

This area has a strength of character by virtue of its good survival of floodplain features. It has an important role in the setting to the city of Oxford, providing the sense of a rural landscape in close proximity to the urban area. It is also critical in the iconography of Oxford – part of a much painted view from Boar’s Hill and North Hinksey forming the rural setting to the historic core, and celebrated in the poetry of Matthew Arnold. Detracting features include the pylons and transmission lines, encroachment of built development, extension of sports facilities and intrusion of traffic noise, which has eroded the peaceful/rural character. Despite this, the area retains a strong visual and cultural unity and a high functional integrity that conveys a perception of exceptionally high landscape quality.

## Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate - SLINC designations and UK BAP priority habitats
Historic Integrity	Moderate - survival of historic meadows indicate longevity of land use; ditches are important historic features
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low - glimpses of some of the tallest buildings of the historic core from floodplain
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace

## Sensitivity to change

Its distinctiveness, historic interest, high ecological value and open character make this area particularly sensitive to change. It also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoints identified at Raleigh Park and Boar's Hill to the west and this heightens its sensitivity to built elements.

Since the 18th century enclosures this area has seen progressive changes resulting from expansion of close mown amenity playing fields, introduction of pylons and transmission lines and gravel extraction. Building of the railway line has fragmented the area, but also introduced the colourful railway bridge crossing across the Thames.

Recently the old Oxford Gas works site has been restored to natural habitat and is now a nature park managed for wildlife. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities and local vernacular of this distinctive area;
- intensive grassland management for recreation rather than nature conservation;
- abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime;
- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation, particularly floodplain trees;
- new built features that would affect the open expansive character of the floodplain.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to conserve the area's historic integrity, tranquil character, rich biodiversity and the role it plays in the rural setting of Oxford. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- conserving the semi-natural habitats through traditional management of the commonland and meadows;
- conserving and managing important landscape features, including pollards and ditches;
- ensuring any new built development is isolated and of high quality design, in locations that do not obstruct views or adversely affect the rural character of the floodplain;
- seeking to enhance management of recreation land e.g. along margins to reintroduce a 'floodplain' character;
- managing the water levels of the Thames to ensure floodplain grassland habitats are maintained;
- considering opportunities for planting of rare floodplain trees such as black poplar;
- maintaining important and famous views of Oxford across the floodplain, such as those from North Hinksey and Boar's Hill;
- considering long term opportunities for future removal/placing underground of transmission lines – as undertaken on the floodplain (Port Meadow) to the north.

## 10 OPEN RIVER TERRACES

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### Generic Description

The *Open River Terraces* are those areas of open land remaining between the dense urban development which characterises the *Settled and Open River Terrace* landscape type. These open green spaces lie on the same domed deposits of river terrace gravels which support the historic core of Oxford as well as many of the older residential areas of Oxford.

Many of the open river terraces have retained their field structure and hedgerow boundaries dating to the Parliamentary enclosures as well as some areas of historic riverside meadow that are highly valued for their biodiversity and endangered habitats. They are notable for their low density of built development, possessing a remote tranquil character in comparison to the busy, urban character of the adjacent areas. However, they are affected by the proximity of built development and are predominantly used as playing fields and recreation grounds. Rural buildings, such as farmsteads, are typically of limestone with red brick detailing although a variety of modern materials are seen in the construction of schools and sports pavilions.

### Key Characteristics

- areas of open greenspace on the *Settled and Open River Terrace* landscape type;
- remote, tranquil character in comparison to the adjacent urban areas;
- field structure and hedgerow boundaries date to Parliamentary inclosure;
- schools, playing fields and recreation grounds and pasture make up dominant land uses;
- historic lowland hay meadows with rich biodiversity and rare habitats;
- form a buffer between urban areas and the sensitive floodplains.

### Character Areas

I0A North Oxford Open River Terrace

I0B Peartree Open River Terrace

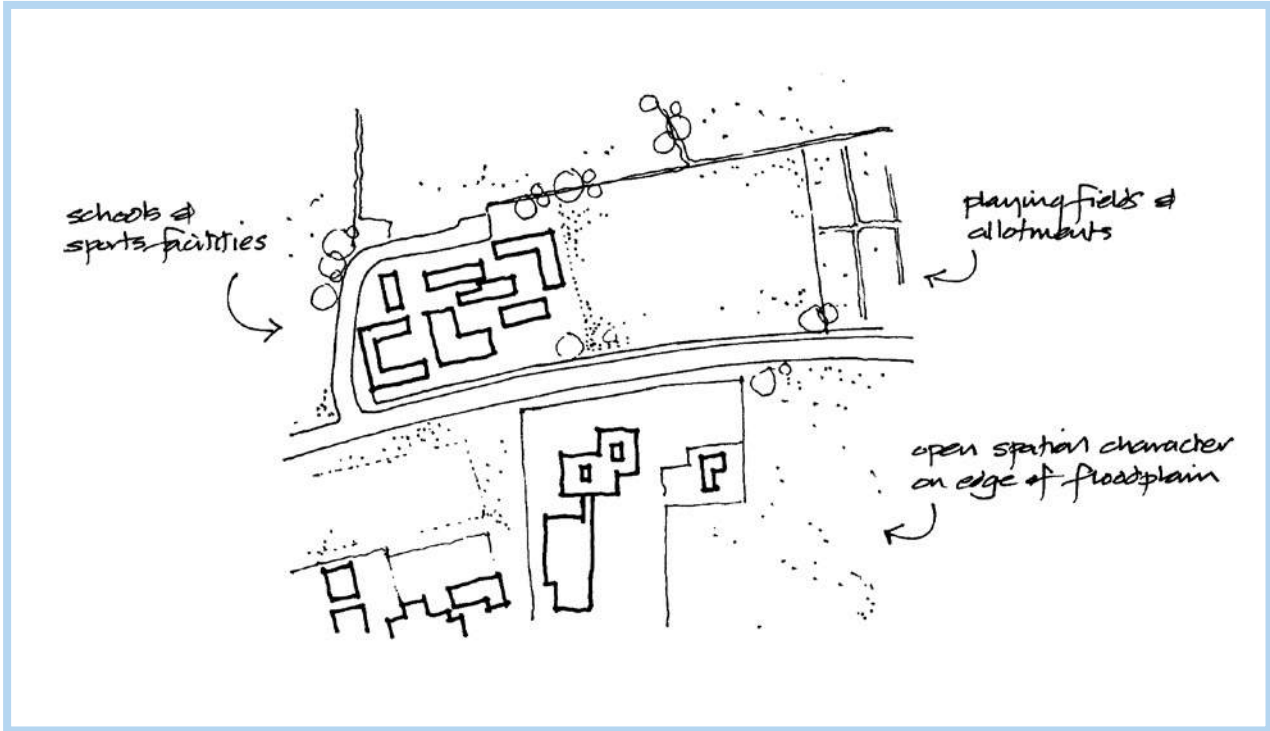
I0C Marston Open River Terrace

I0D St Clement's Open River Terrace

I0E New Hinksey Open River Terrace

# 10 OPEN RIVER TERRACES

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Generic example of spatial characteristics.

# 10A NORTH OXFORD OPEN RIVER TERRACE

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## Description

The *North Oxford Open River Terrace* occurs in three discrete pockets across the *North Oxford River Terrace* landscape character area. They were formerly part of Cutteslowe and Water Eaton Fields (arable and pasture) and St Giles Fields (open arable fields) and have evolved into open recreational greenspace adjacent to the urban landscapes of Oxford. Many have retained their hedgerow boundaries that indicate their former land use (*photo 1*). They contain no sites designated as of ecological importance and are predominately managed for amenity and with mature trees, allotments and private gardens providing local ecological value. Most of the playing fields are privately owned land with little public access (*photo 2*).

These areas are notable for their low density of built development; the typical block pattern is one of single estate or recreational buildings scattered within the open landscape. The local vernacular is local rubble stone and red brick buildings with clay tile roofs (*photo 3*). However, school buildings and sports pavilions, of varying ages and styles, now form the predominant built component of the landscape, located in the corner of each field (*photo 4*).

Belts of poplar, mature specimen trees and old stone buildings are characteristic features of the more rural parts of the river terrace and provide a sense of enclosure, particularly in the summer. Cutteslowe Park is open to the public and provides an important recreational resource. Acquired by the City Council in 1935, it is a designed parkland landscape that lies alongside the Cherwell (*photo 5*). Views to adjacent wooded ridges of Wytham Hill or the East Oxford Heights are an important feature (*photo 6*).

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled and Open River Terraces</i> - the river terraces adjacent to the floodplain of the Rivers Thames and Cherwell.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Part of Cutteslowe and Water Eaton Fields (arable and pasture) and St Giles Fields (open arable fields) as shown on the map of 1769.  Parliamentary enclosure fields with 20th century land use.
Archaeological and historic interest	None evident
Street and block pattern	Single estate or recreational buildings and schools are scattered.
Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via footpaths. Cutteslowe Park is a public open space.
Massing and enclosure	Low density of built development.  Vegetation along boundaries provides a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer.



Architecture and built form	<p>Isolated rural stone buildings (including Cutteslowe Park House and farms) with newer built schools and sports pavilions.</p> <p>Local vernacular is local rubble stone and red brick buildings with clay tile roofs.</p>
Streetscape	<p>Notable for the absence of streets. Access lanes and tracks to institutions and playing fields.</p>
Open space	<p>Most of the playing fields are privately owned land with little public access. Cutteslowe Park is open to the public and provides an important recreational resource.</p> <p>Cutteslowe Park - acquired by the City Council in 1935, lies alongside the Cherwell. Its designed grounds include a children's play area, paddling pool, aviary and steam train. There are tennis courts, football pitches, a grass hockey pitch and a basketball court and in the summer, one cricket wicket, pitch and putt, a public bowls green and croquet lawn.</p> <p>School and College playing fields are manicured grass playing fields set within existing field boundaries. Sports pavilions are located in the corner of each playing field. School buildings are often of modern materials and styles.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Contains no sites designated as of ecological importance. Open spaces are predominately managed for amenity and with mature trees; allotments and private gardens provide local ecological value. St John's Hayfield is a semi-improved lowland neutral grassland of local ecological importance.</p>
Land use, culture and vitality	<p>Peaceful, rural landscape in contrast with adjacent urban areas.</p> <p>Land use is primarily recreational.</p>
Access and traffic	<p>Minor access tracks.</p> <p>Marston Ferry Road crosses the area on its approach to its route across the Cherwell Floodplain.</p>
Views and visual patterns	<p>Views across area are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries.</p> <p>Trees are skyline features - belts of poplars and hedgerow trees form a green backdrop to the open space.</p>
Designations	<p>Cutteslowe Park forms part of the Green Belt.</p>

## Evaluation of character and quality

These areas are distinctive because of their open space, rural character and green backdrop adjacent to urban areas. Although they have little historic or ecological value in their own right, they form an important setting to the floodplain landscapes of Oxford. Landscape quality is perceived as moderate.

# I0A NORTH OXFORD OPEN RIVER TERRACE



Photo 1: Allotments are typical of the river terraces.



Photo 2: Playing fields are privately owned with little public access.



Photo 3: Density of built development is very low. The local vernacular is local rubblestone and red brick with red clay tiles.



Photo 4: Sports Pavilions are located in the corners of the fields.



Photo 5: Cutteslowe Park is a designed landscape and public park that lies adjacent to the River Cherwell floodplain.



Photo 6: Views to adjacent wooded ridgelines are an important feature.

## Indicators of Landscape Value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low - unrecorded sites of local interest only
Historic Integrity	Low - hedgerow pattern of parliamentary enclosure only
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low - no views of the historic core
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace

### Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and absence of nationally valued historic or ecological features means these areas are not as sensitive as their adjacent floodplains. However, their connections and associations with the floodplains increase their sensitivity. Sensitivity may be described as moderate.

Since the enclosure of the landscape this area has seen progressive changes in land use resulting in the expansion of close mown amenity playing fields and gradually more intensive land management. However, the land has remained open and forms a setting to the adjacent floodplains. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- infill development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this distinctive area;
- intensive landscape management that reduces the biodiversity of the landscape;
- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation and trees as a result of old age;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- loss of hedgerows as they become redundant.

### Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities

The landscape strategy should be to conserve the open character of the landscape and to enhance its wildlife value as part of a wider green corridor. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- conserving traditional buildings and materials and encouraging restoration of historic buildings;

- using local materials in any new built development - building materials are typically stone and red brick with red clay roof tiles. 'Coral Rag' boundary walls are also characteristic;
- maintaining a low density of built development and the open character of these terraces as a setting to the floodplains;
- considering management techniques, such as reduced mowing regimes, to enhance wildlife value of these areas;
- enhancing public access to these areas and promoting informal recreation for local residents;
- conserving and managing the historic hedgerows which provide a sense of historic continuity and provide shelter for wildlife;
- promote planting of typical floodplain edge trees such as poplar and willows.

# 10B PEARTREE OPEN RIVER TERRACE

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## Description

Located in the north-west of Oxford, to the west of the suburb of Cutteslow, Peartree is characterised as an area of fragmented, scattered urban fringe development within an open agricultural landscape. The area was previously known as the Wolvercote Fields, an open arable and pastoral landscape, but today it is dominated by the Peartree interchange, a major road junction at the northern gateway to Oxford (*photo 1*). The development of transport related services to the east of the A34 (motels, service stations etc) in contrast with the vast tracts of agricultural land beyond makes for a discordant character.

The area is notable for its low density of built development, although continuing development at the A34 roundabout gives an impression that this landscape is currently in a state of flux and will continue to change. Located within the landscape character type classified as the *Gosford Gap*, the sense of openness is interrupted by the elevated carriageway and the multi-storey motel developments (*photo 2*). Open agricultural fields dominate the area, providing a large amount of greenspace between the infrastructure developments. There is local interest in the biodiversity of the area - arable fields have the potential to support populations of rare arable weeds and road verges and hedgerows provide linear wildlife habitats. Some ecological value is also provided by scrubland around the perimeter of the service area.

This area deserves recognition as an important northern approach and gateway to the city of Oxford as well forming an important setting to Wolvercote Conservation Area, Goose Green and the Thames floodplain.

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Lowland Clay Vale</i> - on Oxford clay and gravel river terrace adjacent to the Thames Floodplain
Evolution of landscape/townscape	An area previously known as the Wolvercote Fields, shown as arable agricultural land on 1765 maps.  Late twentieth century development includes A34 ring road, transport related infrastructure and hotels.
Archaeological and historic interest	Forms a setting to Wolvercote Conservation Area and Goose Green
Street and block pattern	Single large scale buildings (hotels, service stations) are located by major road junctions.  A40(T) and A44(T) dissect the landscape.
Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with car parks and service areas forming semi-public spaces.
Massing and enclosure	Low density of built development.  Vegetation along boundaries provides a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer.

Architecture and built form	<p>The vernacular is red brick or coral rag buildings with red clay tile roofs, seen at Red Barn Farm.</p> <p>Large-scale services and hotel developments dominate today.</p>
Streetscape	<p>Peartree Interchange on the A34 and Wolvercote Roundabout are major road junctions.</p> <p>A40(T) and A44(T) are major roads, the A44(T) with a central reservation. Street lamps are tall and scale is large.</p>
Open space	<p>This area contains a large amount of greenspace. Open agricultural fields dominate the area, providing a large amount of greenspace between the infrastructure developments.</p> <p>Car parks associated with the transport service facilities (although privately owned they have public access).</p> <p>Manicured lawns dominate the greenspace within service areas with some scrubby edges where the development meets agricultural land.</p> <p>Fields of pasture bounded by mature hedgerows provide a rural setting to the north of Oxford.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Arable fields have the potential to support populations of rare arable weeds. Road verges and hedgerows provide linear wildlife habitats. Some ecological value provided by scrubland around the perimeter of the service area.</p>
Land use, culture and vitality	<p>Agriculture and transport-related land use dominates the area. The dominance of roads and traffic creates the perception of a busy, urban environment.</p>
Access and traffic	<p>Peartree interchange is a major road intersection which dominates the northern approach to Oxford.</p>
Views and visual patterns	<p>Views across area are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries.</p> <p>Trees are skyline features - belts of poplars and hedgerow trees form a green backdrop to the open space.</p>
Designations	<p>Small part in south-west designated as part of the Green Belt</p> <p>Small part in south-west forms part of the Wolvercote Conservation Area</p>

## Evaluation of character and quality

The fragmentation of the landscape by major infrastructure, poor condition of the field boundaries and erosion of the rural landscape structure by new built development means that this area does not show great strength of character or quality. Landscape quality may be described as low.

## I0B PEARTREE OPEN RIVER TERRACE



Photo 1: The Pear tree interchange is a major traffic interchange at the northern gateway to Oxford.



Photo 2: Multi-storey motels are features of the urban fringe.

## Indicators of Landscape Value

Landscape Quality	Low
Biodiversity	Low - unrecorded sites of local interest only
Historic Integrity	Low - hedgerow pattern of parliamentary enclosure only
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low - no views of the historic core
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace

## Sensitivity to change

Despite the absence of highly valued ecological or historic features and the generally low scenic quality, this area is in a visually sensitive location, at the gateway to Oxford from the north. It also forms a setting to Wolvercote Conservation Area, historic Goose Green and the Thames floodplain and for these reasons its sensitivity may be described as moderate.

The 20th century has seen the development of major infrastructure and associated built development on the edge of Oxford. The landscape is currently in a state of flux and threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- infill development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this distinctive area;
- new landscapes that do not respond to their wider landscape context;
- intensive landscape management that reduces the biodiversity of the landscape;
- loss of vegetation and trees as a result of new built development and old age;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- loss of hedgerows as they become redundant.

## Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities

The landscape strategy should be to conserve the rural character of the landscape as a setting to Wolvercote and the Thames floodplain and to enhance the area as a gateway to north Oxford. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape enhancement may include:

- using native vegetation to soften and screen existing developments on this rural edge;



- incorporating tree planting with any new development; reducing the harsh distinction between urban and rural and improving the approach to Oxford from the north;
- ensuring future developments take account of local sense of place and their position at a gateway to Oxford on the edge of the Thames floodplain;
- conserving historic buildings such as those at Red Barn Farm;
- encouraging the use of native species for shelter belts instead of non-native conifers;
- encouraging planting within the service station complex for both visual and ecological value;
- conserving the agricultural hedgerow boundaries for historic field patterns and ecological worth;
- considering opportunities to enhance the northern approach to Oxford through additional native planting along the roadside.

# 10C MARSTON OPEN RIVER TERRACE

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## Description

The Marston River Terrace is an outlier of Oxford Clay overlain by second level river gravels. It forms a gently domed 'island' in the Cherwell Floodplain, to the east of the river. This land originally formed part of the open field system linked to the medieval nucleated village of Marston. Marston Common lies to the north – beyond the city boundary. Today, the area appears as a typical arable landscape with medium to large cropped fields defined by low hawthorn hedgerows (photo 1), with occasional hedgerow trees of ash or oak.

The area is notable for its open rural character and extremely low density of built development with buildings comprising a single farmstead and pub, built in the local vernacular of Coral Rag and soft red brick, and modern school. The hedgerows and occasional mature hedgerow trees of oak and ash are important in creating the rural framework. The area is notable for its open rural character and its absence of streets. An historic lane runs along the gravel ridge, linking Marston Village to Hill View Farm. In contrast, Marston Ferry Road and the northern by-pass cut through the landscape bearing no relation to landscape pattern or character.

The area is important in providing access to rural countryside from Marston village core via tracks and footpaths to the Cherwell. From here there is extensive access with footpath/cycle routes continuing along the river and into North Oxford, the University Parks, including the area known as Mesopotamia. Historic meadows and pastures on the edge of the Cherwell Valley support fritillary, scarce Diptera and damselfly, breeding lapwing, lesser-spotted woodpecker and kingfisher. The Victoria Arms Spinney is a small area of wet woodland, a UK BAP priority habitat.

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled and Open River Terraces</i> – occupies part of the river terrace to the east of the Cherwell floodplain.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	This area retains a rural landscape pattern, originating from the former open fields associated with the medieval nucleated village of Marston (3A). Marston Common lies to the north of the area beyond the city boundary. It is likely that the survival of open fields until the 19 <sup>th</sup> century discouraged development of this area. The area remains an open agricultural landscape between the village and the river.
Archaeological and historic interest	Its interest lies in its history – inextricably linked with the historic village core, and its proximity to the river and floodplain – forming a vital part of a green wedge within the urban fabric of Oxford.
Street and block pattern	The area is notable for its open rural character, with buildings limited to a single farmstead, pub and school.
Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via footpaths.

Massing and enclosure	<p>Extremely low density of built development.</p> <p>The hedgerows and occasional mature hedgerow trees of oak and ash are important in creating the rural framework but rarely provide a sense of enclosure.</p>
Architecture and built form	Vernacular stone built farm buildings and public house plus school of modern design.
Streetscape	Notable for the absence of streets. Minor lanes and tracks access the farm and pub and Marston Ferry Road and northern by-pass are main roads that are superimposed on top of the landscape, paying no regard for landscape pattern or character.
Open space	<p>The area is important in providing access to rural countryside from Marston village core via tracks and footpaths to the Cherwell. From here there is extensive access with footpath/cycle routes continuing along the river and into North Oxford, the University Parks, including the area known as Mesopotamia.</p> <p>Historic Meadows and Pastures (New Marston Meadows, Northern Bypass Meadows) are unimproved and semi-improved neutral meadows managed as summer pasture and hay meadows.</p>
Biodiversity	Allotments provide a mosaic of habitats for wildlife and ditches provide wetland habitat for a range of aquatic species. Historic Meadows and Pastures (New Marston Meadows, Northern Bypass Meadows) support fritillary, scarce Diptera and damselfly, breeding lapwing, lesser-spotted woodpecker and kingfisher. Victoria Arms Spinney is a small area of wet woodland with field maple, red currant and song thrush recorded.
Land use, culture and vitality	Arable farmland with a peaceful, rural tranquil quality.
Access and traffic	<p>The area is fragmented by two main east west routes: the Marston Ferry Road and the Northern Bypass (forming the northern boundary of the character area and the boundary of the City administration with Cherwell District).</p> <p>A number of rights of way permit public access in and through this area and connect it with central Oxford.</p>
Views and visual patterns	<p>Views across area are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries.</p> <p>Trees are skyline features - belts of poplars and hedgerow trees form a green backdrop to the open space.</p>
Designations	<p>Historic Meadows and Pastures (New Marston Meadows, Northern Bypass Meadows) are designated SSSI or SLINC and contain the UK BAP priority habitat lowland hay meadows.</p> <p>Victoria Arms Spinney, a small area of wet woodland, is a designated SLINC and contains Wet Woodland, a UK BAP Priority Habitat.</p> <p>The whole area (except for the school buildings) form part of the Green Belt.</p>

## I0C MARSTON OPEN RIVER TERRACE



Photo 1: A typical landscape of medium to large cropped fields defined by low hawthorn hedgerows.

## Evaluation of character and quality

The landscape of the Marston Open River Terrace is comprised of arable farmland of medium to large fields bound by low hawthorn hedges. As such it forms a fairly standard agricultural landscape that is not of particularly strong character or high scenic quality. However, it is the rural/urban contrast that is so distinctive to Oxford and offers a variety of rural walks within the city boundary and a peaceful, rural, tranquil quality as well as providing valuable ecological connectivity, in association with and buffering the immediate river floodplain. As a result the perception of landscape quality is moderate.

## Indicators of Landscape Value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	High – historic meadows on edge Cherwell floodplain are nationally valued
Historic Integrity	Moderate – limited survival of historic pastures/meadows
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low - no views of the historic core
Open Space	High - Large expanse of open greenspace

## Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and absence of nationally valued historic or ecological features means this area is not as sensitive as its adjacent floodplain. However, its sensitivity is heightened by its proximity to and setting for the River Cherwell, providing part of the green wedge that separates the development on the North Oxford River Terrace to the extensive development east of the Cherwell. It also forms a rural setting to Marston Village. As a result landscape sensitivity can be described as moderate.

Since the enclosure of the landscape this area has seen progressive changes in agriculture resulting in a more intensively managed landscape. However, the land has remained open and forms part of the wider green corridor that includes the Cherwell floodplain. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that impinges on the rural character of the Cherwell;
- intensive landscape management that reduces the biodiversity of the landscape;
- maturing and eventual loss of vegetation and trees as a result of old age;
- marginalisation of farming in this urban fringe landscape.

## **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall strategy should be to conserve the rural character and to enhance its wildlife value as part of the wider green corridor. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- maintaining a low density of built development and the open character of the terraces as a setting to the floodplain;
- protecting the integrity of the whole of area as part of the important green wedge;
- considering opportunities to further enhance public access (by foot or cycle) within this area whilst maintaining the tranquil character of the Cherwell;
- promoting management of the farmland e.g. through an agri-environment scheme including maintenance and replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- considering opportunities for small scale woodland planting, for example along the road corridors, while retaining the essentially open character and views into the valley;
- using local materials in any new built development - building materials are typically stone and red brick with red clay roof tiles. 'Coral Rag' boundary walls are also characteristic.

# 10D ST CLEMENTS OPEN RIVER TERRACE

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## Description

This character area is an open tract of greenspace at the foot of Headington Hill, on the eastern edge of the Cherwell floodplain. The Victorian village of New Marston defines the edge of settlement to the east of the river terrace. The northern part of the area retains its ancient land use as lowland hay meadow and supports important flora and fauna associated with the Cherwell floodplain (*photo 1*). The finely manicured sports grounds of Trinity College and Magdalen College lie on the former arable fields of Marston field and are flat and open in character with regularly mown sports pitches and pavilions as features (*photo 2*). The southern part of the terrace consists of the former Headington meadow and St Clement's meadow. Headington meadow is now the site of the new Islamic Centre and St Clement's meadow contains the 19th century church of St Clement's (*photo 5*).

The area is notable for its low density of built development. St Clements Church, the rubblestone built King's Mill and several newer built sports pavilions form the only built features. The local vernacular is local rubble stone buildings and walls. Marston Road runs along eastern edge of area, bordered with black iron railings with Scots pine, but within the area only rural lanes and tracks access the individual buildings. Coral rag walls are associated with King's Mill lane, an ancient lane leading to King's Mill and the River Cherwell, now a public footpath (*photo 6*).

The original field patterns remain with thick hedgerows dividing fields. These hedgerows are supplemented by more exotic species, particularly pine and copper beech (*photo 3*), and black railings around the sports grounds. Much of the area is privately owned (*photo 4*). Also within the terrace is St Clement's churchyard, an area of semi-improved grassland with scattered trees, and St. Clement's Field, a semi improved rough grassland with ruderal species. These are of local ecological importance. The New Marston Meadows, to the north of the area are of national importance for their lowland hay meadow habitat, a UK BAP priority habitat. Trees for a distinctive backdrop to the river terrace landscape.

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled and Open River Terraces</i> - the river terraces adjacent to the floodplain of the Cherwell.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Former meadows of Headington and St Clement's and Marston Field have remained as open space adjacent to the Cherwell floodplain.  Parliamentary enclosure fields with 20th century land use.
Archaeological and historic interest	King's Lane, an ancient lane bordered by stone walls leading down to King's Mill on the Cherwell
Street and block pattern	Single buildings and sports pavilions sit within rural landscape. Sports pavilions are located in the corner of each playing field.

Public/private realm interface	A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via footpaths. Cutteslowe Park is a public open space.
Massing and enclosure	Low density of built development.  Thick hedgerow boundaries provide a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer.
Architecture and built form	Isolated rural stone buildings (including St Clements Church, and King's Mill) with newer built sports pavilions.  Local vernacular is local rubble stone and red brick buildings with clay tile roofs.
Streetscape	Notable for the absence of streets. Marston Road runs along eastern edge of area, bordered with black iron railings and Scots pine.  Rural lanes and tracks access buildings. Coral rag walls are associated with King's Mill lane.
Open space	This character area is dominated by greenspace, mostly privately owned. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Clement's Churchyard, an area of semi-improved grassland with scattered trees.</li> <li>• St. Clement's Field, adjacent to the churchyard, a semi improved rough grassland with ruderal species. Local ecological importance</li> <li>• College playing fields are manicured grass playing fields set within existing field boundaries.</li> </ul> Pollarded willows are a feature of the riverside.
Biodiversity	New Marston Meadows are lowland hay meadows supporting fritillary, scarce Diptera and damselfly. Breeding lapwing, lesser-spotted woodpecker and kingfisher have also been recorded. St Clement's Churchyard is semi-improved grassland with scattered trees. Cowslip has previously been recorded. St. Clement's Field is semi improved rough grassland with ruderal species adjacent to the churchyard. Both sites are of local ecological importance.
Land use, culture and vitality	A peaceful riverside landscape in contrast with adjacent urban areas.  Land use is recreational and agricultural.
Access and traffic	Ancient lane leading to King's Mill and the River Cherwell, now a public footpath.
Views and visual patterns	Views across area are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries.  Trees form a backdrop to views and as buffers to the road and river networks.
Designations	New Marston Meadows are designated SSSI.  St Clement's churchyard is covered by Conservation Area designation.



# **I0D ST CLEMENTS OPEN RIVER TERRACE**



Photo 1: Hay meadows in the north support important fauna and flora.



Photo 2: College sports grounds are flat and open mown lawns with sports pavilions.



Photo 3: Former headgerows are supplemented by more exotic species including pine and copper beech.



Photo 4: Much of the area is privately owned.



Photo 5: St Clement's meadow now contains the 19th Century church of St Clement's.



Photo 6: King's Mill lane is an ancient path, bordered by rubblestone walls.

	New Marston Meadows, Trinity College Sports Ground and Magdalen College Sports Ground lie within Green Belt.
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## Evaluation of character and quality

This area is distinctive as a result of its open space, remnant hedgerows, historic King's Mill Lane, and lowland hay meadows adjacent to the Cherwell. It offers public access to the river and peaceful walks close to the city centre. Its strength of character and good condition of elements means it is perceived as a landscape of high quality.

## Indicators of Landscape Value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High – lowland hay meadows are nationally valued
Historic Integrity	High – survival of historic pastures/meadows and ancient lanes
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Moderate - glimpsed views of the spires through vegetation
Open Space	High - functions as an important greenspace for recreation and as a strategic gap between the suburb of New Marston and St Clements and the Plain.

## Sensitivity to change

This landscape is highly sensitive to change as a result of its function as a strategic gap between the suburb of New Marston and St Clements; its function as a setting to the Cherwell River; and the links it provides between the Cherwell and open space on Headington Hill. The ecological sensitivity and historic continuity of land use (lowland hay meadows) increase its sensitivity change. Part of the area also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoints identified at Headington Hill that heighten its sensitivity built elements.

Since the enclosure of the landscape this area has seen progressive changes in land use resulting in a more intensively managed landscape and one managed primarily for recreation. However, the land has remained open and forms part of the wider green corridor that includes the Cherwell floodplain. Most recently the building of the Islamic centre brings new built development into the rural landscape. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this area and blocks public access to the riverside landscape;
- new landscapes that do not respond to their wider landscape context;
- intensive landscape management that reduces the biodiversity of the landscape;
- loss of vegetation and trees as a result of new built development and old age;
- ageing of the built fabric, including the characteristic stone boundary walls and historic buildings;
- loss of hedgerows as they become redundant.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The landscape strategy should be to conserve the rural character of the landscape as a setting to the Cherwell and to enhance wildlife value as part of the wider green corridor and to enhance opportunities for public enjoyment of the landscape. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- protecting the integrity of the whole of area as part of the important green wedge;
- conserving the traditional management of the lowland hay meadows;
- maintaining the rural character of the river terrace landscape as a setting to the Cherwell;
- considering opportunities to enhance the floral diversity of edges of sports grounds;
- considering a programme for planting of native trees and encouraging traditional management techniques such as pollarding of willows;
- enhancing public access to the riverside – promoting public access and informal recreational provision in association with any new development;
- protecting King's Mill Lane and its stone walls as historic landscape features;
- conserving the rural setting to St Clements and New Marston villages;
- enhancing visibility of the river and connections between the river and river terrace landscapes;
- considering the impact on key views identified at Headington Hill (see view cones) in planning any new development in the area.

# 10E NEW HINKSEY OPEN RIVER TERRACE

## Description

This is a very small area of Open River Terrace on the west bank of the Isis (Thames) fronting onto the Abingdon Road. Although on the first river terrace gravels of the Thames, it lies within the floodplain. Formerly part of St. Aldate's farmland, it has remained as open greenspace next to the Thames, and today the area is wholly in recreational or amenity use with land including extensive well-tended allotment gardens (*photo 1*), University sports ground (*photo 2*) and grounds of the new Four Pillars Hotel.

The area is notable for the absence of streets and built development. The low density of built development consists of scattered buildings including the Four Pillars hotel on the site of Eastwyke Farm and a sports pavilion in the corner of the University Sports Ground. The area retains an open 'green' character with tall hedges of poplar and glimpses of willows beyond, hinting at the presence of the adjacent river (*photo 3*). Access to the river, however, is limited, the land being primarily in private ownership/use. The Thames Path National Trail runs along the west bank of the Thames.

The green frontage onto the Abingdon Road is an important feature of this major route into the historic city core. The extensive allotment gardens also create a very locally distinctive landscape with their patchwork of plots, sheds and shelters and demonstrating active local food growing almost in the heart of the city (*photo 4*). These contrast with the manicured mown grass of the adjacent University Sports Ground.

## Checklist and Key Characteristics

Underlying landscape type(s)	<i>Settled and Open River Terraces</i> - the first river terrace adjacent to the alluvial floodplain of the Thames.
Evolution of landscape/townscape	Formerly part of St. Aldate's farmland that has remained as open greenspace next to the Thames.  Framework of hedgerows dating from Parliamentary inclosures enclosing modern 20th century uses including allotments and sports grounds.
Archaeological and historic interest	Parliamentary field pattern.
Street and block pattern	Notable absence of streets - scattered farms and sports pavilions sit within rural landscape.
Public/private realm interface	Clear divisions between public open space and private open space.
Massing and enclosure	Low density of built development, but thick hedgerow boundaries provide a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer.
Architecture and built form	Ornate sports pavilion.

	<p>The hotel forms a new large scale building on the site of Eastwyke Farm.</p> <p>Local vernacular is local rubble stone and soft red brick with clay tile roofs.</p>
Streetscape	<p>Notable for the absence of streets. Abingdon Road runs along western edge of area, bordered with black iron railings.</p> <p>Rural lanes and tracks access sports ground and allotments.</p>
Open space	<p>The entire area forms part of an open green space, with allotments and recreation grounds. Willow and poplars and the framework of tall hedges are especially important in creating a green 'semi-rural' character.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>The allotments provide useful mosaic habitats for wildlife and ditches provide wetland habitat for a range of aquatic species, although there are no designated sites of ecological importance. The ecological value of the area is enhanced by its proximity to the river corridor, forming part of an extensive green wedge.</p>
Land use, culture and vitality	<p>Actively cultivated garden allotments and sports field. An area used for recreation/amenity/sports.</p>
Access and traffic	<p>Limited public access to the area.</p> <p>Abingdon Road runs along western boundary.</p> <p>Visual links, but no physical access, to the adjacent River Thames.</p>
Views and visual patterns	<p>Tall hedges of poplar form a backdrop to views and glimpses of willow hint at proximity to the river.</p> <p>Extensive views across the area from the Abingdon Road are an important visual experience on approach to Oxford from the south.</p>
Designations	<p>Forms part of the Green Belt.</p>

## Evaluation of character and quality

This open undeveloped area of river terrace, including allotments and sports grounds and surrounding trees is very important in creating an overall 'green' character. It suggests the presence of the adjacent floodplain of the River Thames and, together with the river, this area forms an integral part of the important green corridor that threads through the city. This is particularly valuable feature along the main Abingdon Road approach to the historic core, creating a strong sense of place of Oxford and its rivers. The framework of trees provides clear visual links with the river, although there is no physical connectivity with the river. The extensive allotment gardens also contribute to the semi-rural character forming a locally distinctive landscape demonstrating local food growing almost in the heart of the city. The perception of landscape quality is moderate.

# **10E NEW HINKSEY OPEN RIVER TERRACE**

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Photo 1: Allotment gardens are features of the river terrace landscape.



Photo 2: Built development is at a very low density - this sports pavilion is one of two buildings in the area.



Photo 3: Glimpses of pollarded willows hint at the presence of the adjacent river.



Photo 4: Extensive allotments demonstrate active local food growing almost in the heart of the city.

## Indicators of Landscape Value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – undesignated sites of local interest only.
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate - glimpsed views of the spires through vegetation.
Open Space	High - functions as an important greenspace for recreation and as a strategic gap between the Thames and the residential area of Grandpont.

### Sensitivity to change

This landscape is highly sensitive to change as a result of its function as a strategic gap on the edge of the Thames and its location adjacent to the Abingdon Road, the main southern approach to Oxford city centre. It also lies within the viewcone of the key viewpoints identified from the Nuneham Ridge and Headington Hill and this heightens its sensitivity to built elements.

Since the enclosure of the landscape this area has seen progressive changes in land use resulting in a more intensively managed landscape and one managed primarily for recreation. However, the land has remained open and forms part of the wider green corridor that includes the Thames floodplain. Most recently the building of the Four Pillars Hotel in a locally distinctive style has strengthened the built character of the rural landscape. Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- new built development that does not respect the spatial qualities of this area and blocks views across the landscape to the Thames floodplain;
- new landscapes that do not respond to their wider landscape context;
- intensive landscape management that reduces the biodiversity of the landscape;
- loss of hedgerows of poplar and willow as a result of new built development and old age.

### Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities

The landscape strategy should be to conserve the open green space and to maintain the sense of proximity to the river. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- protecting the integrity of the whole of the area as part of the important green wedge;
- protecting the rural landscape from small scale incremental development;
- maintaining landscape features, including the hedgerow framework, pollarded willows and ditches, through appropriate management;
- conserving the 'green frontage' onto the Abingdon Road and views across the open space;
- seeking opportunities to enhance legibility of pedestrian routes that link to the River Thames (National Trail);
- maintaining the framework of trees (willows and poplars) that enclose the open spaces within this area.
- considering views from Headington Hill or the Nuneham Ridge in planning any new built development;
- considering opportunities to enhance the floral diversity of edges of sports grounds;
- considering a programme for planting of native trees and encouraging traditional management techniques such as pollarding of willows.



## II GARDEN SUBURBS

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The garden city movement was begun by Ebenezer Howard, at the beginning of the 20th century, who advocated the formation of garden cities interrelating country and town in rural settings. The residential 'garden suburb' arose from this idea of the 'garden city'.

This landscape type within Oxford displays many features that are characteristic of the garden suburb. The cul-de-sac is a feature, giving a 'sense of community' to those living within it and private roads restrict access and through-traffic. The low density of large, detached buildings set within large plots creates a sense of spaciousness and rural character.

There is just one garden suburb within Oxford. This lies on the *Settled Plateaux* landscape type, a landscape characterised by its prominent landform (Corallian platforms of sand and calcareous sandstone) and sandy soils.

### Key Characteristics

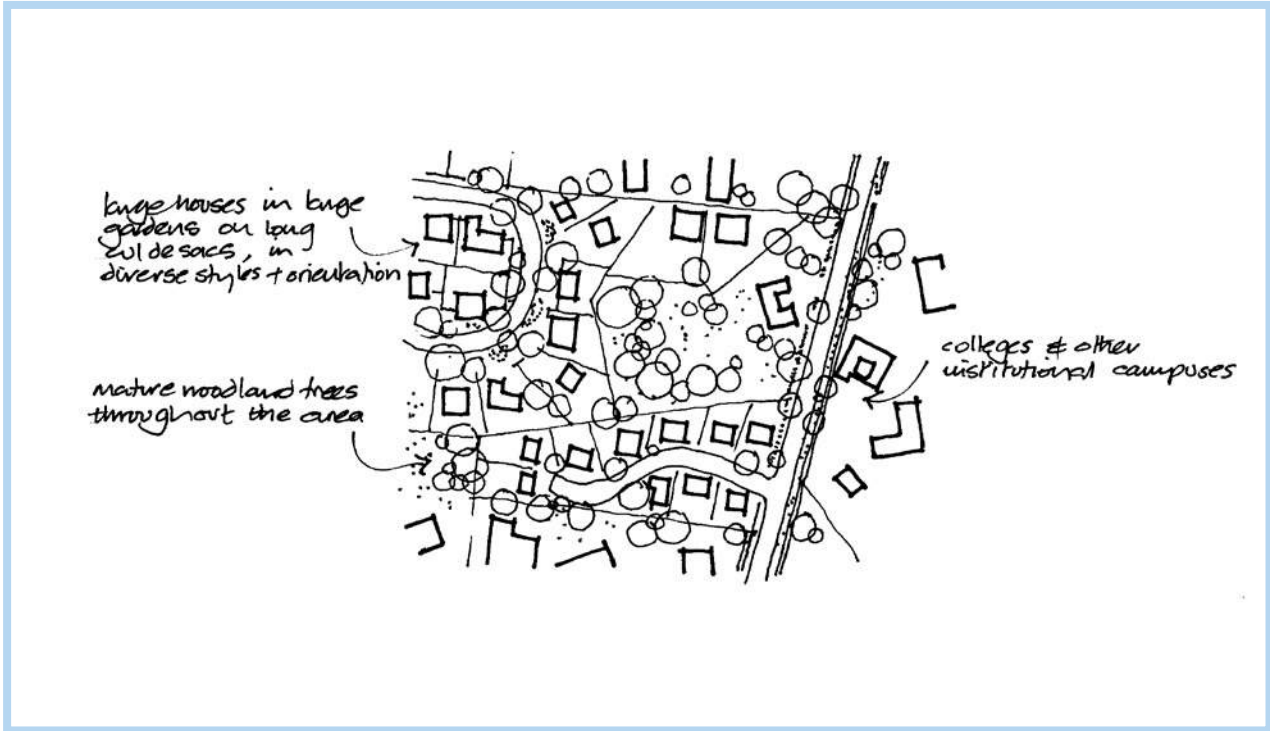
- cul de sacs and private roads with few road markings or kerbs;
- large scale detached residential (and some institutional) properties dating from the turn of the century to the present day;
- large plot sizes with extensive gardens and private grounds;
- located on the *Settled Plateaux* landscape character type to the east of Oxford;
- high tree cover creating a 'woodland' environment;
- narrow valleys containing tributary brooks are features of the landscape;
- views over the city of Oxford.

### Character Areas

IIA Headington Hill

## II GARDEN SUBURBS

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Generic example of spatial characteristics.

# 1.1A HEADINGTON HILL

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## Description

*Headington Hill Garden Suburb* is a distinctive area occupying a prominent position at the crest of Headington Hill. Headington Hill forms the skyline to the east of the Cherwell Valley and is part of the *Settled Plateaux* landscape type. It is a mixed development of detached houses dating from turn of the century to the present day in former Headington fields. Pollock House (1889) and Cotuit Hall (1890) were built at the end of the 19th century and constitute the oldest buildings.

The low-density suburb is set out on curved streets and cul de sacs with large, detached buildings set in large plots (see block diagram). Although the properties are of a consistent scale, there is great variety in architecture, materials and detailing giving each house a unique character (*photos 1 and 2*). The two main access roads (Pullens Lane and Jack Straw's Lane) are rural lanes with few road markings or signs and only partially kerbed. Woodland vegetation borders the lanes providing a sense of enclosure and rural character (*photo 3*). Mature garden vegetation also contributes to the leafy character of the suburb, although the ornamental shrubs and trees associated with the large gardens, mown grass verges, clipped hedges and ornamental Victorian lamp posts have tamed the rural character in places (*photo 4*).

Street lighting is not present throughout resulting in a semi-dark environment at night, further enhancing the rural character of the area. Red brick or stone boundary walls or clipped hedges are features of the streetscape along Pullens Lane and gravel driveways provide tantalising glimpses of the private realm (*photo 5*). The degree of enclosure provided by vegetation restricts views, although there are some superb views over central Oxford from the allotments at the top of the hill (*photo 6*). These also provide valuable habitats for wildlife, their value enhanced by the proximity to the small area of woodland on their northern boundary.

## Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying Landscape Type	Headington Hill forms part of the <i>Settled Plateaux</i> landscape type forms the skyline to the east of the Cherwell Valley.
Evolution of townscape	Pullens Lane forms the eastern border of the grounds of Headington Hill Hall and was the access road to Joe Pullen's Farm.  Pollock House (1889) and Cotuit Hall (1890) and High Wall (1912) are the oldest buildings.  Subsequent mixed development of detached houses dating from turn of the century to the present day in former Headington fields.
Archaeological and historic interest	Location of Pullen's Farm.  Architectural fabric of older buildings e.g. High Wall built in 17th century style and gardens laid out by <i>Peto</i> .
Street and block pattern	Curved streets and cul de sacs with large, detached buildings set in large plots at a low density.
Private/public realm interface	Private space dominates.

	Private roads with access to the public cause some confusion between the public/private interface.
Massing and enclosure	Large detached properties are set well back from the roads. Buildings set within large plots with generous gaps between buildings. High tree cover and avenues along lanes provide sense of enclosure.
Architecture and built form	Large detached buildings within extensive grounds, scattered at low density. Variety in architecture - each house has a unique character. Red brick dominates. Carved stone capitals, ashlar lintels and mullions and tile hung exteriors on the older properties. Multi-faceted pitched roofs with mainly clay tiles, prominent chimneys. Gravel drives and five bar gates.
Streetscape	Rural roads and lanes (eg Pullens Lane, Jack Straw's Lane) with few road markings or signs Footways and kerbs are absent along Pullen's Lane - grass verges and woodland vegetation borders the road giving the impression of a rural lane. Mature woodland trees (beech and horse chestnut) in an avenue along Jack Straw's Lane and Pullen's Lane. Mature garden vegetation contributes to the leafy character of the streetscape. Street lighting is not present throughout. Presence of 'Victoriana' street lamps in private spaces. Red brick or stone boundary walls or clipped hedges are features of the streetscape along Pullens Lane.
Open space	Majority of open space is private - a large amount of greenspace is present in the form of private grounds and gardens and grass verges. Allotments in the south form the only public open space in the area. Mature garden and woodland planting provides contributes to the leafy character of the suburb
Biodiversity	Large private gardens and allotments provide notable habitats, including mature trees, scrub, flowering herbs and ruderal plants. Small area of woodland on the northern edge of the allotment gardens is designated as a SLINC.
Land use, culture and vitality	Quiet residential suburb with students passing through to access halls of residents.
Access and traffic	Private roads are access only and discourage through-traffic, although Pullens Lane and Jack Straw's Lane are through-routes. Cuckoo Lane (pedestrian route) runs along the southern boundary.
Views and visual patterns	Views over central Oxford where vegetation allows, but generally confined to short distance views within area with glimpses through gateways to properties and into private gardens. Wooded hill forms a backdrop to the Cherwell Valley.

# I IA HEADINGTON HILL

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Photo 1: The oldest properties are late 19th Century.



Photo 2: There is a great variety in architecture, materials and detailing making each property unique.



Photo 3: Pullen's Lane has a rural character.



Photo 4: Mown grass verges, clipped hedges and ornamental lamp posts have tamed the rural character.



Photo 5: Views into driveways provide tantalising glimpses of the private realm.



Photo 6: Views towards central Oxford are restricted by vegetation.

Designations	Designated as part of the Headington Hill Conservation Area.
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### Evaluation of character and quality

Headington Hill suburb is a distinctive area due to the large scale and low density of its built form, its mature woodland setting and 'rural' leafy lanes. The unique combination of urban and rural environments further enhances the distinctiveness of this landscape/townscape.

The maturity of the vegetation structure, the richness and variety in architectural detail and the well-maintained fabric of this area convey a sense of high landscape/townscape quality.

### Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low - local interest
Historic Integrity	Moderate - intact Victorian suburb
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low - no views of historic core skyline
Open Space	Moderate - adjacent to Thames floodplain with good access

### Sensitivity to change

This area forms an important backdrop to the centre of Oxford and the Cherwell Valley and as such is highly sensitive to change. However, the maturity and density of vegetation provides a degree of enclosure that enables the area to absorb some change without adverse impacts on landscape character.

Incremental development has progressively occurred while the landscape has continued to mature. The large scale and low density of its built form, its mature woodland setting and 'rural' leafy lanes are critical to the character of the area and threats to this local character could arise as a result of:

- inappropriate or poorly designed extensions;
- infill development, between existing buildings and on backland sites, that results in a change in the spatial characteristics of the area and loss of vegetation;
- replacement of stone or brick wall boundaries with close boarded wooden fencing;

- loss of mature vegetation and trees in the public and private realms as a result of over-maturity;
- road 'improvements' that affect the rural quality of the lanes, e.g. Pullen's Lane.

### **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities**

The overall objective for this area is to conserve the rural wooded setting and richness of built form. Key areas to consider for policy development and landscape/townscape enhancement may include:

- providing opportunities for selective views over central Oxford, for example from the derelict allotment site;
- conserving stone and brick boundary walls and promoting the use of these materials for the construction of new boundaries;
- preparing a re-planting programme to ensure mature trees in the public realm are replaced with similar species;
- encouraging private owners to plant locally appropriate varieties of garden trees and shrubs;
- conserving the rural character of Pullen's Lane and Jack Straw's Lane through resisting line painting, signage or concrete kerbs.

# **A STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. In January 2001 the Countryside Agency commissioned Land Use Consultants to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of Oxford City in its Setting. It was agreed at the first Steering Group meeting that public consultation should form an important part of the landscape character assessment process and this aspect of the study was taken forward in association with the Berkshire Rural Community Council.

## **OBJECTIVES**

2. The purpose of the exercise was to strengthen the landscape character assessment by obtaining valuable information from the local community which would not otherwise come to light, such as local perceptions. The process of consultation also helped build local understanding of the process of landscape character assessment, its value and applications.
3. Four workshops were held. The first two, in May 2001, enabled participants to feed into the process at an early stage of the project. The second two sessions, in September, allowed the consultants to illustrate how information provided in the first workshop had fed into the report and how involvement could be continued.

## **AIMS OF THE FIRST ROUND CONSULTATION**

4. The aims of the first round consultation workshop were to:
  - introduce the project – the objectives, outputs and the process of LCA;
  - seek views/agreement on the ‘setting’, the draft classification and naming of the character areas;
  - understand what people value about the Oxford landscape – distinctiveness as a whole and component areas/ sites / views / walks / landmarks etc;
  - seek information on perceived forces for change both positive and negative; and
  - obtain leads and other sources of information (e.g. local studies, research etc.).
5. The process used included short presentations, visual material, participatory working, discussion and feedback.

## **RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND CONSULTATION**

6. The results of May Workshops were compiled into a summary report that was circulated to all participants. This Summary report is presented in the text box below.



## **PART 3:**

# **USING THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

This section provides advice on the application of the assessment in establishing a landscape policy for the local plan and managing change as well as suggesting other potential uses of the assessment.

# I PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE POLICIES

---

## Introduction

- 1.1. This chapter provides a framework, which should be of assistance in developing relevant policies in the Oxford Local Plan aimed at preserving and enhancing the character and quality of Oxford's diverse landscape and townscape. The present study is only the first stage in this research process, and more detailed work will be required within the individual character areas, but the methodology and findings of the present work provide the starting point for generating a comprehensive strategy.
- 1.2. It is important to note at the outset that planning policies include, on the one hand, regulatory measures to avoid unnecessary damage to existing features of value, and on the other, inducements and stimulants for positive change. Regulations and grants are important, but individuals and local communities also have great freedom to shape the qualities and character of the areas in which they live, often in subtle ways.
- 1.3. Urban landscape and townscape policies need to reflect the dynamic nature of towns and cities as they respond to competing land use pressures, fluctuations in economic prosperity, and shifts in cultural attitudes. The city's 'dreaming spires' may have a timeless quality but, in reality, their settings, along with those of other features and character areas, are all subject to change to a greater or lesser degree. Thus change needs to be managed to achieve permanent enhancement of the city's environment.
- 1.4. The capacity of an area to accept change reflects the inherent qualities and values of the landscape and townscape that already exist and the nature of any development that is proposed. Some character areas are highly sensitive and can receive little new development without destroying their special qualities, while other areas are less sensitive and can accommodate either further development or substantial renewal.
- 1.5. The treatment that is appropriate in any individual character area needs to take account of these subtleties. For example, some areas are internationally important for their historical integrity, like the medieval core, but this does not result in an automatic embargo on any change. In recent years some highly significant new buildings of outstanding architectural design have been erected in the centre. Sadly, however, there are also a few examples of new buildings on key sites in adjacent character areas that have failed to reflect the opportunities for appropriate urban design.
- 1.6. Resolution of planning and design issues for individual building proposals requires detailed study of the locality and setting by the developer's

planners and architects and the City Council. This process can be assisted by preparation of guidance on design principles and the preparation of design briefs, but the studies in question need to be undertaken on a block by block, or street by street basis.

- I.7. The analysis in this report takes place one step higher in the appraisal process by dealing with the essential characteristics that make up each character area. It provides the context for the review process but is not sufficiently detailed to deal with individual sites or spaces.
- I.8. This study has identified and described 52 discrete areas in Oxford. Each of these descriptions highlight the more important features that need to be conserved and provide pointers to further improvements that can be made. As such, the descriptions should provide a useful basis for helping to formulate policies on future development in these areas and should support development control decisions and judgements on design and aesthetic considerations.
- I.9. However, it is also clear that some of the areas are experiencing greater or more rapid change than others and some areas are inherently more sensitive to change because of their existing quality.
- I.10. One measure of this sensitivity is already provided by the designation of 'conservation areas' within the Local Plan. This designation has statutory force, and provides for closer inspection of development proposals in areas of outstanding architectural and historic interest. The existence of a conservation area also facilitates the provision of grants for building repairs and renewal.
- I.11. The City Council is understood to be keen to proceed with a similar designation to enhance and protect the most important areas of open space within the city. Detailed mapping, confirmation of precise boundaries and full public consultation will be required before open space conservation areas can be declared, but as a first step towards this process a comparative assessment has been made of areas of open space within the study area.
- I.12. This review has been set within the context of an overall evaluation of landscape value using a number of related criteria. The method of approach is described in the next section.
- I.13. It is important to stress at this point that the essential role of the landscape character area assessment in this study has been to give equal weight to all areas on the basis that regardless of value or sensitivity, every locality is important to its inhabitants and deserves comparable treatment.

## DEVELOPING A METHOD OF APPROACH

### Influences on Landscape/Townscape Quality

- 1.14. As demonstrated through this study, landscape and townscape quality is created and maintained by many different influences. These include the historical age and integrity of the development; architectural styles; massing and proportion of buildings relative to open space; presence or absence of trees, gardens, parks, river valleys and other wildlife corridors; the patterns of commercial and domestic use and supporting infrastructure from street lighting to pedestrian and vehicular movement.
- 1.15. In an urban area, analysis of the way in which these elements interact is more complex than is the case with the equivalent process for a rural landscape. In both cases, however, the need arises to focus on key elements and avoid becoming distracted by less important features.
- 1.16. Three separate approaches have been explored as ways of developing a policy framework. The first used the 'Quality of Life Capital approach to identify key valued features of Oxford's landscape. This method (which is described in *Appendix A*) was used in combination with a series of public workshops. It resulted in the definition of 19 character areas, each of which have a minimum of five landscape attributes and are therefore judged as critical to the character of Oxford at an Oxford-wide or even national level.
- 1.17. The Quality of Life Capital method resulted in a large proportion of Oxford being included within the category of landscape of key significance. This was felt to be too broad for effective use in defining relevant planning policies. Suggestions were made for refining the 'area of search' by deleting sub-areas where development had already occurred. Discussions around these issues highlighted the impracticality of using the survey data collected for strategic assessment of character areas as a basis for mapping areas of planning constraint or enhancement.
- 1.18. A second method of approach was then considered of applying broad landscape policy principles across all character areas, without seeking to differentiate those areas' relative importance. These landscape policies would highlight three types of 'zone': those where conservation of the existing fabric and townscape would be of highest priority, those where some enhancement of existing conditions would be beneficial and those where more fundamental measures including regeneration or renewal might be appropriate. This approach has been used effectively at Structure Plan level (see, for example, *Planning for Landscape Change – an Introduction and User's Guide to Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, 1996 –2011*).
- 1.19. The weakness of this approach within an urban context is quickly exposed by the fine grain nature of townscape where conditions can change from a focus on conservation in one street to a case for extensive renewal in the next. Blanket policies of this nature are simply too crude to be applied within an Historic City.

to be applied within an Historic City.

I.20. The third approach that has been piloted is to concentrate first on a number of individual attributes that underpin landscape quality and value, and then to combine the results to reveal those areas within which a number of the attributes overlap. In essence, this approach is a refinement of the Quality of Life Capital method outlined above. However, instead of generating only one plan in which all the attributes are combined, it also allows different groupings of character areas to emerge depending upon the subject matter being considered.

I.21. This refinement has entailed reviewing each of the 52 character areas against the following 7 criteria:

- landscape quality,
- biodiversity value,
- historic integrity,
- extent of Inter-visibility,
- presence or absence of Open Space
- re-creatability of the landscape/townscape, and
- sensitivity.

I.22. The following definitions have been used for each of the above terms.

Landscape quality: *a measure of landscape and townscape character; valuing the aesthetic qualities and scenic beauty of an area.*

Biodiversity: *a measure of conservation value based on international, national and local designations.*

Historic Integrity: *a measure of the longevity of development in an area that has particular national or local significance in terms of events, design features and architectural qualities, including a measure of the state of preservation and intactness of the resource.*

Intervisibility: *a measure of the extent to which the character area is important because it contains significant views of key features in the historic core.*

Open Space: *a measure of the extent of open space that is recorded on the 1:10,000 scale ordnance survey within a given character area.*

Re-creatability: *a measure of the ability to re-create landscapes or townscapes if they are lost. For example, the historic landscape of Port Meadow or the central medieval core of Oxford would have a very low re-creatability value i.e. are difficult to re-create whereas some of the inter-war/post-war suburbs would have high values i.e. are easily re-creatable.*

Sensitivity: *the degree to which a particular character area can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on character. Sensitivity may depend upon the degree of visual enclosure, and the presence of sensitive landscape features.*

I.23. For the first three of these criteria, a scale of importance or value has been attached based on a high, moderate or low score. These values

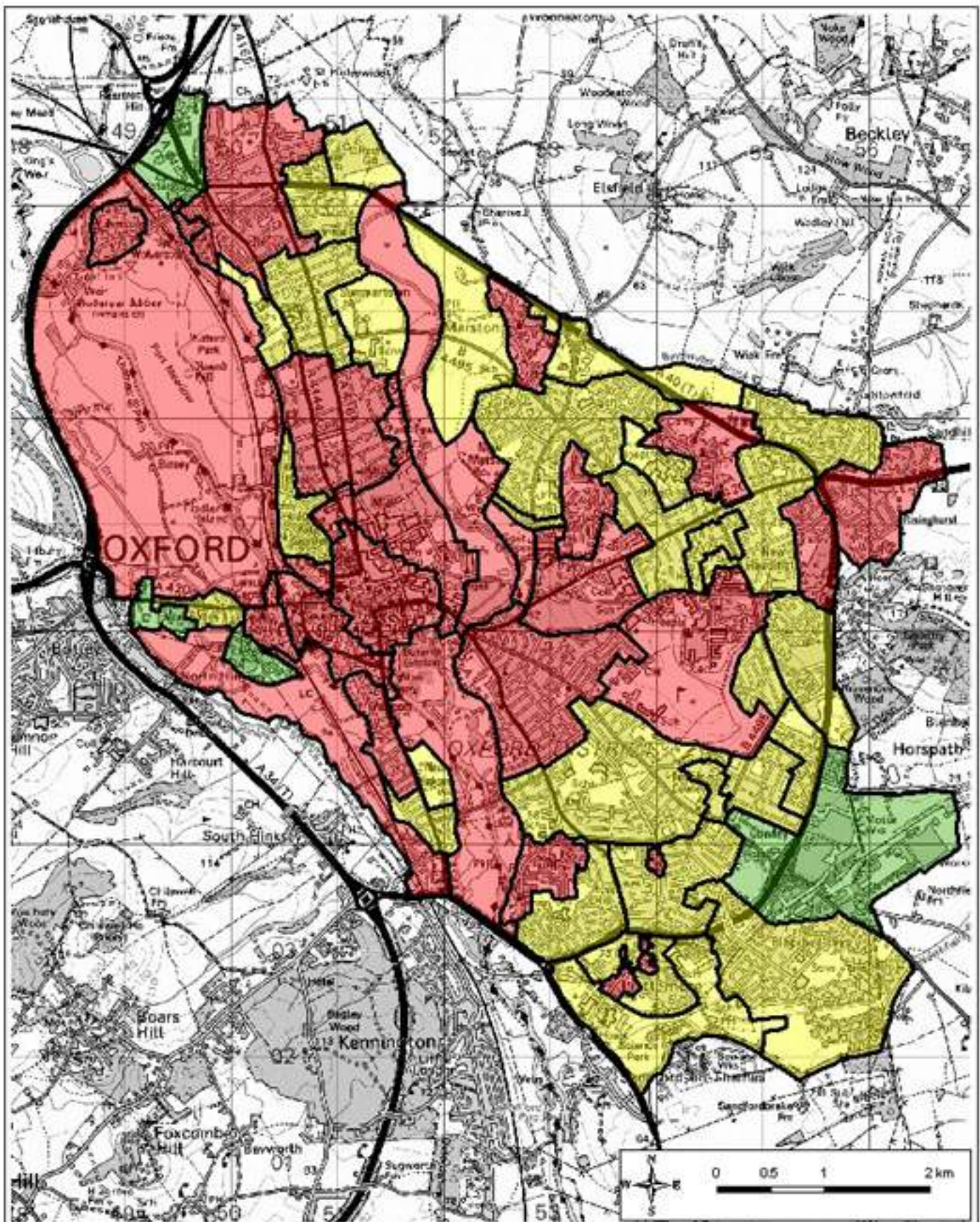
case of nature conservation where designated sites may be of international, national or local significance attribute.

- I.24. The same approach has been followed with landscape quality and historic integrity even though there are no established standards as such. For example, landscape quality is judged to be high if views of the area are regularly used in tourist or other promotional literature. Areas that are regularly visited by local residents and would be described as part of the 'Oxford scene' in that they serve the interests of the whole community receive a moderate score, while areas that may still be attractive but are known only to local inhabitants receive a low score.
- I.25. Areas that have played a prominent part in the evolution of Oxford over the centuries, and reveal parts of that history in the character of buildings or the presence of open space – like commons and university parks, are given a high score. Small centres and long established suburbs with homogeneous character are accorded a moderate value while areas whose character is dominated by development in the last century are rated as of low historic importance.
- I.26. The remaining two criteria, Inter-visibility and Open Space are recorded as either present or absent.
- I.27. Results from each of these valuations are shown in *figures 3.1.1 to 3.1.7*. It is important to recognise that parts of individual character areas will vary widely and may not warrant the score given for a particular criterion. However, the aim behind evaluation is to sieve out those areas which justify closer examination rather than to produce a sophisticated measure of landscape importance at this stage.

### **Conclusion: Combining Values**

- I.28. In order to build up a composite value each of the individual criteria is scored from 1 to 3 with '1' representing a low value and '3' a high value. With a total of 7 criteria, it is theoretically possible for a character area, which exhibits high values throughout, to achieve a total score of 21. However, some attributes are uncommon, such as character areas with good inter-visibility with the Mediaeval core so, in practice, any composite score in excess of 15 indicates that the character area is highly valued.
- I.29. A single map showing the relative value of character areas has been produced in *figure 3.1.8* by grouping areas into those with aggregate scores in excess of 15 (high value), those with scores between 9 and 15 (moderate value) and those with scores under 9 (lower value). The most important function of the method as applied to character areas is that it assists in identifying those areas that are sensitive to change and are most in need of closer study.
- I.30. Specific criteria, or attributes, can also be put together in any number or combination to highlight particular assets. For example, biodiversity,





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## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

### Key

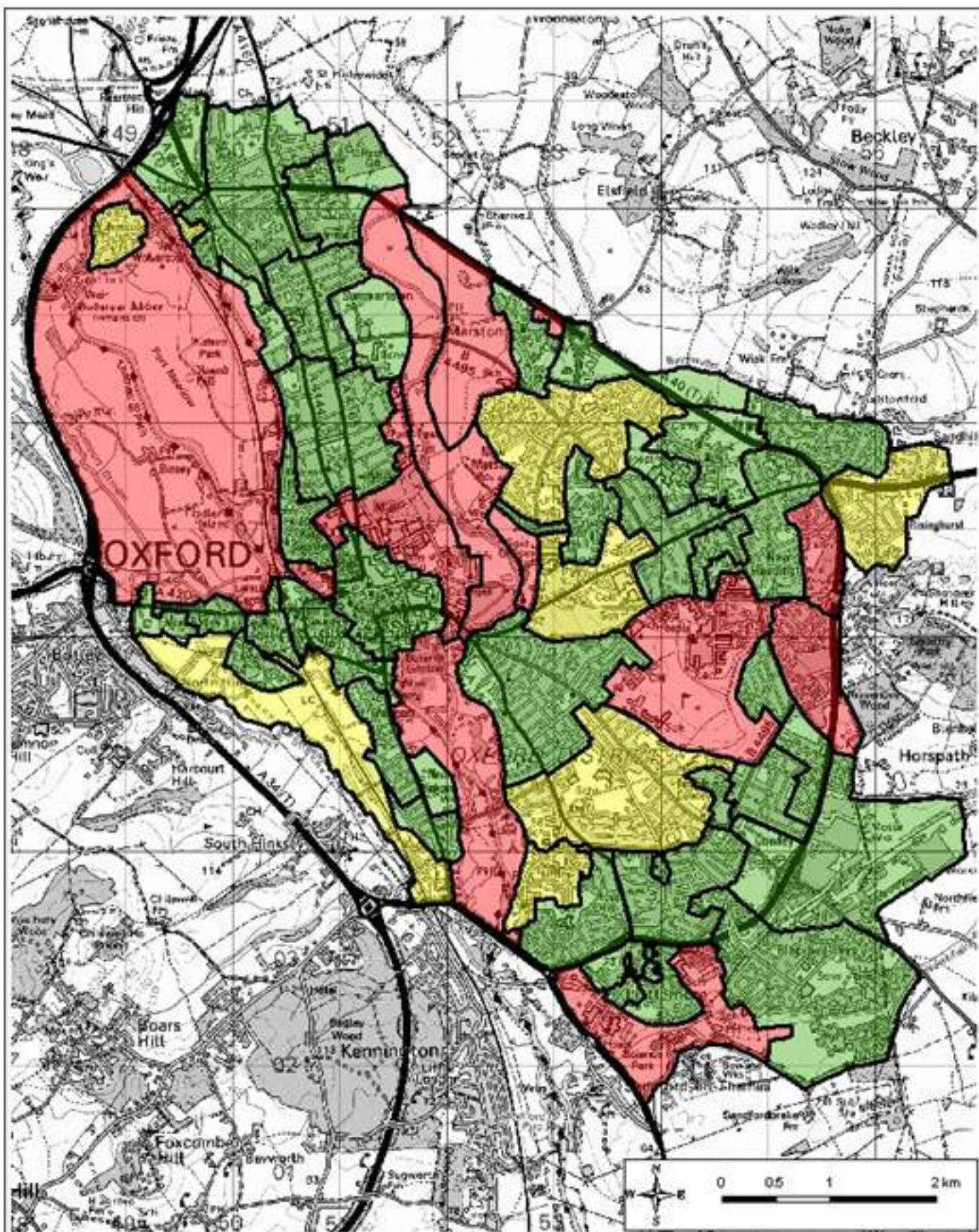
- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

Figure 3.1.1 :  
Evaluation of Landscape Quality

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43 Chalton Street  
London NW1 1JD  
Tel: 020 7303 5764  
Fax: 020 7303 4790  
luc@london.landuse.co.uk







## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.1.2 :  
Evaluation of Biodiversity

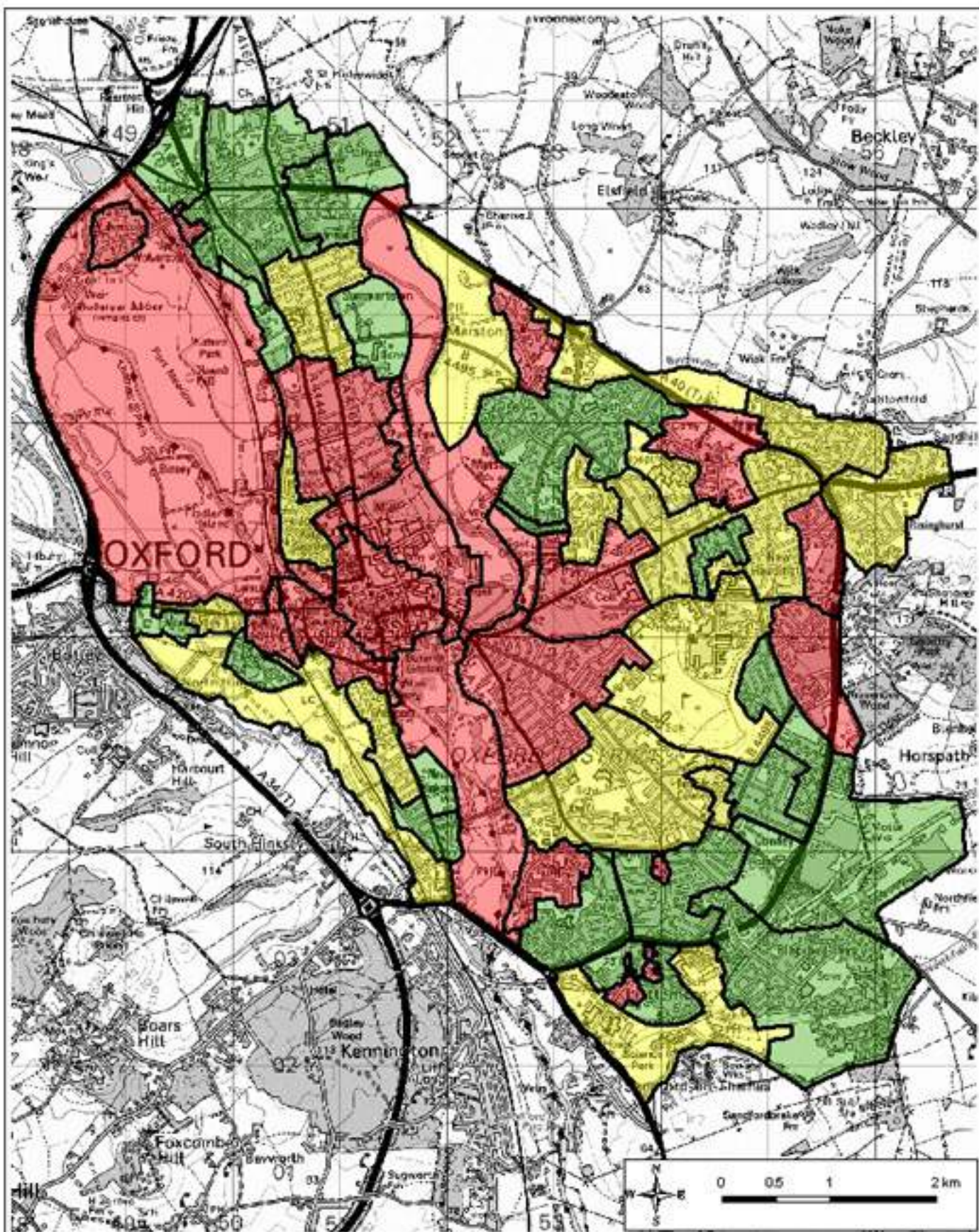
### Key

- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

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## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

### Key

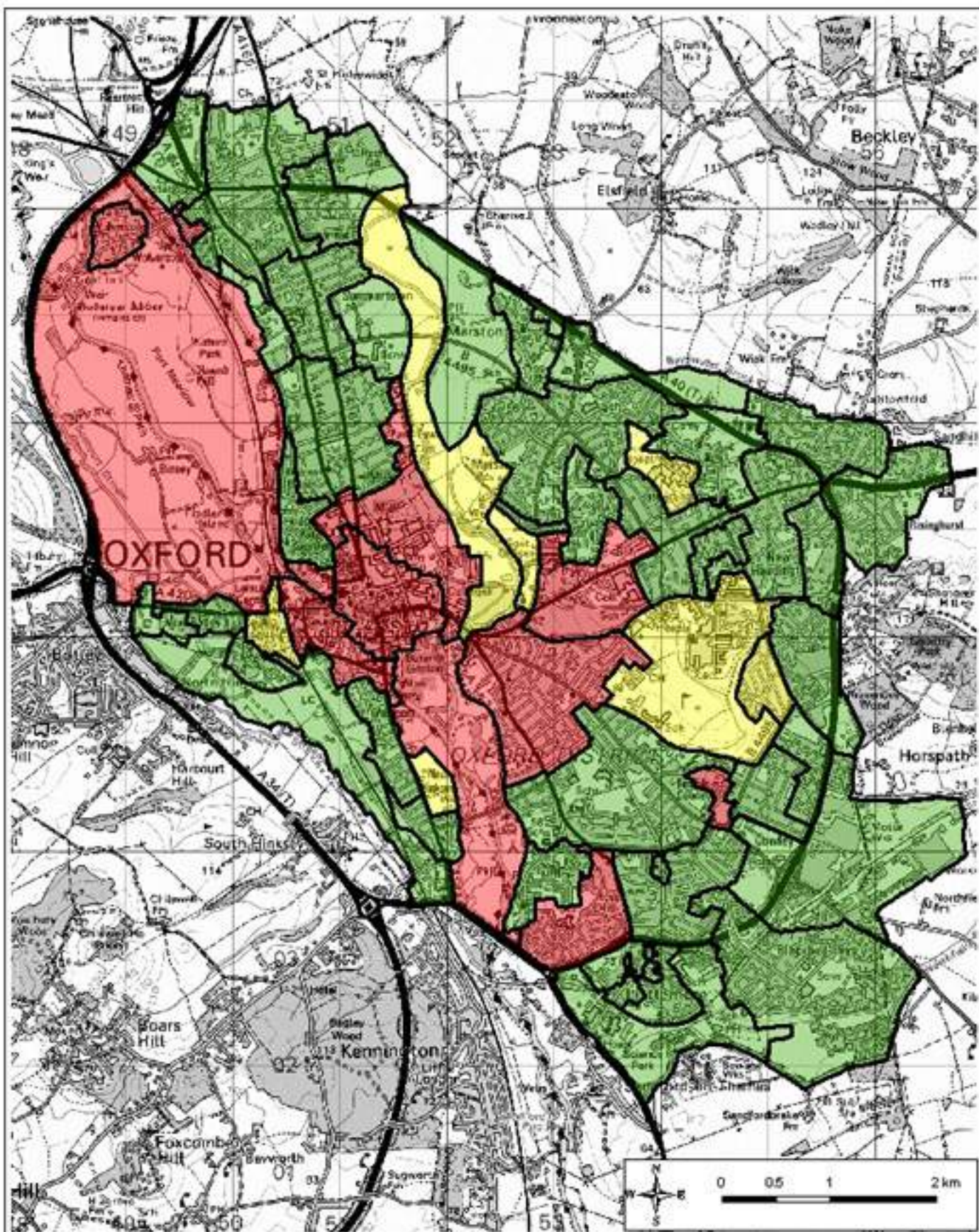
- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

Figure 3.1.3:  
Evaluation of Historic Integrity

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## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

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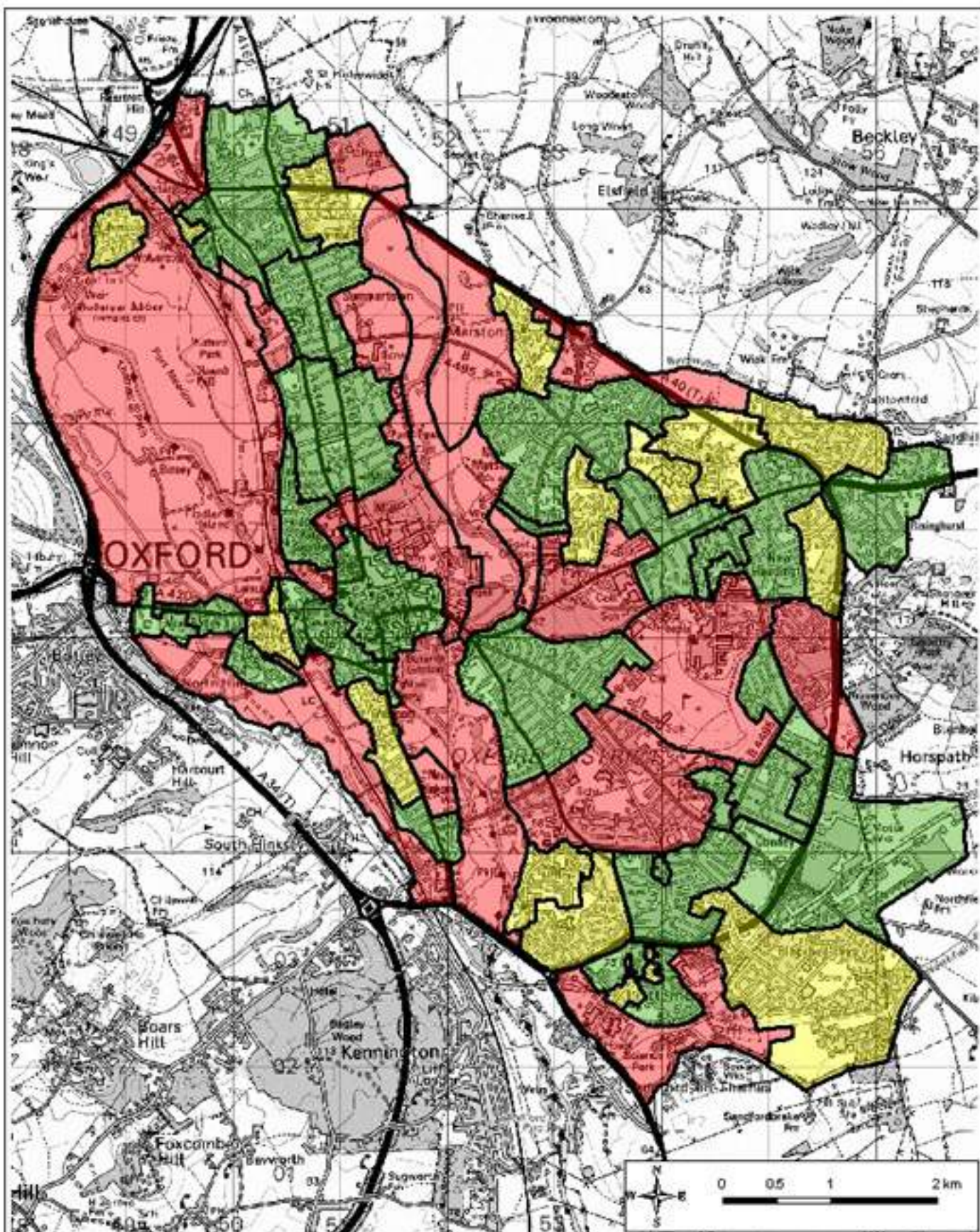
- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

Figure 3.1.4:  
Evaluation of Intervisibility

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## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.1.5 :  
Evaluation of Open Space

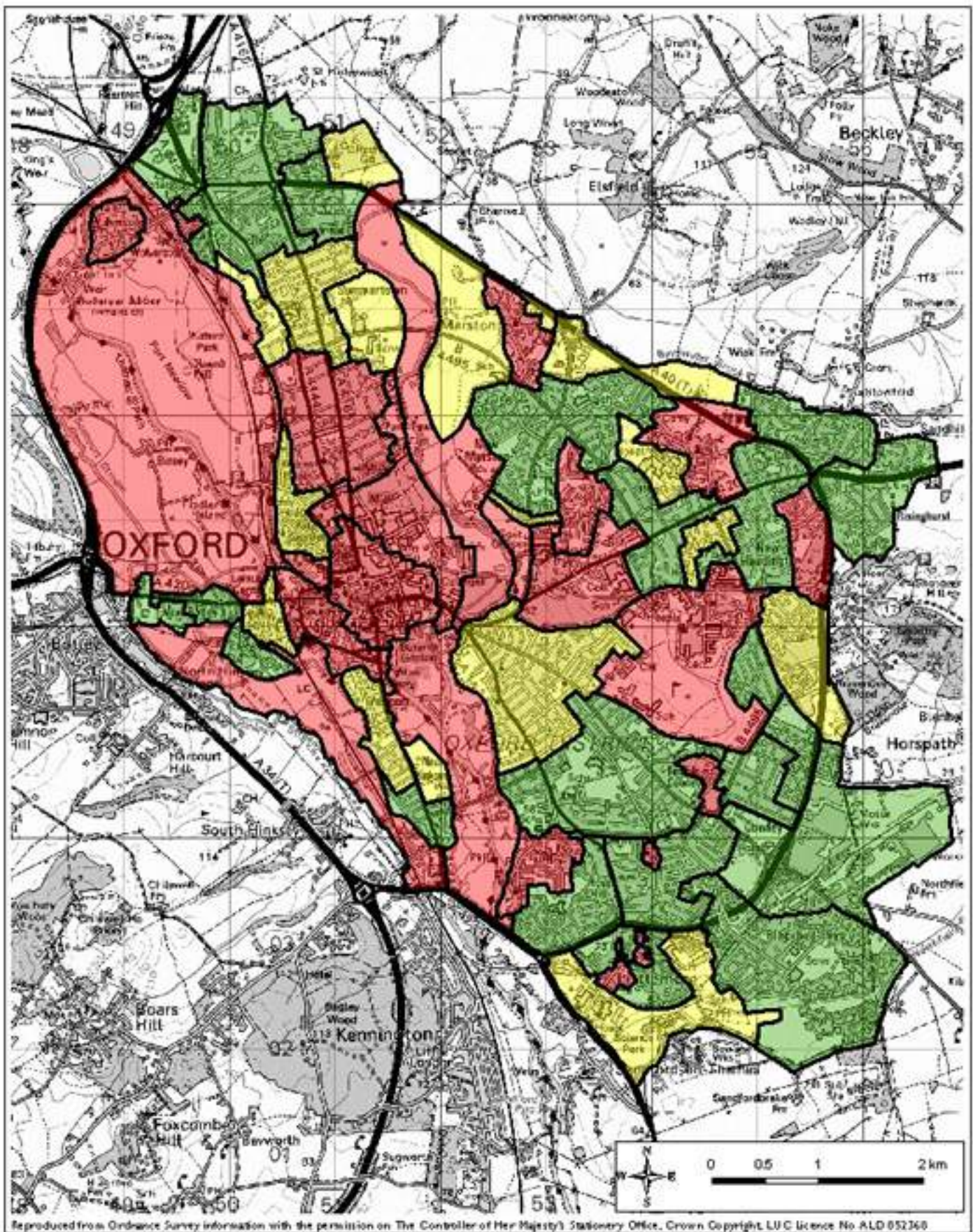
### Key

- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

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## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

### Key

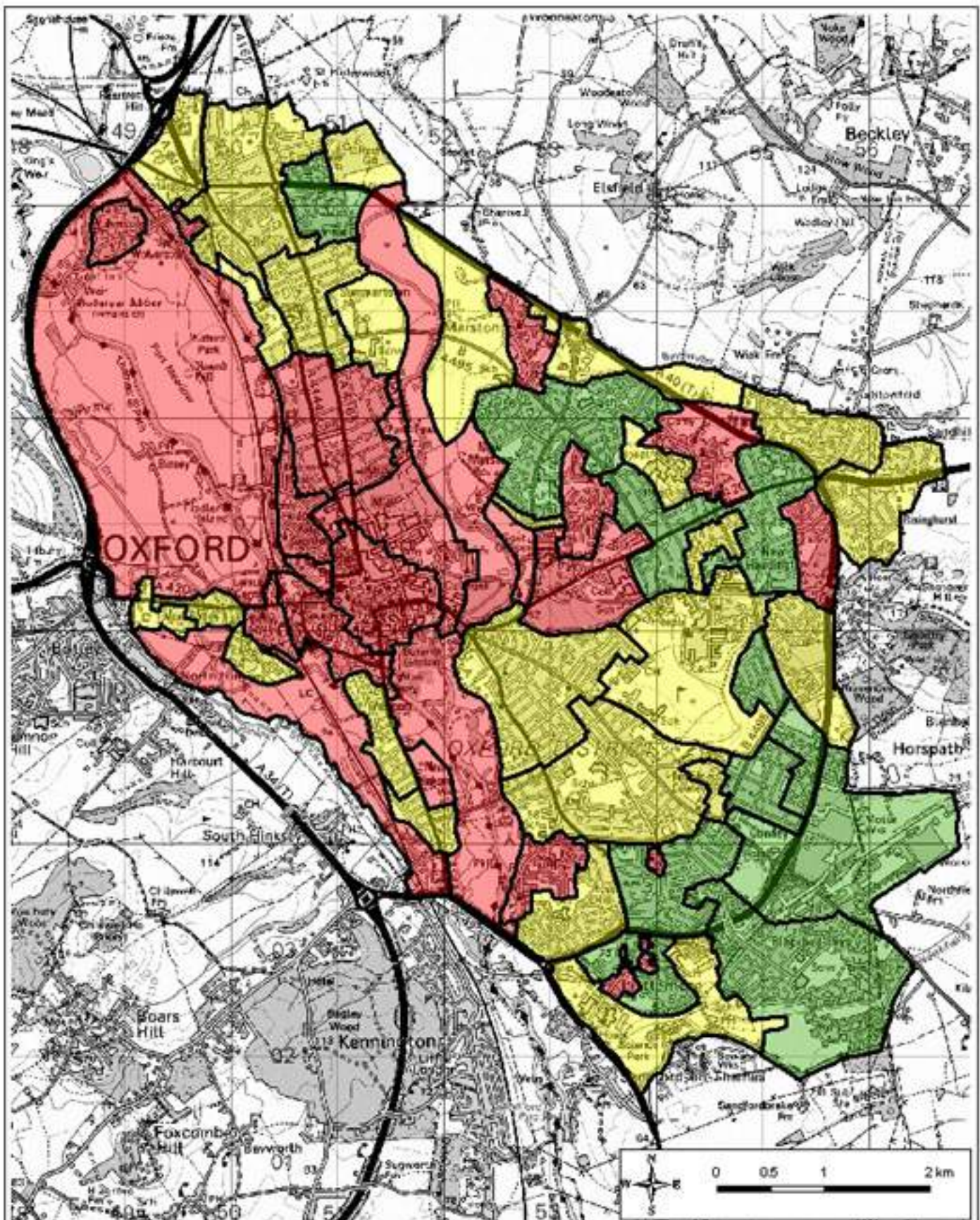
- Low (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- High (1 point)

Figure 3.1.6 :  
Evaluation of Re-creatability

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### Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

#### Key

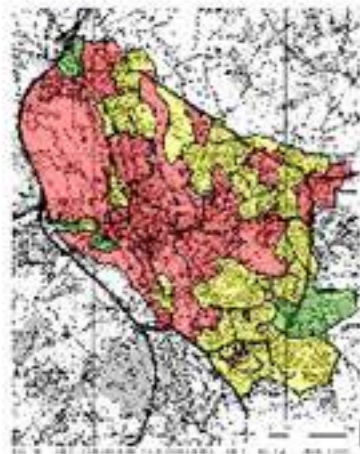
- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

Figure 3.1.7 :  
Evaluation of Sensitivity

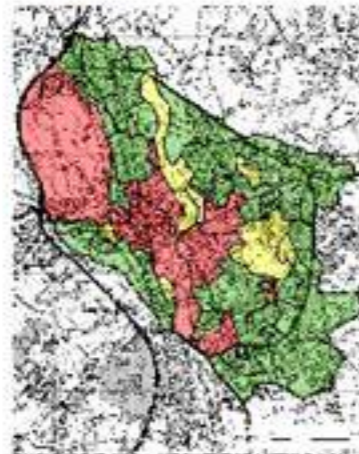
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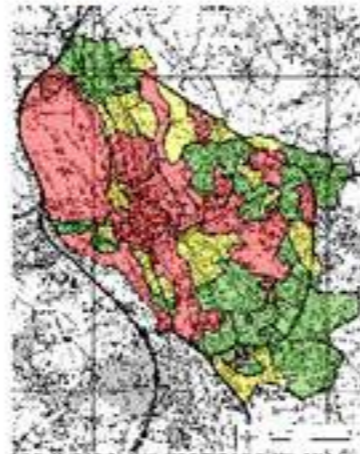




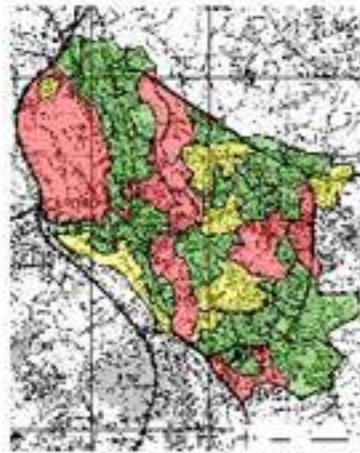
Evaluation of Landscape Quality



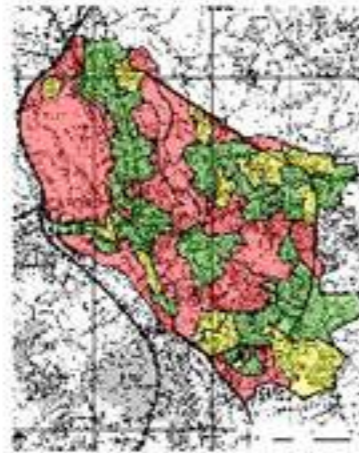
Evaluation of Intervisibility



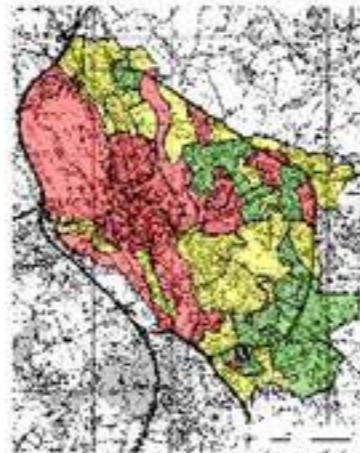
Evaluation of Re-creatability



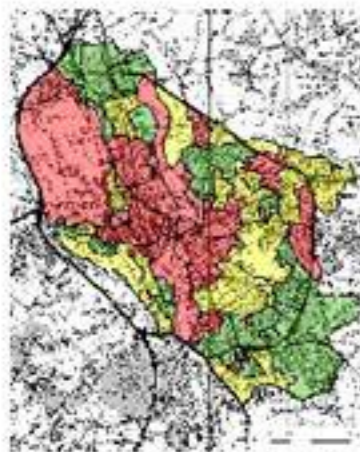
Evaluation of Biodiversity



Evaluation of Open Space



Evaluation of Sensitivity



Evaluation of Historic Integrity

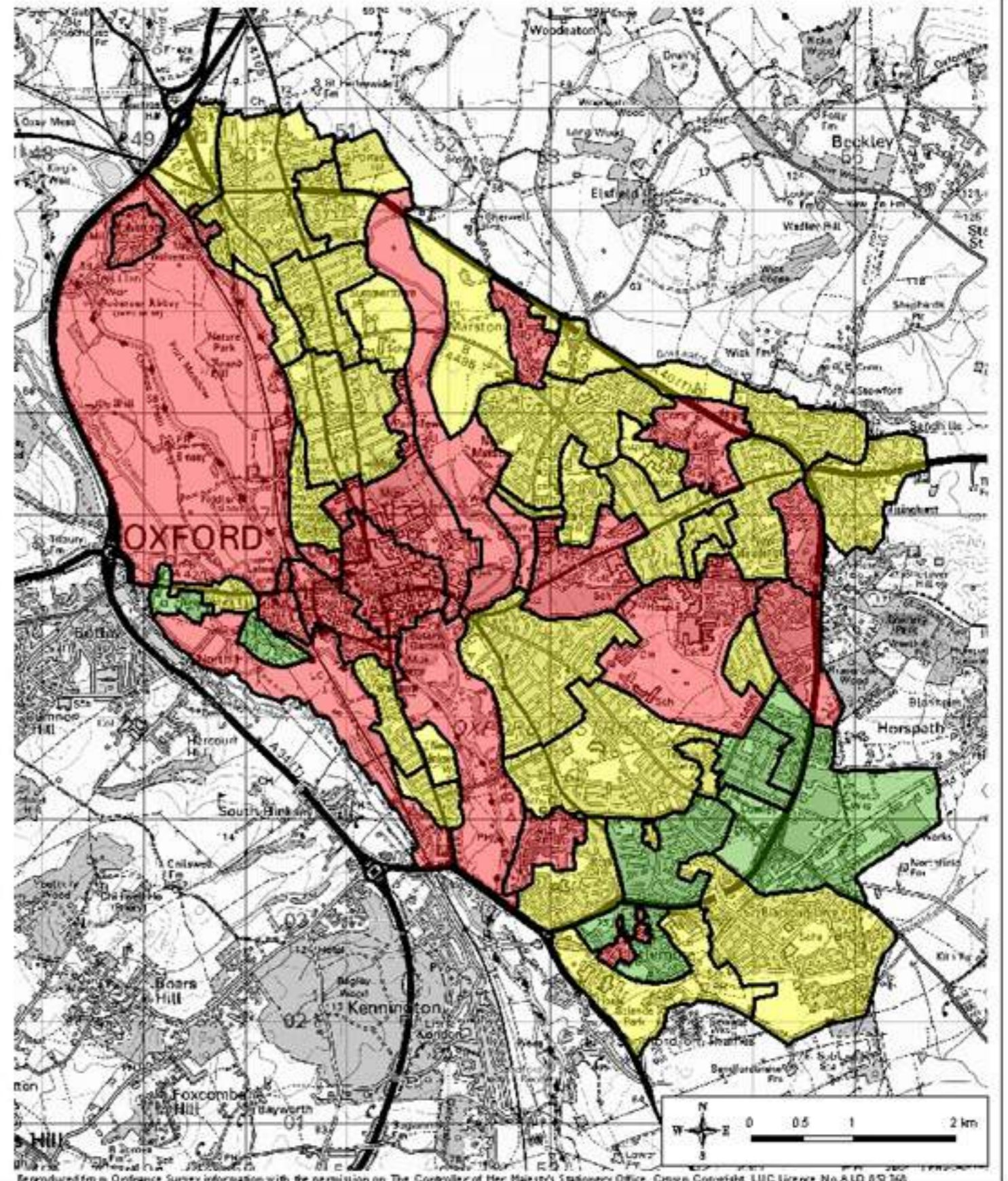
**Key**

For all evaluations except for Evaluation of Re-creatability

- High (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- Low (1 point)

For Evaluation of Re-creatability

- Low (3 points)
- Moderate (2 points)
- High (1 point)



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**Key to Landscape Value**

- High (> 15 points)
- Moderate (9 to 15 points)
- Low (< 9 points)

Cumulative score calculated from total points from evaluation by 7 different categories (figures 3.1.1 to 3.1.7 inclusive)

For each evaluation (except Re-creatability) 3 points was awarded for a high evaluation, 2 points for a moderate evaluation and 1 point for a low evaluation.

For Evaluation of Re-creatability 1 point was awarded for a high evaluation, 2 points for a moderate evaluation and 3 points for a low evaluation.

**Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment**

**Figure 3.1.8 : Cumulative Evaluation of Character Areas**

Drawing Number: 205702\_001\_fig3.1.8\_cumulative





open space and re-creatability will give a good measure of the importance of open space areas for nature conservation.

- I.31. The underlying principles of this valuation process can be extended in future by adding new criteria as information becomes available. It should also be possible to apply the method more precisely to smaller areas when these are surveyed as part of townscape studies, design briefs or conservation plans.

## 2 MAKING USE OF THE OXFORD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The study of Oxford's landscape character has been undertaken as a research project with the primary objective of extending the principles of landscape character assessment to historic cities. Its subsidiary function has been to develop a methodology that can assist in securing the long term protection and enhancement of historic urban environments.
- 2.2 One of the principal ways in which urban landscapes can be protected and enhanced is through application of planning policies and effective development control, but encouragement to deliver higher quality in design and construction can also be offered through advice, guidance, grants, and the involvement of community, civic interest, trade and professional groups. This chapter explores some of the ways in which LCA can play its part.

### USE OF LCA WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE OXFORD LOCAL PLAN

- 2.3 The second stage of the Oxford Landscape Character Assessment has been carried out over the same time period as the review of the Local Plan. It has not been practical, therefore, to incorporate specific recommendations from the LCA in the draft Plan. However, the identification of character areas does provide a fuller understanding of the landscape elements that contribute to the special qualities of Oxford. As such, the LCA should be an important source of information and reference for all who have an interest in protecting and enhancing the city's landscape and townscape.

This role of landscape character assessment is clearly identified in national planning guidance: **PPG 7: The Countryside-Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development** (revised February 1997).

- 2.4 This guidance recognises that a character-based approach to landscape can help in *accommodating necessary change without sacrificing local character. It can help ensure that development respects or enhances the distinctive character of the land and the built environment. It is descriptive, and not an additional layer of countryside protection or designation ... Local planning authorities may find the character approach helpful as they have occasion to review their local countryside designations'* (para 2.15).
- 2.5 A recent policy document by the Countryside Agency (*Planning tomorrow's countryside 2000*) recommends that Government guidance in PPG7 should be revised to promote a greater role for landscape character assessment and policies based on it as a means of encouraging high quality development which respects and enhances countryside character.



character.

- 2.6 There is no specific reference to the role of LCA in urban areas or its relationship to townscape. For the purposes of the Oxford City study the principles of LCA have been adapted and applied to townscape.
- 2.7 Oxford City Council is in the process of revising its planning policies as part of the Review of the Local Plan. These policies deal with the principles of development control within the city as a whole. The strategic level of assessment employed in the LCA is at too broad a scale to warrant application of detailed planning policies to the individual character areas, and in any event, government policy set out in PPG12: Development Plans makes it clear that such detail is inappropriate within a Local Plan and should be contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- 2.8 It would be possible, however to devise broad policies, as outlined in the Countryside Agency's advice (*Planning tomorrow's countryside 2000*) which quotes the example of **Hart District Council**. The Hart Local Plan policy simply states:

*"Within the Landscape Character Areas, as indicated below and shown on the Proposals Map, development will be permitted if it does not significantly adversely affect the particular character of the landscape and is in accordance with other policies of this plan".*

- 2.9 Whether the opportunity is taken to develop Character Area based policies or not (which as far as the Oxford Local Plan goes may be impractical given time constraints) it would be possible to develop more specific guidance for enhancing the landscape and townscape of each LCA through separate studies. These studies could involve close collaboration and consultation with local resident groups and other interested parties, including land and property owners. Following consultation, the resulting documents could be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.10 **It is recommended that more detailed studies are undertaken, starting with the most sensitive areas, to produce landscape policies and design guidance for the Oxford landscape character areas. Following consultation, such policies and guidance should be considered for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance.**
- 2.11 **It is recommended that this methodology is promoted, and improved upon if necessary, to assist in securing long-term protection and enhancement of historic urban environments and other urban areas.**

development should also help to secure new building that is sympathetic to, and respects, local character.

2.13 The LCA can be used to identify:

- (i) areas which are most sensitive to development;
- (ii) those areas where appropriate development could take place providing that it respects existing local character and follows local guidelines;
- (iii) areas where there are positive opportunities for development to contribute to local character or achieve positive landscape enhancements.

2.14 The wider landscape character assessment of the setting of the city is particularly helpful in this respect as it is the fringe areas which are experiencing the greatest degree of change. The approach provides a deeper understanding of both the character of the fringe as it looks out to the wider countryside and into the townscape. However, much of the setting falls into the adjacent districts and it is not possible to be prescriptive about the type of development that these areas could accommodate without further cross-referencing with these Local Plans.

2.15 The evaluation of landscape quality described in *Part 3, Chapter 1* indicates that, within the context of the overall assessment, the most sensitive areas are:

- the river valleys including the floodplain and remaining associated open river terrace areas which create the rural setting within the city;
- the ridgelines, summits and slopes of the surrounding hills which form the skyline view;
- areas where coalescence could easily occur between the outer suburbs of Oxford and adjacent settlements e.g. along the river terrace towards Kidlington;
- small open spaces of playing fields, allotments and recreation grounds that are integral to the fabric of the city and a vital resource to local people.

**Less sensitive areas include:**

- some locations adjacent to the existing settlement edge which lie **below** the slopes that create the visible rural setting to Oxford ( in these locations, development would impinge less on perceptions of the rural setting and critical views in or out of Oxford);
- locations where the existing condition of the landscape is poor and does not contribute to the setting . In these areas, there are enhancement opportunities where development could help provide a new edge or positive gateway to the city.

- locations where the existing condition of the landscape is poor and does not contribute to the setting . In these areas, there are enhancement opportunities where development could help provide a new edge or positive gateway to the city.

### **Development Briefs**

- 2.16 The landscape character assessment provides a strong context for preparing detailed development briefs for individual sites or allocations. For each character area it provides outline guidance which could provide the basis for more detailed area based or site specific study.
- 2.17 For example, the individual character area assessments give details on the local built character in terms of scale, size, materials, streetscape, density, massing and local details. This information should contribute to the design brief and help ensure that the special and distinctive character of Oxford is respected. The intention is not to stifle change and create pastiche but to provide a clear understanding of what constitutes local character and indicate how this can be articulated through change and development.

### **LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY**

- 2.18 It would be possible to prepare a landscape strategy for Oxford based on the information contained in the assessment and the broad strategy set out in the evaluation. This involves an analysis of character, condition and sensitivity to generate an appropriate management strategy. It could borrow and adapt from terminology used in rural character assessment:

**Conservation** – landscapes/townscapes of strong character and high quality where emphasis should be on conservation of existing character and of particular features that contribute to this character.

**Enhancement** - where landscape/townscape character is becoming weakened, individual features have suffered significant decline or damage and positive improvement is needed.

**Restoration** - to repair landscapes/townscapes which still have reasonably intact character but there is a decline in its condition.

**Creation or Restructuring** to form a new landscape and townscape character.

- 2.19 For each character area, the LCA could provide information on what the broad strategies mean in practice, noting the key features to be conserved/enhanced and opportunities for new projects. The strategy could also help prioritise actions and programmes for the local authority.

## **URBAN DESIGN STUDIES**

- 2.20 In a similar way, the character assessment can provide a framework for more detailed urban design strategies and streetscape improvements. Reference to the LCA will set out the key criteria and parameters of local character and potential areas for enhancement. This can form the basis for more detailed survey, analysis and design. A good example is the proposed Broad Street Urban Design Study.

## **GREENSPACE STRATEGY**

- 2.21 The LCA has collated a baseline of information on the greenspace (both public and private) within the city. For each character area the LCA provides a description of the greenspace and management issues and recommendations for enhancement e.g. restoration of floodplain character, opportunities for further planting.
- 2.22 This information could be brought together to provide the basis for a city-wide green space strategy, giving guidance on restoration, enhancement and management opportunities including enhancing ecological value. A greenspace strategy could also set out opportunities for linking sites, noting areas of open space deficiency, creation of new areas of open spaces (e.g. in association with development), enhancing accessibility and a framework for detailed studies such as Heritage Lottery Fund Bids.

## **OXFORD WATERWAYS STRATEGY**

- 2.23 The LCA could be used as the basis for producing an Oxford Waterways Strategy seeking to promote the conservation and enhancement of Oxford's rivers, streams and canal.

## **URBAN TREE STRATEGY**

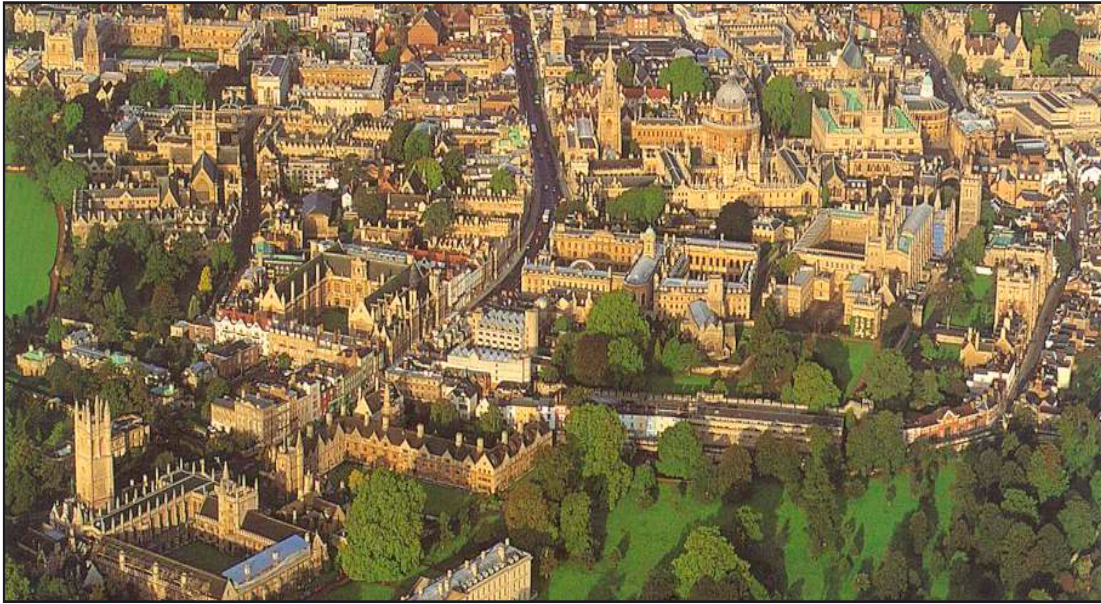
- 2.24 The LCA has not involved a detailed tree survey but has considered the contribution of trees to local character and distinctiveness. For each character area, the LCA has collated information including:
- Characteristic tree species e.g. mature limes on approach roads;
  - Presence and contribution of public and private trees to local character;
  - Presence of landmark trees e.g. mature trees on village green at Iffley village;
  - Opportunities for new planting e.g. street trees.
- 2.25 This information could provide the basis for a city-wide urban tree strategy describing the tree character of the city as a whole, contribution to local distinctiveness and priorities for planting and management. Some examples are provided in *figure 3.2.1*.

examples are provided in *figure 3.2.1*.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.26 **It is recommended that consideration is given to developing the LCA in more detailed strategies and guidance documents for the City of Oxford as time and resources permit.** These studies could then form the subject of separate Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).





Trees make an important contribution to Oxford.



There are few trees in the city centre; those that do exist are important landmarks. There is an opportunity for further planting of land mark trees.



Trees along the main approach roads contribute to perceptions of Oxford as a 'Green City'.

Figure 3.2.1  
Urban Trees and Local Character





Trees make an important contribution to the character of urban areas.



Trees and Development.

Figure 3.2.1  
Urban Trees and Local Character

## **Appendix A: Stakeholder Consultation**



## **Text Box 1: Summary Report Circulated to Participant at 10<sup>th</sup> May Workshops**

This note provides a summary of the main outcomes of the two workshops held on the 10<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Participants**

The workshops were attended by a total of 65 participants (25 at the landowner workshop in the afternoon and 40 at the evening community workshop). The full list of participants is appended. Generally there was a good spread of interests, although it would have been useful to have greater representation from those that actually influence and affect the landscape e.g. utilities as well as those that wish to protect it. Some colleges were represented at the afternoon session although it is clear that this workshop was not the most appropriate means of establishing a meaningful long term dialogue with the university.

### **Format**

The events were run as participative workshops, initiated by a short presentation by LUC and followed by three roundtable workshop sessions covering the following main themes:

- Values of the Oxford landscape – what is important, to whom and why?
- Main changes – both positive and issues that are affecting local character?
- Top three concerns and hopes for the future

Prof. Brian Goodey of Oxford Brooks chaired the workshops.

### **Main Results**

The workshops proved to be enormously helpful in adding local detail into the formal assessment process and raising new issues of which we were unaware and also pointing to additional areas of information including local wildlife surveys and historical research. It is nevertheless important to note that this assessment is a strategic level study and therefore cannot cover every local nuance. It should however, provide the framework for more detailed studies in the same way that rural LCA can provide the framework for Village Design Statements.

### **Some Key Points**

Key points emerging from the seminar include:

- strong recognition of the international importance of the Oxford landscape – medieval architecture and strong skyline of domes and spires set against a rural background;
- but against this the importance of the local – small spaces, quiet areas, views etc. are equally valued locally as the ‘headline’

characteristics;

- local details – e.g. floorscape, cobbles, paving, kerbs, signs, different road widths (broad streets, narrow alleys), lampposts are all important;
- the entwined rural – urban framework with rural areas coming into the heart of the city (valleys) and visible in views (hills) is most highly valued as are the ‘secret wild spaces’.
- the many hidden and unexpected spaces of Oxford – ‘undiscovered’ sense – are all very important in creating the character of the city; - hidden delights dilemma/balance – keeping ‘secret undiscovered’ quality v. exclusion;
- contrast and juxtaposition of urban, busy, quiet, tranquil and rural is a key characteristic of Oxford and what make it distinctive;
- importance of the waterways (rivers and canal)– city has turned back on waterways – opportunity e.g. Worcester St. canal terminus? – Bluebelt network.

### **Workshop Summary**

This note represents a very brief synopsis of comments received and notes the main values, hopes and concerns. Many more detailed comments have been received which will be incorporated into the relevant sections of the report. A full list of comments from each workshop has been collated and will be provided to the Countryside Agency and Oxford City Council.

### **Workshop I Feedback**

The **most valued things** about Oxford by participants from Workshop I may be summarised as:

- The proportion and accessibility of open space - the relationship between the compact city centre and rural landscape;
- The waterways entwined with the town as green fingers penetrating the city;
- Quality historic buildings and historic urban spaces;
- The unique skyline of spires and domes;
- The unique character the historic University buildings and spaces;
- Urban wildlife;
- Views in and out of the city.

The top **concerns** about the future of Oxford's landscape and townscape may be summarised as:

- Loss of open space to new development;
- Future of the OTS and its impact on the landscape/townscape;
- The need for affordable housing set against preservation of the landscape.

The top **hopes** for the future of Oxford's landscape and townscape may be summarised as:

- Imaginative urban development using older buildings and new development which will enhance, not detract from, the historic townscape and open landscape;
- A continuing sensitive approach to landscape planning;
- Better management of public parks;
- Better and safer access to the rivers, canal and streams throughout the city;
- Sufficient protection of open spaces within and surrounding the city;
- Further sensitive development of the OTS to combat transport issues;
- Brownfield sites will be used for new housing development;
- Hope that Oxford will see environmental *and* social improvements.

### **Workshop 2 Feedback**

The **most valued things** about Oxford by participants from Workshop 2 may be summarised as:

- The historic and University buildings;
- The accessibility of the countryside;
- The unexpected small, green spaces and quiet corners;
- The network of waterways entwined within the town and green fingers which penetrate the city;
- The great variety of buildings, textures and materials in the centre;
- The vibrancy of the city and its cosmopolitan population;
- The gardens, parks and trees;
- The green belt horizon;
- The relationship between buildings and open spaces;

- Small details - such as doorways, street signs, lamp-posts, cobbles, paving details;

The top **concerns** about the future of Oxford's landscape and townscape may be summarised as:

- Mundane urban sprawl which will continue to erode the character of the landscape and townscape;
- Unchecked peripheral development;
- Integration of sporting provisions into the landscape;
- Not recognising the unique character of Oxford, which would result in it becoming more and more like other towns, for example Swindon;
- Heritage will be undervalued;
- Loss of wildlife corridors through development;
- Traffic and parking will continue to erode townscape character.

The top **hopes** for the future of Oxford's landscape and townscape may be summarised as:

- Green areas and biodiversity within the city will be maintained;
- Better-integrated transport solutions will reduce pollution;
- Streets will be better maintained and incorporate more imaginative street landscaping unique to Oxford;
- Briefs for developers will take account of local character;
- Effective protection should be given to green spaces (both large and small);
- Imaginative and innovative design of domestic architecture will create areas with sense of place;

The canal basin will be opened up in Worcester Street to improve the weak western entrance to the city.

## **AIMS OF THE SECOND ROUND CONSULTATION**

7. The second round of consultations were held in Oxford Town Hall in September 2001. The aims of the second round of public consultation were to:
  - explain progress to date (ie. final classification, fieldwork complete and draft write up);

- feedback the results of the May workshops and show how they were incorporated in the study;
  - illustrate the emerging results of the study and show how the LCA could be used and
  - show how participants are part of a process.
8. The format for the second round of consultation was a presentation session rather than a participative workshop. Participants were provided with A3 maps of the landscape and townscape characterisation and copies of the keys. The session lasted 1 5 hours and was organised into:

**Introduction** – outlining the purpose of the session.

**The process of Landscape Character Assessment** - covering how it works, the purpose of the study, where we are in the process.

**Results so far** - explaining the classification of landscape and townscape and how they fit together.

**Feedback from workshop 1** - including a general overview of the main themes, values and issues and specific examples of how comments have been taken on board e.g. boundaries, special areas, areas of ecological interest.

**Presentation of an in depth example of the write up of one character area** - participants were taken through the write up and all the main headings. focussing on key characteristics, issues and opportunities – illustrated with slides.

**How the study will be used** - a presentation illustrating how the report could be used:

- As input to Local Plan
- Protecting the Character and Quality of Open Space
- Development Guidelines – influencing design and development & maintaining local distinctiveness
- Urban Tree Strategies
- A framework for more detailed local studies e.g. VDS

**Invitation to Comment**

## **THE EXHIBITION**

9. In addition to the two rounds of public consultation was an exhibition consisting of 6 A1 boards displayed in the foyer of the Oxford City Council Offices in Oxford. This allowed the wider public to have an input into the study by posting responses to a questionnaire displayed with the exhibition.

## **LANDSCAPES AND TOWNSCAPES OF VALUE TO OXFORD**

10. The result of the public consultation was fed into the emerging report. One way in which the results of the public consultation were interpreted was through the identification of landscape and townscapes of key significance to Oxford.

### **Defining Landscapes of Key Significance to Oxford**

#### ***Method***

11. The approach to defining landscapes of key significance to Oxford uses an adaptation of the evaluation technique 'Quality of Life Capital' which is based on an understanding of 'What Matters and Why'. This integrated evaluation technique is being promoted by the four conservation agencies – The Environment Agency, English Nature, Countryside Agency and English Heritage. It reflects the full range of sustainability concerns including social and economic factors. In this study the focus has been on landscape/environmental factors. The method stands back from individual features or areas and considers the attributes or services (benefits) that they provide for human well being.
12. The steps in the method involved:
- Identification of key valued features of Oxford's landscape through the public consultation workshops.
  - Identification of the benefits that each key valued feature provides i.e. why is the feature valued (sense of place, biodiversity, cultural associations etc.)
  - Evaluation of the importance and contribution of these benefits for each of the 52 character areas of Oxford, (i.e. its contribution on the national, Oxford-wide or local scale).
  - From the above analysis, identification of those character areas that are important at the Oxford-wide or national scale.

#### ***Identification of Important Features & Benefits***

13. The identification of the key valued features of Oxford and the reasons why they are considered to be important is taken directly from the results of the consultation workshops held in May 2001 and confirmed in July 2001, plus feedback from the questionnaires provided at the exhibition at St. Ebbes held July – August 2001.
14. From the consultations, there was a clear consensus of the main valued features of the Oxford landscape. In addition, a number of important perceptual characteristics of the city were identified.

#### ***Key Features***

- unique architecture and urban form, historic buildings and spaces, skyline of domes and spires

- the waterways, Thames, Cherwell, tributaries and canal and the intertwined rural and urban fabric
- the rural backdrop and setting – e.g. wooded ridgelines

**Perceptual Characteristics of Oxford as a whole**

Contrast, Juxtaposition and Balance of

- Historic and Contemporary
- Tranquillity and Vibrancy
- Open and Enclosed
- Rural and Built
- Unexpected, secluded 'hidden delights' waiting to be discovered
- Public and Private Space

**Identification of Benefits**

15. The next step has involved an identification of the key benefits that these features provide i.e. WHY are they valued. We have only considered benefits of Oxford-wide or greater significance. The benefits incorporate, as far as possible the perceptual characteristics of contrast and juxtaposition and draws on the results of the public consultation. They are noted in table A.1.

**Table A.1. Identification of Benefits**

Feature	Benefit (at least Oxford – wide significance)
<p><b>Unique Architecture and Urban Form</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural associations – medieval</li> <li>• Cultural associations – designed landscapes</li> <li>• Cultural associations – academic</li> <li>• Contrast and variety</li> <li>• Sense of Place – unique to Oxford (form and materials)</li> <li>• Sense of Place – unique skyline of spires and domes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Waterways and the Entwined Rural-Urban Fabric</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic continuity in land use (e.g. meadows, commons, woodland)</li> <li>• Sense of Place – providing a rural\tranquil environment within the city</li> <li>• Accessible Countryside (within urban fabric)</li> <li>• Biodiversity (national importance and local sites)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides important vistas and views (to historic core)</li> <li>• Provides contrast (open and built, peaceful and vibrant)</li> <li>• Sense of Place - important trees and green setting</li> <li>• Sense of Place - important watercourses</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Backdrop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of Place - provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)</li> <li>• Sense of Place – forms an important rural setting to the historic core (within Oxford)</li> </ul> <p>[the benefits <b>below</b> relate only to areas outside the city boundary are not included in the analysis.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Containment and strong setting</li> <li>• Biodiversity – habitat e.g. ancient woodland</li> <li>• Cultural associations – excursions from Oxford, patterns of rural land use e.g. commons, academic ownership</li> <li>• Accessible countryside (beyond Oxford)</li> </ul>

16. Table A2 below sets out the evaluation for each of the character areas within Oxford. Since the public consultation further survey work has been undertaken and therefore some of the boundaries of character areas shown on *Figure A1* are different to the character areas presented in the main report. It should be noted that this exercise is purely to help define those landscapes and townscapes recognised as being of special importance to Oxford. It is not intended to be a ranking or grading of landscape quality and it should not be taken in any way as indicating priorities for management or protection of other areas. The analysis is solely to present the results on the consultation.
17. The results of the analysis showing all those areas which have a minimum of five attributes of significance at the Oxford-wide level is illustrated in *Figure A1*.



**TABLE A1: EVALUATION TO IDENTIFY LANDSCAPES AND TOWNSCAPES OF KEY SIGNIFICANCE TO OXFORD USING CRITERIA IDENTIFIED AT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Key: N = National significance  
 O = Oxford-wide significance  
 L = Local significance

FEATURES:  ATTRIBUTES:	UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM						ENTWINED RURAL - URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS							RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT	
	Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)		Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)
Character Area																	
<b>1. Historic Core</b>																	
1A Oxford Medieval Walled Town	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	O	-	O	-	O	-	High quality built environment with unique skyline.
1B Historic University Core		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N <sub>G</sub>	-	-	O	-	O	-	High quality built environment with unique skyline.
<b>2. Historic Fringe</b>																	
2A University Fringe		N	N	N	N	N	-	O	C	O	-	-	O	-	O	-	High quality academic built environment

Character Area	FEATURES:	UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM					ENTWINED RURAL - URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS							RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT		
	ATTRIBUTES:	Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)	Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)	
																		unique to Oxford.
2B	Western Fringe	-	-	-	L	O	O	-	L	-	L	-	-	L	O	-	-	
<b>3. Historic Village Cores</b>																		
3A	Marston Core	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	-	-	L	-	O	-	
3B	Old Headington Core	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	-	O	L	-	O	-	Village typical of Oxford on an important wooded ridge creating a rural setting to Bayswater Brook.
3C	St. Clements & The Plain:	L	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	-	-	L	-	O	-	
3D	Temple Cowley	-	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	O	-	L	-	O	-	
3E	Church Cowley Core	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	-	-	L	-	O	-	
3F	Littlemore Village	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	-	-	L	-	O	-	
3G	Iffley Village	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	O	-	O	L	-	O	O	Village typical of Oxford and important green setting to river.
3H	Upper Wolvercote	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	L	-	-	L	-	O	-	

Character Area	FEATURES:		UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM				ENTWINED RURAL - URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS							RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT		
	ATTRIBUTES:		Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)	Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)
3I Lower Wolvercote	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	-	L	O	-	L	-	O	-	Village typical of Oxford with views of Oxford.
3J Headington Quarry	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	O	-	N <sub>B&amp;G</sub>	-	-	L	-	O	O	Village with sense of place and important green setting to Oxford.	
<b>4. Victorian Suburbs</b>																		
4A North Oxford	-	N	N	L	O	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	Unique built environment with academic connections.
4B Jericho	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	
4C Grandpont	-	O	-	L	L	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	
4D East Oxford	-	-	-	L	-		-	-	-	O	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	
4E New Osney	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	-	O	O	-	L	L	N	-	-	-	
4F Summertown	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	
4G Headington	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	
4H .Headington Hill	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	O	-	

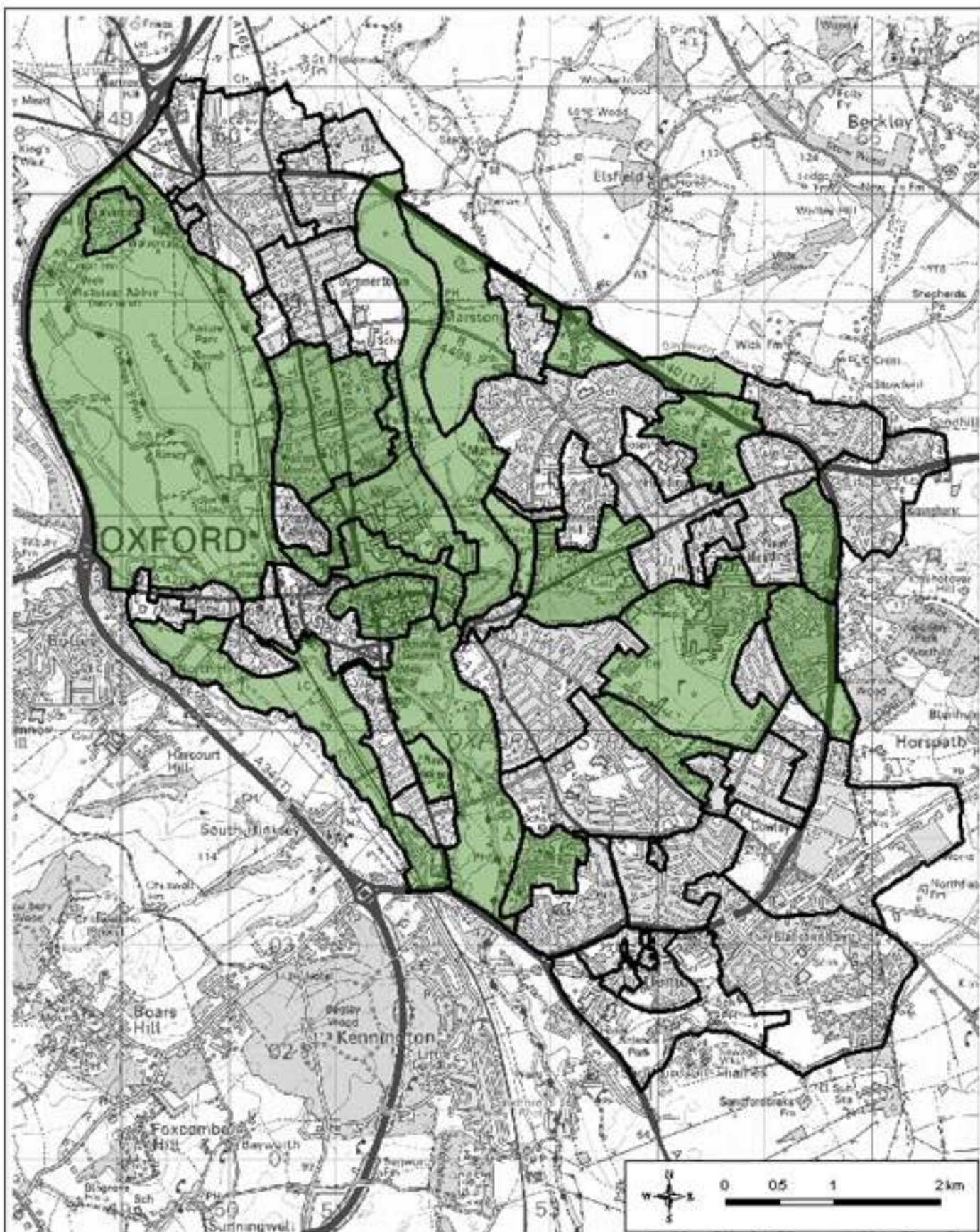
Character Area	FEATURES:		UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM					ENTWINED RURAL - URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS							RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT	
	ATTRIBUTES:		Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)	Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)
4I	New Marston Village	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	L	L	L	L	-	L	-	O	L	
5	Interwar and Post war Suburbs																	
5A	Rose Hill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	O	-	O			O	
5B	Cowley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	
5C	Florence Park	-	O	-	-	-	-	O	L		L	-	-	L	O	-	-	
5D	The Slade	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N <sub>B</sub>	L	-	L	-	-	L	
5E	New Headington	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N <sub>G</sub>	-	-	L	-	-	-	
5F	New Marston	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	
5G	Cuttesslowe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	
5H	North Oxford Fringes	-	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	L	-	-	
5I	New Hinksey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	O	-	-	-	
5J	Botley Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	O	-	-	-	
5K	Barton	O	-	-	L	L	-	-	L	L	O	-	-	L	O	O	L	
5L	Littlemore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L		-	-	
5M	Cowley Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	O	C	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	Open meadow/common land

FEATURES:  ATTRIBUTES:	UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM						ENTWINED RURAL - URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS								RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT
	Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)	Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)	
Character Area																	typical of Oxford.
5N Sandhills and Risinghurst	-	-	-	L	L	-	-	L	L	O	-	-	L	L	O	O	
<b>6. Post 1960's Suburbs</b>																	
6A Blackbird Lees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	L	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	
6B Wood Farm	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	O	C	N <sub>B</sub>	-	-	O	-	-	O	Important green setting to Oxford on edge of Shotover.
6C Horspath	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	
<b>7. Open Hills (with Institutions)</b>																	
7A Headington Hill	-	O	O	-	O	-	O	O	C	L	N	-	O	-	O	O	Important green setting to Oxford.
7B Southfield Park and Hospitals	-	-	-	-	O	-	O	O	C	N <sub>B</sub>	-	-	O	O	-	O	Important green setting to Oxford.
7C John Radcliffe Hospital	-	L	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	L	-	-	-	
<b>8. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fringe – Business, Industry and Retail</b>																	
8A Cowley Motor Works	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	
8B Littlemore Business and Science Parks	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	L	O	-	-	L	O	-	-	

FEATURES:  ATTRIBUTES:	UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM						ENTWINED RURAL – URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS								RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT
	Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)	Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)	
Character Area																	
8C Botley Industrial and Retail Parks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	L	-	-	-	
<b>9. Rivers and Floodplains</b>																	
9A Thames (Isis) - North	O	-	N	-	O	-	N	O	C	N <sub>B</sub>	N	O	N	N	O	N	Open green space close to centre of Oxford. Floodplain landscape.
9B Cherwell	O	-	N	-	O	-	O	O	C	N	O	O	O	O	O	N	Open green space running through centre of Oxford.
9C Bayswater Brook	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	C	O	-	O	L	O	L	L	Open green space on the north of Oxford with links to the Cherwell.
9D Thames (Isis) – South	-	-	O	-	-	-	N	O	C	O	N	O	O	O	O	N	Open green space with distinct character close to centre of Oxford.
9E Hinksey & Bulstrake Streams	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	O	C	O	-	O	O	O	O	O	Important setting and open green space on the west of Oxford (forming part of the Thames floodplain).

FEATURES:  ATTRIBUTES:	UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN FORM						ENTWINED RURAL – URBAN FABRIC - WATERWAYS								RURAL BACKDROP		COMMENT
	Cultural associations - medieval	Cultural associations - designed landscapes	Cultural associations - academic	Contrast/Variety	Sense of Place - unique to Oxford (form and materials)	Sense of place - unique skyline of spires/domes	Historic continuity in land use (e.g meadows and commons)	Sense of Place – rural/tranquil environment	Accessible countryside	Biodiversity/Geology B G	Important vistas and views (to historic core)	Rural setting to Rivers	Sense of Place – Contribution of trees	Sense of Place - Contribution of watercourses	Sense of place - Provides views to rural backdrop (beyond Oxford)	Forms an important setting to the historic core (wooded ridges/hills)	
Character Area																	
<b>10. Open River Terraces</b>																	
10A North Oxford	-	-	O	-	L	-	L	L	L	L	-	O	L	L	O	-	
10B Peartree	-	-	-	-	L	-	L	L	L	L	-	-	L	L	O	-	
10C Marston	-	-	-	-	O	-	O	O	C	O	-	O	L	-	O	O	Rural setting to the river and open green space.
10D St. Clements	-	-	O	-	O	-	O	O	C	N <sub>B</sub>	O	O	L	-	O	O	Rural setting to the river and open green space.
10E New Hinksey	-	-	-	-	O	-	L	O	L	L	-	O	O	L	O	O	Rural setting to the river and open green space.





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## Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

**Figure A.1:**  
Possible Landscapes of Key Significance to Oxford  
(ie with more than five attributes of significance at the Oxford wide level)

### Key

- Possible Landscapes of Key Significance to Oxford

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## **Appendix B: Glossary**

# GLOSSARY

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Ashlar	Masonry of large blocks with even faces and square edges.
Bay window	Window of one or more stories projecting from the face of a building at ground level.
Bow window	A curved bay window.
Characterisation	The process by which the classification and description of landscape/townscape character is undertaken to identify what makes one area `different' or `distinct' from another. This is a recognised approach, endorsed by Government and promoted by the Countryside Agency.
Coral rag, or ragstone	The local crumbly limestone quarried from hills surrounding Oxford
Curtain wall	A non load-bearing external wall of repeating modular elements applied to a steel frame.
Re-creatability	A measure of the ability to re-create landscapes or townscapes if they are lost.
Iconography	Icon is a Greek word that means image. Iconography is the art of expressing an artistic or cultural representation of a place or person.
Jetty	The projection of an upper storey beyond the storey below in a timber-framed building.
Landscape Character	is what makes one landscape different from another. It means the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape. It creates a particular sense of place. (source: <i>Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance</i> )
Landscape Sensitivity	The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on character. Sensitivity is not absolute, but is likely to vary according to the type of change being considered. (source: <i>Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance</i> )
Landscape Quality	This is a function of the extent to which the character of a landscape type is demonstrated in a particular area, in terms of the presence of key characteristics and absence of atypical and incongruous features. It also depends upon the state of repair of elements in the landscape and the

	integrity or intactness of the landscape. (source: <i>Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance</i> )
Landscape Value	refers to the value we attach to different landscapes and is the basis for designating or recognising certain highly valued landscapes. A landscape may be valued for many reasons, which might include landscape quality, scenic quality, tranquillity, wilderness value, consensus about its importance either nationally or locally, and other conservation interests and cultural associations. (source: <i>Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance</i> )
Landscape/Townscape Type	Generic areas sharing common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation, land use and built form.
Landscape/Townscape Character Area	Single and unique, discrete geographical areas of a landscape/townscape type.
Lintels	Horizontal beam bridging an opening.
Mullions	Vertical members between the lights in a window opening.
Pebble dashing	An early 20th century render where stones are embedded in a wet plastered wall.
Rendering	The process of covering outside walls with a uniform surface.
Rubble stone	Masonry whose stones are wholly or partly in a rough state.
Strength of character	The degree to which a particular area demonstrates the defining characteristics of the landscape type to which it belongs. (source: <i>Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance</i> )
Stucco	Originally a fine lime plaster render worked to a smooth surface. Characteristic of many late 18th century and 19th century classical buildings.
Zone of Visual Influence	The area from which a structure(s) can be potentially seen from.

## **Appendix C: Bibliography**

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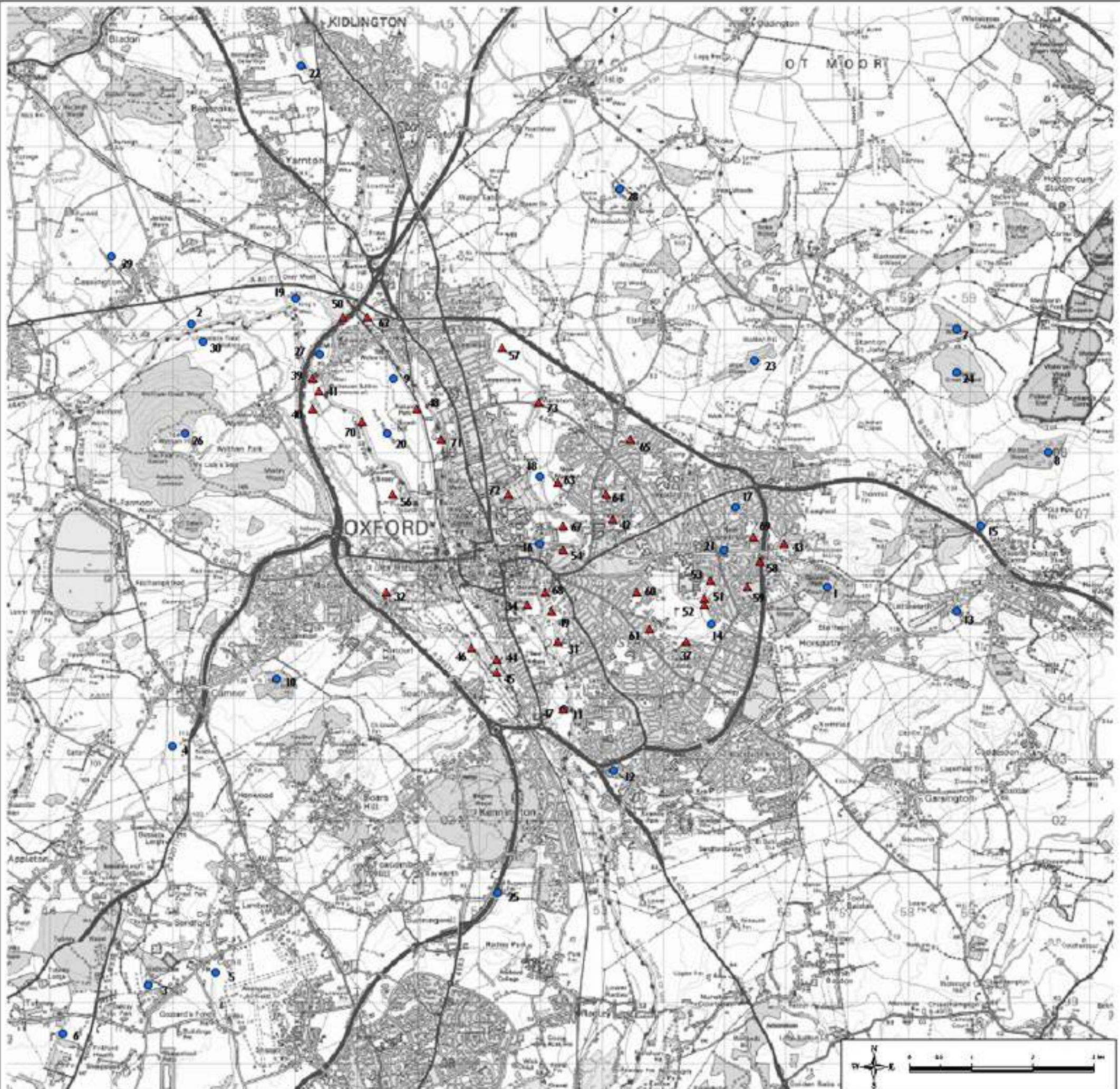


## **Appendix D: Ecological Sites**



# Oxford City Landscape Character Assessment

Figure D.1:  
SSSI and SLINC location plan



**Key**

- ▲ SLINC
- SSSI

Drawing Number: 105700\_004\_appended to d\_01 with sites

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APPENDIX D: ECOLOGICAL SITE SUMMARY BASELINE INFORMATION								
PART I: SSSI (source: English Nature, SSSI citations)								
Map no.	Designation	Site name		Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
1	SSSI	Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill		SP567058	1986	Ancient woodland indicator plants, Aculeates, Diptera, breeding and wintering birds	Lowland dry acidic grassland, Lowland heathland	Ancient Woodland managed as coppice with standards, 2 ponds, secondary woodland, unimproved neutral/acidic grassland and heath
2	SSSI	Cassington Meadows		SP463101	1993	Common frog, adders tongue, great burnet	Lowland hay meadow	Seasonally flooded alluvial hay meadows with reed sweet grass, meadowsweet fen
3	SSSI	Cothill Fen		SU456993	1993	Nationally rare black bog rush- blunt flowered rush mire, 25 Red Data Book invertebrates, Great Crested newt, nightingale	Fen, Wet woodland	Nationally rare calcareous fen, mire, scrub, carr and ancient woodland
4	SSSI	Cumnor		SP460032	1990			An exposure of the Corralian succession, including fossiliferous coral rag deposits
5	SSSI	Dry Sandford Pit		SU467995	1986		Fen	An exposure of Corralian Beds, Jurassic era. Sand quarry with calcareous fen, grassland, scrub, heath, spring fed pools
6	SSSI	Frilford Heath		SU442985	1986	Nationally rare black bog rush- blunt flowered rush mire, nationally rare plants, beetles, flies, bees and other insects	Lowland dry acidic grassland, Lowland heathland, Fen	Unique acid grassland, heathland and valley fens reminiscent of Breckland and coastal dunes
7	SSSI	Holly Wood		SP588100	1986	Ancient woodland indicator species, black hairstreak and purple emperor butterflies		An ancient woodland fragment of the Shotover Forest managed as hazel-maple coppice with oak standards
8	SSSI	Holton Wood		SP603080	1984	Nightingale, white admiral, purple emperor		Semi-natural ancient woodland on Oxford Clay with a network of marshy meadow rides and glades
9	SSSI	Hook Meadows and the Trap Grounds		SP496092	1986		Lowland hay meadows	A series of unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, managed as hay meadow and pasture, bordering the large pastures of Wolvercote and Port Meadow. Fen, reedbed, ditches and watercourses provide other habitats

Map no.	Designation	Site name	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
10	SSSI	Hurst Hill	SP477043	1986			Site of old brickpits with an exceptionally rich lichen and bryophyte flora and reptile fossils
11	SSSI	Iffley Meadows	SP524038	1986	Fritillary – largest population in region, adders tongue, great burnet, ragged robin	Lowland hay meadows and grazing pasture	BBOWT reserve. Unimproved neutral meadows and pastures within a network of river channels, willow lined ditches and hedges
12	SSSI	Littlemore railway cutting	SP532028	1986			A key exposure of Jurassic limestone and clays
13	SSSI	Littleworth brickpit	SP588054	1987			Fossiliferous outcrop of Kimmeridgian (Jurassic) stratigraphy, particularly famous for ammonites
14	SSSI	Lye Valley	SP548052	1987	Nationally rare black bog rush- blunt flowered rush mire, Locally uncommon grass of Parnassus and common butterwort. Rare invertebrates, warblers and visiting snipe	Fen	Calcareous valley fen, shape, area and quality altered by neighbouring golf course, and residential development. Other communities include tall herbs
15	SSSI	Lyehill Quarry	SP592068	1986			Outcrop of Wheatley limestone (Jurassic), a fore-reef outcrop of the Oxford coral-reef area
16	SSSI	Magdalen Grove	SP520065	1991			Fossiliferous river terrace deposits
17	SSSI	Magdalen Quarry	SP552071	1986			Outcrop of Upper Jurassic rocks of major importance to the geographical reconstruction of the ancient Oxford coral reef and shallow sea
18	SSSI	New Marston Meadows	SP520076	1993	Fritillary, scarce Diptera and damselfly. Breeding lapwing, lesser-spotted woodpecker and kingfisher	Lowland hay meadow	Unimproved neutral meadows, drier grassland and swamp managed as summer pasture and hay meadows
19	SSSI	Pixey and Yarnton Meads	SP480105	1986	Notable green-winged orchid, autumn crocus saw-wort and pepper saxifrage	Lowland hay meadow	Unimproved neutral floodplain meadows managed for hay and aftermath grazed. Watercourses with tall herbs

Map no.	Designation	Site name	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
20	SSSI	Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common & Green	SP495083	1986	Only site in UK for creeping marshwort (RDB species)	Lowland meadow, floodplain grazing marsh	Large area of neutral unimproved pasture, and derelict grazing marsh, grazed almost continuously for 1000 years. Wolvercote Green managed as hay meadow
21	SSSI	Rock Edge	SP550064	1986			Outcrop of Coral Rag (Upper Jurassic) limestone that helped to demonstrate the existence of "Headington Reef" in the area
22	SSSI	Wolvercote Meadows	SP481143	1985		Fen, Lowland hay meadow	Unimproved alluvial grassland with rich crested dog's tail-black knapweed (NVC MG5) meadow and tall herb fen communities
23	SSSI	Sidling's Copse and College Pond	SP555095	1986	Ancient woodland indicators, Atlantic stream crayfish	Fen, Wet woodland, Reedbed, Lowland dry acid grassland, lowland limestone grassland	Calcareous fen, carr, broadleaved woodland, scrub, reedbed, open water and acidic and limestone grassland
24	SSSI	Stanton Great Wood	SP588093	1987	Ancient wood indicator plant species, uncommon butterflies		Ancient woodland, managed as coppice with standards
25	SSSI	Sugworth	SP513008	1986			A fossiliferous Pleistocene fluvial channel
26	SSSI	Whytham Woods	SP462083	1986	Ancient wood indicator plant and moth species, nationally rare plants, flies and beetles	Wood pasture, lowland limestone grassland	Ancient Woodland, wood pasture, common land and limestone grassland
27	SSSI	Wolvercote Meadows	SP484096	1986		Floodplain grazing marsh, Lowland hay meadow	Unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland managed as hay and pasture
28	SSSI	Woodeaton Quarry	SP533123	1986			Geological site with one of the most complete Bathonian sections in Oxfordshire
29	SSSI	Woodeaton Wood	SP450112	1986	Ancient woodland indicator species		Ancient coppice with standards woodland on calcareous soil
30	SSSI	Wytham Ditches and flushes	SP465098	1986		Eutrophic standing water, Fen	Eutrophic aquatic and fen flora and small area of unimproved pasture

<b>PART 2: SLINC (sources: Oxford City Council, BBOWT Wildlife Sites Project)</b>								
<b>Map no.</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>SLINC series number</b>	<b>Grid ref</b>	<b>Survey date</b>	<b>Key species</b>	<b>UK BAP habitats</b>	<b>Habitat notes</b>
31	SLINC	Aston Eyot and the Kidneys	SLINC 18	SP523049	14th Oct 1998	Song thrush, bullfinch, green woodpecker		A mix of improved and semi-improved grassland with scrub and bounded by woodland
32	SLINC	Botley Meadow (Osney Mead)	SLINC 13	SP495057	Apr-00	Reed bunting, Great burnet, ragged robin, snakeshead fritillary, meadow barley, common meadow-rue, cuckoo-flower, kingfisher, sedge warbler	Lowland meadow	A large area of remnant floodplain meadow, managed by light grazing horses and a hay cut. Scrub and ditch habitats
33	SLINC	Burnt Hill Meadows	SLINC 24					Neutral grassland
34	SLINC	Christchurch Meadow	SLINC 42 Wildlife Corridor	SP518055				Neutral grassland
35	SLINC	Church Grove	SLINC 07					Neutral grassland
36	SLINC	Complex of Cherwell Valley Meadows between A40 and R. Thames	SLINC 38 Wildlife Corridor					Neutral grassland
37	SLINC	Cowley Marsh	SLINC 34	SP544049	7th October 1998	meadowsweet, fleabane, selfheal, common spotted orchid (2001)		A small area of wet grassland surrounded by woodland and scrub
38	SLINC	Fiddlers Elbow Island	SLINC 12					Wetland/fen
39	SLINC	Godstow Bridge Meadow	SLINC 04	SP483092	11th May 2001	Cuckoflower, great burnet, marsh valerian, ragged robin, cowslip	Lowland hay meadow	Unimproved neutral grassland and scrub including areas of wet grassland and the banks of the River Thames
40	SLINC	Godstow Holt	SLINC 06	SP483087	18th May 2001	Hairy brome, giant fescue, field maple, guelder rose	Wet Woodland	Dry broad leaved woodland and wet woodland

Map no.	Designation	Site name	SLINC series number	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
41	SLINC	Godstow Nunnery Meadow (Godstow Abbey Meadow)	SLINC 05	SP484090	11th May 2001	Birthwort, Cowslip, cuckooflower	Lowland hay meadow	Unimproved lowland meadow grazed by cattle for part of year
42	SLINC	Headington Hill View Point	SLINC 27	SP532069	Dec-98			Site famous for Oxford view, now obscured by accommodation block
43	SLINC	Henry Stephen/C.S Lewis Reserve	Other	SP560065		Common toad, bats		A man-made pond surrounded by mixed woodland with a small area of marsh and sandstone boulders. Managed by BBOWT
44	SLINC	Hinksey Lake	SLINC 15	SP513046				Wetland/fen
45	SLINC	Hinksey Pools	SLINC 16	SP513044	11th September 2000	Cuckooflower, kingfisher, little grebe, sedge warbler, Water vole (?), bittern (winter visitor), reed bunting, bullfinch,		A narrow pool, dug for rail ballast. Northern end used for fishing, southern end undisturbed with reeds and scrub
46	SLINC	Hinksey Stream	SLINC 14	SP509048				Wetland/fen
47	SLINC	Iffley Meadows, next to SSSI	SLINC 17	SP524038				Wetland/fen
48	SLINC	Line Ditch	SLINC 10	SP500087	9th Nov 2000	Water rail, snipe, reed bunting, sedge warbler, snipe	Reedbed	Drainage ditch, deep, well vegetated with overhanging scrub. Reedbed of common reed and greater pond sedge
49	SLINC	Long Meadow	SLINC 19	SP522054	29th July 1999	Pepper saxifrage, common meadow rue, devil's bit scabious, meadow barley, ragged robin	Lowland hay meadow	A traditional hay meadow, although presently not under management and rather overgrown
50	SLINC	Lower Wolvercote Meadow	SLINC 02	SP488102				Neutral grassland
51	SLINC	Lye Valley	SLINC 41 Wildlife Corridor	SP547056				Woodland
52	SLINC	Lye Valley Fen	SLINC 29	SP547055				Wetland/fen
53	SLINC	Lye Valley Scrub (part)	SLINC 30	SP548059				Woodland and scrub



Map no.	Designation	Site name	SLINC series number	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
54	SLINC	Magdelan Meadow	SLINC 21	SP524064				Neutral grassland
55	SLINC	Meadow next to Lower Wolvercote SSSI	SLINC 03	SP483094				Neutral grassland
56	SLINC	Medley Manor Wood	SLINC 08	SP496073	18th May 2001	Herb Paris, cowslip, greater butterfly orchid, goldilocks buttercup, wood sedge, pendulous sedge, giant fescue, hairy brome, primrose, three-nerved sandwort, bluebell, black bryony, red currant, field maple, guelder rose, crab apple, holly		Small oak, ash and sycamore woodland with large ditches and reservoir
57	SLINC	Northern Bypass Meadows	SLINC 25	SP514097				Neutral grassland
58	SLINC	Old Road Land, Dorchester Close	SLINC 32	SP556062	13th April 2001	great crested newt, bullfinch, song thrush	Lowland calcareous grassland	A small but very diverse area with small ponds, a small area of calcareous grassland, woodland and scrub encroaching through lack of management
59	SLINC	Open Magdelan Wood	SLINC 33	SP554058				Woodland
60	SLINC	Oriel Wood (Bartlemans Wood)	SLINC28	SP536057	23rd April 2001	Bullfinch, song thrush, bluebell, blackbird, dunnock, goldfinch, green woodpecker	Wet woodland	A small area of secondary woodland with many non-native species. Important link area
61	SLINC	Oxford Bus Station Playing field	pSLINC	SP538051	5th December 2000	Cuckooflower, devils bit scabious, meadow barley, spiny rest harrow, long winged conehead	Lowland hay meadow	A currently unmanaged neutral meadow grassland, previously used as a sports pitch

Map no.	Designation	Site name	SLINC series number	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
62	SLINC	Oxford Canal Marsh	SLINC 01	SP492102	1991 (brief visit in 13th Sept 2000)	Song thrush, Linnet, bullfinch, reed bunting, snipe, jack snipe, water rail, kingfisher, green woodpecker, marsh tit, willow tit, fieldfare, redwing, blackbird, dunnock. Cuckooflower, ragged robin	Floodplain grazing marsh, fen	Previously cattle grazed wet meadow and sedge dominated fen
63	SLINC	Park Farm Meadows	SLINC 35	SP523075				
64	SLINC	Parts of Milham Ford School grounds	SLINC 36	SP531073	1999, on-going	Song thrush, spotted flycatcher, bullfinch bee & pyramidal orchid, hairy violet, common blue, narrow leaved birdsfoot trefoil, strawberry clover, cowslip, wax cap fungus, ragged robin, small copper butterfly cuckooflower	Lowland hay meadow	Two small areas of unimproved grassland.
65	SLINC	Peasmoor Piece	SLINC 26	SP535082				Other
66	SLINC	Seacourt Stream	SLINC 39 Wildlife Corridor					Wetland/fen
67	SLINC	St Catherine's Meadow (Merton College Sport's Field)	SLINC 22	SP524068	24th November 2000	Bullfinch	Wet woodland	A wet meadow in 1978, now reverted to wet woodland and scrub with a shaded pond
68	SLINC	St. Hilda's College Meadow	SLINC 20	SP521057	2nd May 2001	Snake's head fritillary, ragged robin, devils' bit scabious, great burnet	Lowland hay meadow	A small traditional hay meadow, bounded at north by the River Cherwell

Map no.	Designation	Site name	SLINC series number	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
69	SLINC	Stansfield Study Centre	SLINC 31	SP555066	April 18th 2001	Great crested newt, song thrush, cuckooflower, ancient woodland indicator species: bluebell, hart's tongue fern, hornbeam, spurge laurel, sanicle, common spotted orchid, smooth and palmate newt, bats	Lowland calcareous grassland	A variety of habitats including scrub, woodland, 2 ponds and calcareous grassland
70	SLINC	Thames-side at Binsey	SLINC 09	SP491085				Wetland/fen
71	SLINC	Trap Grounds	SLINC 11	SP504082				Wetland/fen
72	SLINC	UniversityParks	SLINC 43	SP515073				Other
73	SLINC	Victoria Arms Spinney	SLINC 23	SP520088	23rd April 2001	Field maple, red currant, song thrush	Wet woodland	A small woodland adjacent to the River Cherwell with pollarded crack willow
74	SLINC	Water meadows, N. Hinksey	SLINC 40 Wildlife Corridor					Neutral grassland

**PART 3: Oxford Urban Wildlife Group Sites (source: Oxfordshire Museums Service, Oxford Urban Wildlife Group Surveys)**

NB: OUWVG Sites not shown on map								
Map no.	Designation	Site name	OUWVG Site no.	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
75	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Barton Farm Meadow	A94	SP547084	1995	small tortoiseshell, meadow brown, speckled wood, wren, chaffinch		Species poor semi-improved fields
76	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Binsey Wetlands	A119	SP490077	1989	Great burnet, common meadow rue, bluebell, cuckooflower, badger	Ancient and species rich hedgerows	A series of improved wet grassland areas with willow scrub, species rich hedgerows and species rich ditches. Foxes recorded.
77	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Blackbird Leys	A49	SP555 023	N/A			
78	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Blackbird Leys	A51	SP562025	N/A			
79	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Blackbird Leys	A52	SP562025	N/A			
80	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Botley Road Site	A88		1989	Kestrel, Dunnock, Skylark, Grey Partridge, Tortoiseshell, snails	Ancient and species rich hedgerow	Damp rank grassland, ditches, species rich hedges, arable land
81	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Bullingdon Green	A115	SP559048				
82	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Bus garage/ Barracks Lane Meadow	A93 (Oxford Wildlife Site pSLINC)	SP538051	1995	Common blue, browns, orange tip, red admiral, small tortoiseshell, cinnabar, orthoptera	Lowland meadow	Rough tussocky grassland with abundant spiny restharrow. Anthills present.
83	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Cold Harbour	A77	SP518042	1991	Kingfisher (1990), grass snake		Tall ruderals with scattered scrub. Numerous apple trees
84	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Dukes Lock Pond	A122	SP487109	1989			A large pond and swamp with continuous scrub.

Map no.	Designation	Site name	OUWG Site no.	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
85	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Fiddler's Island, land adjoining railway and Castle Mill Stream	A109	SP500070	1990	Great burnet, marsh valerian	Lowland meadow	Unimproved wet rough grassland and tall herbs. Scrub and trees form boundary with canal towpath
86	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Field adjoining Binsey Road	A113	SP493070				Improved cattle grazed grassland
87	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Field end of Abingdon Road	A89	SP521036	1991	Giant puffball and shaggy inkcap		Semi-improved pasture with disturbed/ruderal element. Scattered scrub to mill stream.
88	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Field south of Littlemore Hospital	A61	SP538019				
89	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Fields adj. Heyford Hill Road	A63	SP530020				
90	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Fields adj. Heyford Hill Road	A64	SP530020				
91	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Fields adj. Heyford Hill Road	A65	SP530020				
92	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Fields adj. Heyford Hill Road	A66	SP530020				
93	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Fields adj. Heyford Hill Road	A67	SP530020				
94	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Haynes Field	A83	SP558067	1992			Damp rough SI grassland with hedgerow with ringlet, small skipper, meadow brown, common spotted orchid and pepper saxifrage recorded.
95	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Lake west of Cutteslowe	A135	SP498105	1979			3 plants recorded. Lake used for recreation

Map no.	Designation	Site name	OUWG Site no.	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
96	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Land adj. to Littlemore sewage works	A54	SP542022	N/A			
97	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Land adjoining sewage works	A69	SP527028				
98	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Land adjoining sewage works	A70	SP527028				
99	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Land on White Horse Road	A116	SP510053				Adjacent recreation ground not worth survey
100	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Lane to Cowley Marsh	A107			Mute swan		Grassland with scattered trees to river
101	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Lawn Upton School and St. Mary and St Nicholas Church, Littlemore	A56	SP538026				
102	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Lawn Upton School and St. Mary and St Nicholas Church, Littlemore	A57	SP538026				
103	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Littlemore Hospital	A58	SP536022				
104	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Littlemore Hospital	A59	SP536022				
105	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Littlemore Hospital	A60	SP536022				



Map no.	Designation	Site name	OUWG Site no.	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
106	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Loop Farm Flood meadows	A41	SP487110	1989	Ragged robin, cuckooflower	Lowland meadow	Flood plain meadows, grazed by cattle. Dissected by hedgerows and damp scrub land.
107	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Marsh Lane Meadows	A96	SP529084	1995	Mole		Recreation ground. Mown semi-improved grassland areas and horse grazed paddocks, surrounded by hedgerows.
108	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Minchery Farm Meadows	A71	SP 544024	1992	Common blue and tortoiseshell	Lowland meadow	Rough, ungrazed semi-improved wet grassland with tall herbs. Scattered trees and scrub recorded
109	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Minchery Farm Meadows II	A72	SP546024	1992	Small tortoiseshell, darter dragonfly	Lowland meadow	ungrazed wet grassland with tall herbs.
110	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Oriel fields and gardens at rear of Church way	A74	SP526033				
111	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Oriel fields and gardens at rear of Church way	A75	SP526033				
112	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Oriel Wood	A79	SP537057	1990	Bluebell	Wet woodland	Predominantly broadleaved woodland, with exotic species and numerous elm suckers, some areas of wet grassland and scrub.
113	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Osney Cemetery	A114	SP505058	1990			Woodland/scattered trees with rough ruderal species poor grassland.
114	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Overgrown Gialls hillside, nr. Brea Rd. Foundation	A101					Semi-improved neutral grassland with hawthorn and blackthorn scrub.
115	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Pasture North of Trout Inn Bridge	A137	SP484092	1989	cowslip, common star of Bethlehem		Semi-improved pasture, grazed by geese. Some calcareous plants.
116	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Radcliffe Hospital	A95	SP537078	1995	Musk mallow and sheep's bit		Damp and dry grassland

Map no.	Designation	Site name	OUWG Site no.	Grid ref	Survey date	Key species	UK BAP habitats	Habitat notes
117	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Southfield Golf Course and Oriel Wood	A103					
118	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Spindlebury Park	A48		N/A			Football field, freshwater stream with marginal vegetation, large hard-edged pond. Hard-core trails and paths. Managed as a Nature Reserve by OCC
119	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	St Clement's Churchyard	A38	SP528063	1990	Cowslip		Semi-improved grassland with scattered trees
120	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	St. Andrews Churchyard, Headington	A102	SP545076		Moles and bees recorded		Mown lawns of churchyard with wild area of woodland, scrub and rough grassland behind. To be managed for wildlife.
121	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	St. Clement's Field	A39	SP527063	1990			Semi improved rough grassland with ruderal species
122	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	St. Frideswide Churchyard	A112	SP502063	1990			Mainly close mown grassland with hedgerows and scrub. Small areas "overgrown"
123	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	St. John's Hayfield	A28	SP 515 090	1989		Lowland meadow	Semi-improved lowland neutral grassland
124	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	University Parks	A123	SP515072	1986	invertebrates, birds		Native and ornamental trees with large areas of rough, herb-rich grassland, cut late summer.
125	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site	Wetland and woods south of Iffley Meadows		SP523030				Habitat mosaic of wet grassland and scrub with a small plantation woodland.,
126	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site		A141					
127	Oxford Urban Wildlife Survey site		A143					

**Appendix E:**  
**Field Survey Form for Survey at 1:25,000**

**OXFORD CITY AND ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (1:25,000)  
FIELD SURVEY SHEET**

Photograph Nos:

Date:

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**CONTEXT:**

**National:**

**County:**

**Local (ie draft LCA):**

**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES**

**Topography**.....

**Geology/Soils**.....

**Hydrology**.....

**Landcover**.....

**ECOLOGY/BIODIVERSITY**

**Habitats**.....

**BAP priority habitats**.....

**Diversity**.....

**Designations**.....

**ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY**

**Key visible historic components**.....

**Period of predominant character**.....

**Archaeology**.....

**LANDSCAPE PATTERNS**

**Communication**.....

**Settlement**.....

**Field Boundaries**.....

**Woodland/trees**.....

**Access/recreation**.....

**Tranquillity**.....

**Landmarks**.....

## SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE

Pattern.....  
Density.....  
Age, style, materials.....  
Relationship to landscape.....

## AESTHETIC AND PERCEPTUAL QUALITIES

<b>VIEWS</b>	distant	framed	intermittent	panoramic	corridor
<b>SCALE</b>	intimate	small	medium	large	
<b>ENCLOSURE</b>	confined	enclosed	semi-enclosed	open	exposed
<b>VARIETY</b>	complex	varied	simple	uniform	
<b>TEXTURE</b>	smooth	textured	rough	very rough	
<b>COLOUR</b>	monochrom e	muted	colourful	garish	
<b>MOVEMENT</b>	remote	vacant	peaceful	active	
<b>UNITY</b>	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic	
<b>NATURALNESS</b>	undisturbed	restrained	tamed	disturbed	

## Contribution to Oxford's Landscape Setting

## Forces for Change that may affect Oxford's setting

## Key objectives in relation to the setting of Oxford

**Appendix F:  
Field Survey Form for Survey at 1:10,000**

**OXFORD CITY AND ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING  
CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (1:10,000)  
FIELD SURVEY SHEET**

Photograph Nos: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHARACTER TYPE:**

**CHARACTER AREA:**

**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES**

Topography

Geology/Soils

Hydrology

Microclimate

**ECOLOGY/BIODIVERSITY**

Habitats

Diversity

**ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY**

Evidence of evolution of urban form

Key visible historic components

Period of predominant character

Archaeological interest

Historic Parks and Gardens:

**TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER**

Street and Block Pattern

Relationship of public and private realms

3D Massing - scale and density of buildings

Enclosure and street proportions



Roofscape and skyline

Image (civic/urban/suburban/ecclesiastical/collegiate/rural etc)

**Built form**

Distinctive buildings and other landmarks

Building materials

Fenestration

Doorways

**Streetscape**

Boundaries and edges

Paving materials

Street furniture

Lighting

Trees and other vegetation

**Open Space**

Scale and distribution of open space

Interaction with built form

Public/private

Light and shade; colour

Auditory and Olfactory Senses

Boundaries and edges

Paving materials

Trees and other vegetation

Water elements

Access

Recreational use

## **Land Use, Culture and Vitality**

Vitality

Use patterns

User conflicts

Day/night

Cultural Associations:

## **Access and Traffic**

Road hierarchy/congestion,

## **Other infrastructure:**

Rail, Canal, Bridleway, Towpath, Footpath, Pylons, Power Lines

## **Views**

Key views to area and skyline or landmarks:

Key views from area:

Visual sequences and patterns within area:

## **EVALUATION OF TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER**

Perception of townscape and landscape quality

Unique or distinctive urban character

## **SENSITIVITY AND VULNERABILITY**

Mechanisms of change

Evidence of change

Has change so far resulted in positive, negative or neutral impacts?

Evident vulnerabilities (key issues)

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE:** (Conserve/Enhance/Regenerate)

**KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND  
TOWNSCAPE ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**