

Oxford City Council
A Character Assessment of Oxford in
its Landscape Setting 2022 Update
Addendum Report





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Addendum Report

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A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'D. Watkins'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

PART 2: THE CHARACTER OF OXFORD AND ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

1.1 Approach to the Assessment

1.2 What makes the setting of Oxford distinctive and why

1.3 What makes the landscapes within the City of Oxford distinctive and why

1.4 Relationship between the 1:25000 and 1:10000 assessments

2.0 WHAT MAKES THE SETTING OF OXFORD DISTINCTIVE AND WHY

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Defining Landscape Types

2.3 Defining Landscape Character Areas

3.0 WHAT MAKES THE LANDSCAPE WITHIN THE CITY OF OXFORD DISTINCTIVE AND WHY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Defining Landscape/Townscape Types

3.3 Defining Landscape/Townscape Areas

3.4 Description and Evaluation

FIGURES

2.3.1 Landscape / Townscape Character Types and Areas

APPENDICES

1 Evaluation Criteria

PREFACE

Background to the Updated Study

CBA were commissioned by Oxford City Council in 2022 to undertake a partial update of the 2002 Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting Study (the 2002 Study), taking into account new guidance and up-to-date evidence.

This updated assessment (the 2022 Study) provides a key piece of evidence for the emerging Oxford City Local Plan 2040. It aims to help inform and underpin urban design/place-making policies for promoting good design in ways that protect and enhance the City's built, historic and natural environment and heritage assets by respecting local character and context and promoting innovation.

Approach and relationship to the 2002 study

2002 Study Report Structure

INTRODUCTION

PART 1: SETTING THE SCENE

1. Defining the setting
2. Formative influences
3. Cultural perceptions
4. The Character of Oxford Today and Managing Climate Change

PART 2: THE CHARACTER OF OXFORD AND ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING

- 1. Introduction to Landscape and Townscape Character Assessment**
- 2. What makes the setting of Oxford distinctive and why**
- 3. What makes the Landscapes within the City of Oxford distinctive and why**

PART 3: USING THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

1. Providing a Framework for Developing Landscape and Townscape Policies
2. Making use of the Character Assessment

The 2002 Study was developed in line with the principles of interim landscape character assessment guidance published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 1999¹, which was superseded by the final guidance in 2002².

The scope of the 2022 Study is limited to reviewing the landscape/townscape character area descriptions within the City of Oxford's boundaries, defined at 1:10000 scale as set out within **Section 3 in Part 2 of the 2002 Study**.

In doing so, the 2022 Study has reflected the principles of current landscape character assessment guidance published by Natural England in 2014³ and townscape character assessment advice published by the Landscape Institute in 2018⁴.

¹ Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance (Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage, 1999)

² Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England & Wales (Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)

³ An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014)

⁴ Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note (Landscape Institute, 2017)

The review has drawn on up-to-date evidence provided by relevant recent studies⁵, current Google/Bing aerial imagery and OS mapping supplemented by field survey work, to identify any areas of significant land use change since the 2002 Study.

The 2022 Study should be read in conjunction with Conservation Area Appraisals where available⁶, which provide a detailed description of the character and significance of the Conservation Areas within the city and also identify opportunities for their conservation and enhancement.

The landscape/townscape character type descriptions within the City of Oxford's boundaries defined at 1:10000 scale by the 2002 Study, are considered to remain largely fit for purpose, with only minor updates to the description text.

The landscape/townscape character area classification is considered to remain largely fit for purpose, with some localised amendments to the character area boundaries⁷.

The format/content of the character area descriptions have been adapted and enhanced as follows:

- **Photos** – the 2002 Study photos/captions retained where relevant and supplemented and/or replaced by new photos as appropriate
- **Description** – the 2002 Study information updated where required to reflect current character
- **Checklist and key characteristics** – the 2002 Study information updated where required to reflect current character and inclusion of a new section for local heritage assets
- **Strength of character and perceptions of quality** – the 2002 Study evaluation updated where required to reflect current character/quality and amended to identify positive/strong and negative/weak characteristics and features
- **Indicators of landscape value** – the 2002 Study evaluation updated where required to reflect current value
- **Sensitivity to change** – the 2002 Study evaluation updated where required to reflect current sensitivity and threats
- **Contribution to good design / place-making principles** – inclusion of a new section providing an evaluation of the area's contribution to good design / place-making principles to inform area-based design guidance/design codes (see **Appendix 1** for details of evaluation criteria)
- **Provision of green infrastructure** – inclusion of a new section identifying the area's green infrastructure assets and evaluation of their contribution to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change (see **Appendix 1** for details of evaluation criteria)

The **Objectives, policy development and enhancement opportunities** section of the character area descriptions in the 2002 Study has been deleted as these are out of date.

⁵ City of Oxford High Buildings Evidence Base (2018), City of Oxford View Cones Assessment (2015) and current Conservation Area Appraisals

⁶ See: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20195/conservation_areas/871/conservation_areas

⁷ The alterations to the landscape character area boundaries are as follows:

- Boundary of character area 5J extended to include residential development on Earl Street (previously in 8C)
- Boundary of character area 6A extended to include all of Fry's Hill Park (previously in 8B)
- Boundary of character area 9C extended to incorporate new development at Barton Fields, resulting in the boundary of character area 3B reduced to follow A40 and the boundary of character area 5K amended to include Barton Fields Allotments and exclude new development on Barton Fields Road
- Boundary of character area 9D extended to Grandpont Causeway (Abingdon Road)

Structure of the Addendum Report

The findings of the 2022 Study are set out in this Addendum Report, which should be read in conjunction with Parts 1 and 3 of the 2002 Study where appropriate.

The Addendum Report is structured in line with **Part 2: The character of Oxford and its landscape setting** of the 2002 Study, as follows:

- **Section 1.0 – Introduction to Landscape and Townscape Assessment** – outlines the integrated approach to the character assessment undertaken at two scales
- **Section 2.0 – What makes the Setting of Oxford distinctive and why** – describes the broad landscape types/character areas at 1:25000 scale within the wider setting of Oxford
- **Section 3.0 – What makes the Landscape within the City of Oxford distinctive and why** – describes the more detailed landscape/townscape types and character areas assessed at 1:10000 scale within the City of Oxford’s boundaries as listed below (see also Figure 2.3.1):

Landscape/Townscape Type	Townscape Character Area
1. Historic Core	A Historic City Core
2. Historic Fringe	A University Fringe B Western Fringe
3. Historic Village Cores	A Old Marston Core B Old Headington Core C Temple Cowley D Church Cowley Core E Littlemore Village F Iffley Village G Wolvercote H Headington Quarry
4. Victorian Suburbs and Villages	A North Oxford B Jericho C Grandpont D East Oxford E New Osney F Summertown G New Headington H New Marston Village
5. Inter-war/Post-war Suburbs	A Rose Hill B Cowley Residential Suburb C Florence Park and Cowley Marsh D The Slade E New Headington F New Marston G Cutteslowe/ Sunnymead H North Oxford Fringes I New Hinksey J Botley Road

	K Barton L Littlemore M Sandhills and Risinghurst
6. Post 1960s Suburbs	A Blackbird Leys B Wood Farm C Horspath Road Area
7. Open Hills (with Institutions)	A Headington Hill B Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex C John Radcliffe Hospital
8. 20 th Century Fringe Business, Industry and Retail	A Cowley Motor Works B Littlemore Business and Science Parks C Botley Industrial and Retail Parks
9. Pastoral Floodplains	A Thames (Isis) North B Cherwell C Bayswater Brook D Thames (Isis) South E Hinksey/Bulstake Streams
10. Open River Terraces	A North Oxford Open River Terrace B Peartree Open River Terrace C Marston Open River Terrace D St Clements Open River Terrace E New Hinksey Open River Terrace
11. Garden Suburbs	A Headington Hill

Stakeholder Engagement

The findings set out in this report have been reviewed by the following:

- Sarah Harrison – Planning Policy Team Leader, Oxford City Council
- James Newton – Senior Urban Design Officer, Oxford City Council
- David Radford – Archaeologist, Oxford City Council

PART 2: THE CHARACTER OF OXFORD AND ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING

This section includes:

A landscape character assessment of Oxford's landscape setting at 1:25000

An updated landscape/townscape character assessment of the area within the City of Oxford's boundaries at 1:10000

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

1.1 Approach to the Assessment

1.1.1 Landscape character assessment is an established tool to assist in local planning and management.

1.1.2 Urban characterisation is less studied and, in the absence of specific guidance for the assessment of urban areas, various approaches have been used. This study is therefore unusual in that it uses a combination of landscape and townscape character assessment to articulate:

- What makes the setting to Oxford distinctive and why; and
- What makes the landscapes and townscapes within the City of Oxford distinctive and why

1.2 What makes the setting of Oxford distinctive and why

1.2.1 In this study a broad landscape character assessment has been undertaken for Oxford City and its setting to identify what makes the setting to Oxford distinctive and why. The method used is that recommended in the Countryside Agency's Interim Guidance. This was undertaken at a scale of 1:25000 and identifies landscape types and landscape character areas. The purpose of this assessment was to identify:

- The characteristics that distinguish the different landscapes underlying and surrounding Oxford; and
- What contribution the landscapes make to the setting of Oxford; and
- Opportunities to conserve or enhance the landscape setting

1.3 What makes the landscapes within the City of Oxford distinctive and why

1.3.1 A more detailed, integrated landscape/townscape assessment was then undertaken for the area that lies within the Oxford City's administrative boundary, to identify what makes the landscapes within the city distinctive and why. The approach to the assessment at 1:10000 was based on the Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance but adapted to take into account the urban environment. Landscape/townscape types and landscape/townscape character areas were identified at 1:10000.

1.4 Relationship between the 1:25000 and 1:10000 assessments

- 1.4.1 The 1:25000 assessment of landscape types reflects common combinations of geology, topography and land use. It, therefore, takes into account settled and open land, but does not take into account the styles of built development within the built up area of Oxford. In this way, the landscape character areas can be seen to flow underneath the city where they may inform management of rural landscapes and open space within the city boundaries.
- 1.4.2 The 1:10000 assessment of landscape/townscape types reflects common combinations of land use, settlement form and style (age) of built development. It is interesting to note that many of the townscape types reflect underlying landscape types. For example, most of the Victorian Suburbs and Villages (1:10000 landscape/townscape type) correspond with the Settled Open River Terraces (1:25000 landscape type) while the Open Hills (with Institutions) (1:10000 landscape/townscape type) correspond with the Settled Plateaux (1:25000 landscape type).
- 1.4.3 Where there has been no additional influence on the landscape from land use, settlement form and style (age) of built development, the landscape types have remained the same. This is the case with the Pastoral Floodplains (1:10000 landscape/townscape type) and the Pastoral Floodplains (1:25000 landscape type).
- 1.4.4 Part 2 of this report presents the results of these two assessments.

2.0 WHAT MAKES THE SETTING OF OXFORD DISTINCTIVE AND WHY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Oxford landscape has evolved over thousands of years as a result of complex interactions between physical, historic, cultural and social factors as described in the previous section⁸.

2.1.2 Oxford and its setting is characterised by a diversity of landscapes and these variations and differences are represented in the characterisation of eight distinct **landscape types**. Each of these generic landscape types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes including geology, landform, land cover and historic environment. These landscape types vary from the pastoral floodplains of central Oxford to the prominent wooded ridges of the Midvale Ridge.

2.1.3 **Landscape character areas** are geographically specific areas within a landscape type, each with their own individual character or 'sense of place'. The eight landscape types identified within the study area have each been subdivided into discrete character areas.

2.2 Defining Landscape Types

2.2.1 The Countryside Character Initiative was the response, from Government, to the need for a new approach to landscape assessment which would look at the whole of England's countryside, rather than just specific designated areas. The aim was to provide a consistent national framework within which more detailed local landscape assessments would fit. The Countryside Agency mapped the whole country into 159 separate, distinctive character areas. The City of Oxford and its setting is covered by two of these national character areas: 108 The Upper Thames Clay Vales and 109 The Midvale Ridge⁹.

2.2.2 For this study, draft landscape types were derived from detailed desk study, taking account of the Countryside Agency's Regional Character Areas (1999) and the Oxford County Framework of Land Description Units (LDUs) (2001). Secondary sources of information included the district assessments undertaken by the four districts adjoining the City of Oxford to ensure that the final assessment was compatible with existing work.

⁸ See Part 1 (Setting the Scene) of the 2002 Study

⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles> for details

2.2.3 The draft landscape types were then refined through field surveys at a scale of 1:25000. The table below (2.2.1) indicates how the landscape types fit into the Countryside Character Framework.

Table 2.2.1 – Fit of Landscape Types into the Countryside Character Framework

Countryside Character Area	Landscape Type (1:25,000)
108: Upper Thames Clay Vales	1. Lowland Clay Vales 2. Pastoral Floodplains 3. Settled and Open River Terraces 4. Wooded Clay Vales
109: Midvale Ridge	5. Settled Plateaux 6. Enclosing Limestone Hills 7. High Plains 8. Clay Vales

2.2.4 The following table (2.2.2) presents a summary generic description of each landscape type, its distribution and its contribution it makes to Oxford’s landscape setting

Table 2.2.2 – Landscape Type Summary Description

Landscape Type	Description	Contribution to Oxford’s Landscape Setting
1. Lowland Clay Vales	Smooth, gently undulating low-lying areas of Oxford Clay which form the footslopes and vales between areas of high ground. They are characterised by mixed agricultural fields divided by low, neatly trimmed hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Roads often have wide verges and are bordered by drains. Church towers in the stone/brick built villages and farmsteads are prominent landmarks in these flat, open landscapes.	The smooth, open vales create a dramatic contrast to the areas of high ground, enhancing the topographical setting of Oxford within a ring of hills.
2. Pastoral Floodplains	Flat, wide alluvial floodplains of the rivers which flow between the prominent hills. The tranquil pastoral scene of open meadows with cattle grazing amongst the silhouettes of mature floodplain trees contrasts with the busy urban scenes which often lie adjacent. Boathouses, locks and pubs along the river are landmarks. Historic buildings	The flat, open pastoral floodplains are part of the classic image of Oxford - they have long been used for pasture and hay crops. In landscape terms, the simple open green meadows and expanses and open water provide a dramatic contrast, both in colour and form, to the built core of Oxford. Open character allows long views over them.

	and ancient groves are features. Allotments and land uses such as playing fields and large scale business/retail parks are often found in the floodplain landscapes.	
3. Settled and Open River Terraces	<p>The river terraces (and their proximity to pastures) have been the prime locational factor for settlement in the Thames Valley from prehistoric times. These domed deposits of river terrace gravels overlying clay support the historic core of Oxford as well as much newer built development. The landscape type therefore tends to have a busy, urban character. Buildings are typically of limestone with red brick detailing. Roads are a feature of the landscape today. Those river terraces that remain undeveloped, typically support a rural, agricultural landscape of medium to large 'enclosure' fields with arable and pasture. They provide a contrast with both the floodplain and adjacent urban areas.</p>	Provides minor undulations in topography and separates the Thames and Cherwell floodplains. The river terraces support built development and form a contrast to the open floodplains.
4. Wooded Clay Hills	<p>Prominent, but low, rounded hills which stand out from the low lying clay vales and alluvial plains to the north of Oxford. The tranquil agricultural landscape is characterised by a mixture of arable and pasture fields divided by low, neatly clipped hedgerows and wooded ridges, creating a strong field pattern. Fields of oil seed rape stand out as bright patches in the landscape during summer. On top of the hills one has a clear sense of elevation above the surrounding clay vales. Settlement is sparse – stone farmhouses are scattered over the hillsides, and small stone villages are restricted to the footslopes.</p>	Although relatively low, these hills are prominent as they rise out of the flat clay vales north of Oxford. Their wooded ridges and strong field patterns provide an important backdrop to the north of the city where few other landform features are present. Conversely there are views from these hills to the city.
5. Settled Plateaux	The Settled Plateaux are lower Corallian platforms formed of sand and calcareous	Hills provide a strong topographic setting and wooded skyline is important in views from Oxford.

	<p>sandstone, incised by narrow valleys, with a steep scarp at their western edge. Reefs of Coraline limestone or 'Coral Rag' overlie the sandstone along the eastern boundary, forming the transition to the higher Enclosing Limestone Hills. The Coral Rag, which is quarried from these areas, is typical of the buildings in this landscape type and sandy soils result in vegetation of gorse and pine. The landscape is unique among the upland area for its high density of settlement.</p>	<p>Famous views of Oxford, as drawn by artists e.g. Turner. Conversely there are views from these hills to the city.</p>
6. Enclosing Limestone Hills	<p>Prominent hills with steep scarp slopes and table topped landform, surrounding Oxford. The underlying geology is a mixture of Coral Rag,(Upper Corallian formation), grey mudstones with limestone nodules (Kimmeridge Clay), and sands and limestones of the Portland Formation. They are characterised by fields of mixed farmland divided by hedgerows - the strong field patterns are a feature of this landscape type. The hills typically support large areas of deciduous woodland. Nucleated villages tend to be situated either at the foot or at the top of the scarp slope and are characterised by the use of stone as the main building material. Estates are associated with stone walls and designed parkland is common. Church towers within the scarp top villages, for example at Elsfield, are prominent landmarks in the landscape. Communication masts are also prominent on the hills.</p>	<p>These hills provide a strong topographic setting and rural wooded backdrop to Oxford. Conversely there are views from these hills to the city.</p>
7. High Plains	<p>This landscape type is distinctive in its flat-topped landform and sandy soil, which caps the highest hills as at Boar's Hill and Shotover Hill. The result is isolated areas with red soils and a heathy character, supporting</p>	<p>The enclosing effect of these hills is very important to the setting of Oxford. Clumps of Scots Pine growing on sandy soils are particularly important features on the ridgelines. Conversely there are views from these hills to the city.</p>

	<p>distinctive vegetation such as pines which stand out as distinctive skyline features. These areas tend to be fairly well settled due to the relatively flat landform on top of these hills. Housing, of all ages, is positioned to take advantage of the views. Although these hills are relatively well settled, they retain a peaceful character, remote from the city. Ornamental garden vegetation is the only clue as to the human influence when seen from a distance.</p>	
8. Clay Vales	<p>Smoothly undulating clay vale of large scale arable fields divided by neatly trimmed hedgerows with hedgerow trees. These vales are at a higher altitude than the lowland clay vales. Tree cover is otherwise extremely low. This is a tranquil working rural agricultural landscape with sparsely scattered redbrick farmsteads and very little public access. Hedgerow trees stand out as features in this flat, open landscape.</p>	<p>This open agricultural belt emphasises the topography and enclosing effect of the hills beyond the vale.</p>

2.3 Defining Landscape Character Areas

2.3.1 Landscape character areas are geographically specific areas of a landscape type, which have their own individual character or ‘sense of place’. They are particularly useful in planning and management terms, allowing appropriate policies or actions to be applied at a local level. Within the City of Oxford and its setting there are 23 discrete landscape character areas. These are shown on the map in figure 2.2.1¹⁰ and are described in the table 2.2.3 below.

¹⁰ See the 2002 Study for map of the Landscape Character Areas

1 Lowland Clay Vales



1a. Elsfeld Fringes



1b. Botley ClayVale



1c. Gosford Gap

2 Pastoral Floodplains

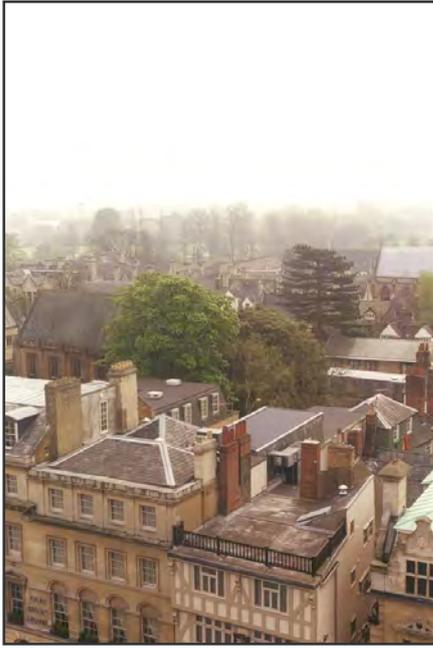


2a. Thames (Isis)



2b. Cherwell

3 Settled and Open River Terraces



3a. North Oxford River Terrace



3b. River Terrace Outliers



3c. Marston River Terrace



3d. East Oxford River Terrace



3e. Oxford Airport



3f. Kidlington River Terrace

4 Wooded Clay Hills



4a. Cassington - Bladon Ridge



4b. Islip Ridge

5 Settled Plateaux



5a. Headington



5b. Cowley/Blackbird Leys

6 Enclosing Limestone Hills



6a. Wytham Hill



6b. Hinksey Heights

6 Enclosing Limestone Hills



6c. East Oxford Heights



6d. Nuneham Courtney Ridge

7 High Plains



7a. Shotover Plain



7b. Boar's Hill

8 Clay Vales



8a. Sandford Vale



8b. Radley Vale

Table 2.2.3 Landscape Character Area – Summary Description

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
<p>Type 1: Lowland Clay Vales 1A Elsfield Fringes</p>	<p>Peaceful clay vale of arable fields divided by low hedgerows and crossed by narrow country lanes. Divides the East Oxford Heights and Islip Ridge. Regular ditches drain from surrounding hills into Otmoor to the east and Cherwell Valley to the west. Scattered farms are only settlement.</p>	<p>Manage hedgerows and replant hedgerow trees to conserve them as features. Resist development which would impinge on the rural character of the clay vale. Resist road widening and improvements of rural lanes.</p>
<p>Type 1: Lowland Clay Vales 1B Botley Clay Vale</p>	<p>Peaceful agricultural clay vale with a dramatic sweeping landform dividing Wytham Hill and the Hinksey Heights to the west of Oxford. Distinctive red soils and scattered red brick farm buildings are features. Main roads and pylons pass along the vale, between the hills. Views over the vale are a feature of the western approach to Oxford.</p>	<p>Conserve hedgerows which create the characteristic landscape pattern of the vale. Conserve rural character as setting to Oxford. Maintain views across the vale from approach roads into and out of Oxford.</p>
<p>Type 1: Lowland Clay Vales 1C Gosford Gap</p>	<p>Low lying clay vale separating north Oxford and Kidlington. Hedgerow trees and shelter belts create a degree of enclosure. This rural area is under pressure from built development, infrastructure and other urban fringe land uses. Scattered farms are constructed from local limestone and are features of the working agricultural landscape. This rural landscape is fragmented by roads - the A34(T), A44(T), A4166, A4260 - and their associated junctions and service facilities. There are also a number of out of town superstores/garden centres and urban fringe activities such as golf courses.</p>	<p>Maintain rural gap and ensure ribbon development does not result in merging Oxford and Kidlington. Maintain rural character as a setting to Oxford. Built development should respond to local materials and rural character - limestone and red brick are the dominant materials of rural buildings. Consider opportunities to enhance this area which forms a major gateway into Oxford.</p>
<p>Type 2: Pastoral Floodplains 2A Thames (Isis)</p>	<p>The Thames Floodplain is particularly notable for its historic commons and meadowlands, including Port Meadow, Pixey Mead and Wolvercote Green. The Thames National Trail runs along the length of the river and a number of historic sites such as Godstow Abbey and Binsey are found</p>	<p>Maintain historic continuity of land use of the water meadows and commons. Promote traditional management of meadowlands (pasture and hay cropping) and trees (pollarding of willows). Maintain open character and views across the floodplain.</p>

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
	<p>along its length. Historic wooded groves are also features of the Thames floodplain. The floodplain forms a setting for the historic core of Oxford, most famously at Christ Church Meadow. The industrial/retail estates of the Botley Road are built in the floodplain and obscure views across the floodplain on the western approach into Oxford. There is also encroachment by infrastructure, such as the electricity pylons south of Botley, and the A34.</p>	<p>Maintain opportunities for public access and enjoyment of this pastoral landscape. Conserve and enhance wildlife resource and wetland habitats. Unsuitable landscape for built development. Opportunity to enhance western approach to Oxford.</p>
<p>Type 2: Pastoral Floodplains 2B Cherwell</p>	<p>A mixed agricultural landscape of pasture and arable fields divided by hedgerows. Becomes more confined in central Oxford where it forms the setting to the historic core to the west and Marston/Headington to the east. Its course through central Oxford is characterised by open sports grounds, flood meadows (for example the Angel and Greyhound Meadow) and pollarded willows. Part of the development at New Marston encroaches onto the floodplain south of Marston village.</p>	<p>Promote traditional management of meadowlands (pasture and hay cropping) and trees (pollarding of willows). Maintain rural, pastoral character. Maintain public access and enjoyment of this pastoral landscape. Conserve wildlife resource and wetland habitats. Unsuitable landscape for built development.</p>
<p>Type 3: Settled and Open River Terraces 3A North Oxford River Terrace</p>	<p>Gently domed area of land formed from River terrace deposits between the Thames and Cherwell floodplains. Prime location for settlement since prehistoric times - the medieval walled town of Oxford is located at the southern tip of the terrace, overlooking the point at which the Cherwell and Thames meet. Supports dense urban development from the historic core in the south to the suburb of Cutteslowe in the north.</p>	<p>Built development should be confined to the extent of the river terrace. Maintain existing open spaces as a setting to the floodplains.</p>
<p>Type 3: Settled and Open River Terraces 3B River Terrace Outliers</p>	<p>Small islands of first level river terrace deposits within the Thames floodplain. Typically support settlement, including Wolvercote, Osney, Grandpont and New Hinksey - all areas vulnerable to flooding.</p>	<p>Built development is typical of river terraces but should not extend onto the floodplain beyond.</p>

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
<p>Type 3: Settled and Open River Terraces 3C Marston River Terrace</p>	<p>Gently domed island of second river terrace deposit on clay in the Cherwell Valley. Supports the historic core of Marston Village and the agricultural fields which form a setting to the village and the floodplain. Crossed by the ring road and B4495.</p>	<p>Built development is typical of river terraces, but should not extend onto the floodplain beyond. Maintain a rural setting to Marston Village.</p>
<p>Type 3: Settled and Open River Terraces 3D East Oxford River Terrace</p>	<p>Small second river terrace deposit on a platform of Oxford Clay which gently rises east from the Cherwell floodplain towards Cowley. Supports the large Victorian suburb of East Oxford and contains the narrow alluvial floodplain of Boundary Brook, an important landscape feature and tributary of the Thames.</p>	<p>Conserve and enhance the corridor of Boundary Brook as a wildlife corridor and landscape feature.</p>
<p>Type 3: Settled and Open River Terraces 3E Oxford Airport</p>	<p>Second and third river terraces overlying solid geology of cornbrash and clay, resulting in an open, flat landscape. Oxford airport and large industrial parks dominate the rural landscape and straight roads cut across the plain. Hedgerows are low, allowing views across the open agricultural landscape. Historic stone buildings such as farms and pubs are present, but new development and urbanising features, such as kerbs and roadside lighting, have eroded the rural character.</p>	<p>Conserve setting of historic features and buildings on approach to Oxford. Minimise urbanising elements to provide a rural approach to Oxford. Management of hedgerows and re-planting of hedgerow trees will enhance landscape condition on this northerly approach to Oxford.</p>
<p>Type 3: Settled and Open River Terraces 3F Kidlington River Terrace</p>	<p>Second river terrace overlying Oxford clay and cornbrash, between the Thames and Cherwell floodplains. Supports the settlement of Kidlington, the largest village in England (population over 17,000). This village has grown from an ancient village with a 13th century church, farm and a vicarage dating from the 16th century.</p>	<p>Maintain the separation between Kidlington village and the North Oxford River Terrace.</p>
<p>Type 4: Wooded Clay Hills 4A Cassington-Bladon Ridge</p>	<p>Cluster of prominent rounded clay hills to the north-west of Oxford overlooking the Thames Floodplain and Oxford airport. Wooded ridgelines of Bladon Heath and Spring Hill are visible</p>	<p>Maintain the wooded skylines which provide a wooded setting to the north-west of Oxford. Limit the number of communication masts on the hill</p>

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
	from surroundings and Bladon Heath includes the remains of a round castle. Crossed by a minor road and railway.	tops. This is particularly important on these small scale hills.
Type 4: Wooded Clay Hills 4B Islip Ridge	Low, rounded clay hill to the north-east of Oxford, overlooking the Cherwell Valley. A rural, wooded ridge with small limestone villages on the footslopes. Woodeaton Manor is a feature on the hillside. The B4027 traverses the ridge, making use of the dry land between the Cherwell floodplain to the west and low lying Otmoor to the east.	Maintain the wooded hilltops which provide a wooded setting to the north-east of Oxford. Limit the number of communication masts on the hill tops. This is particularly important on these small scale hills.
Type 5: Settled Plateaux 5A Headington	Prominent platform of sand and calcareous sandstone to the east of the Cherwell Valley with a steep scarp slope, probably most famous at Headington Hill. The wooded character of this plateau forms a wooded backdrop to the historic core of Oxford, the sandy soil supporting Scots Pine as landmark features. The southern edge of the plateau is incised by narrow valleys, including the Lye Valley local nature reserve.	Maintain the wooded character. Scots pine are characteristic of the sandy soils, and could be included in planting schemes. Avoid high rise development on the highly visible ridgelines. Maintain views over central Oxford from Headington Hill.
Type 5: Settled Plateaux 5B Cowley/ Blackbird Leys	Prominent platform of sand and calcareous sandstone to the south-east of the East Oxford River Terrace. This plateau is significantly lower than Headington, but forms an obvious scarp along Between Towns Road. The plateau forms a wooded backdrop to East Oxford, the sandy soil supporting Scots Pine as landmark features. The southern edge of the plateau is incised by Northfield Brook. An outcrop of Ampthill Clays from a prominent wooded hill at Rose Hill.	Maintain the wooded character of the plateau, particularly at Rose Hill. Scots pine are characteristic of the sandy soils and could be included in new planting schemes. Maintain views over central Oxford from Rose Hill and Cowley.
Type 6: Enclosing Limestone Hills 6A Wytham Hill	Prominent rounded hill of Coral Rag on the western edge of Oxford, surrounded by the Botley clay vale and Thames floodplain. Mixture of farmland and large areas of ancient deciduous woodland, preserved	Maintain the wooded rural character of the hill as a green backdrop to Oxford. Limit number of communication masts and other vertical elements which would be very visible on the ridgeline.

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
	<p>as a privately owned estate and bequeathed to the University for educational purposes, resulting in a prominent wooded ridge. Forms an important backdrop to Oxford and rich ecological resource. All settlement confined to lower slopes</p>	<p>Maintain hedgerows which are important elements in views of the hill.</p>
<p>Type 6: Enclosing Limestone Hills 6B Hinksey Heights</p>	<p>Prominent ridge of Coral Rag and Kimmeridge Clay enclosing Oxford to the south-west. Mixed farmland and woodland, including the historic Bagley Wood and lower slopes of Boar's Hill, provides a rural setting to south-west Oxford. Wooded tributaries drain into the Thames floodplain. Villages, located on the lower slopes, have grown extensively in the 20th century. These include Kennington, Botley and Cumnor as well as the village of South Hinksey. Areas of city parkland at Raleigh Park and in the Chilswell Valley reflect the important visual links with the city.</p>	<p>Maintain the wooded rural character of the hill as a green backdrop to Oxford. Limit number of communication masts and other vertical elements which would be very visible on the ridgeline. Maintain land in rural, agricultural use. Conversion to other uses such as golf courses can be highly visible in this location, for example from the Thames floodplain. Maintain views over the Thames floodplain and across Oxford from public footpaths and viewpoints. Maintain hedgerows which are important elements of the ridge.</p>
<p>Type 6: Enclosing Limestone Hills 6C East Oxford Heights</p>	<p>Prominent ridge of Kimmeridge Clay and Portland limestone enclosing Oxford to the east. Mixed farmland and woodland, including parts of the Forest of Shotover, provides a rural setting to north-east Oxford. Settlement is limited to the lower slopes where it overlooks the adjacent lowlands, for example at Elsfield. The main eastern approach to Oxford (the A40 from London) passes through this rural character area before entering Headington. This area includes Shotover House and Park and forms the lower slopes of Shotover Plain.</p>	<p>Maintain the wooded rural character of the hill as a green backdrop to Oxford. Limit number of vertical elements which are very visible on the ridgeline. Maintain views over Oxford from public footpaths and viewpoints. Conserve hedgerows which are important features of the landscape setting. Conserve undeveloped rural approach to Oxford along the A40 – gateway to Headington.</p>
<p>Type 6: Enclosing Limestone Hills 6D Nuneham Courtney Ridge</p>	<p>Portland limestone ridge to the south of Oxford, beyond the Sandford Vale. The Nuneham Ridge has a prominent scarp to its north, made more visible in the summer by its crop of oil seed rape. The open fields contrast with extensive areas of</p>	<p>Maintain the wooded rural character of the hill as a green backdrop to Oxford. Limit number of vertical elements which are very visible on the ridgeline. Maintain views of Oxford from public footpaths and viewpoints.</p>

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
	<p>deciduous woodland. Electricity pylons and a road cross the ridge before descending into the vale. The variety of village landscapes is notable: parkland with new estate village (Nuneham); extended village on green (Marsh Baldon); and compact village (Toot Baldon). The landscape gardens at Nuneham Courtney were designed to incorporate the long-distance views of Oxford across the Thames.</p>	<p>Conserve hedgerows which are important features of the landscape setting.</p>
<p>Type 7: High Plains 7A Shotover Plain</p>	<p>Shotover Plain is a prominent table-topped hill lying to the east of Oxford. The Shotover Ironsands, which overlie the plateau, result in distinctive red sandy soils supporting heathy vegetation such as gorse and pine, which stand out as distinctive skyline features. The plateau is also valuable agricultural land as a result of its well drained soils and level landform. The windmill at Wheatley indicates its historic popularity for growing corn. The historic approach to Oxford from London ran over the top of the hill until the late 18th century. There are magnificent views over Oxford and surrounds from the edge of the plain.</p>	<p>Maintain tree cover as a backdrop to Oxford. Limit the number of masts which are highly visible on these ridges. Maintain clumps of pines as characteristic skyline features. Conserve vistas over Oxford and the surrounding landscape and provide public viewpoints where possible.</p>
<p>Type 7: High Plains 7B Boar's Hill</p>	<p>Steep-sided, table-topped ridge rising above the Hinksey Heights to the west of Oxford. This area was partially developed in the 20th century as a smart country retreat from Oxford and contains many private dwellings, positioned to take advantage of the views across Oxford. The gardens of these properties add a variety of colour and texture to the vegetation of this ridge, making it distinctive. The sandy soils support a large number of Scots pines which are features of this hill. Magnificent views across Oxford and the surrounding lowlands including</p>	<p>Maintain extent and variety of tree cover as an interesting backdrop to Oxford. Limit the number of masts which are highly visible on these ridges. Maintain clumps of pines as characteristic skyline features. Conserve public viewpoints and manage vegetation to ensure these do not become obscured.</p>

Landscape Character Area	Brief Description	Opportunities in Relation to the Setting of Oxford
	those painted by Turner. The Jarn Mound was built specifically to allow all-round views.	
Type 8: Clay Vales 8A Sandford Vale	Large scale, smooth clay vale to the south of Oxford. Hedgerows create a strong field pattern and hedgerow trees stand out as features in this open landscape. Vertical elements, such as electricity pylons, are highly visible in this open vale landscape. Red brick is characteristic of the vale and red brick farms are scattered throughout. There are extensive views across the vale from surrounding high ground, for example from Garsington, and there is very little opportunity to conceal development in this open landscape.	Conserve hedgerows which are important features of the landscape pattern of the vale. Replace hedgerow trees as they mature to conserve these landscape features.
Type 8: Clay Vales 8B Radley Vale	Flat, open clay vale on the western bank of the Thames, opposite the Sandford Clay Vale. Good condition working agricultural landscape of arable fields divided by low hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees (oak), ditch-side vegetation (willows) or shelter belts (poplar) which create important skyline features. Minor rural lanes are bordered by drainage ditches, rich in wetland vegetation. Farm buildings are typically constructed of red brick and thatch. The settlements of Radley and Lower Radley contain large houses scattered at low density along narrow lanes - these are typically constructed from red brick with thatch, with some rendered and painted. Electricity pylons are prominent elements. This is a sensitive landscape due to its open, exposed character.	Conserve shelter belts (poplar), hedgerow trees (oak) and wetland vegetation (willows) which create a wooded skyline. Maintain the open, rural character as a setting to Oxford. Conserve the low density of housing, which characterises this area, in contrast to the city of Oxford.

2.3.2 This assessment of the city and its setting provides the context for a more detailed study (1:10000 scale) of the urban fabric, within the city boundary. The results are presented in the following chapter.

3.0 WHAT MAKES THE LANDSCAPE WITHIN THE CITY OF OXFORD DISTINCTIVE AND WHY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The urban fabric of the city of Oxford overlies the physical landscape. The landscape/townscape character assessment of Oxford City, within its city limits, was undertaken at a scale of 1:10000. This more detailed scale allowed identification of landscape/townscape types and character areas on a street by street basis on the basis of their land use, built form and green space be it agricultural land, parkland, amenity grassland or areas of semi-natural habitat.

3.2 Defining Landscape/Townscape Types

3.2.1 Characterisation has involved a two-stage classification of generic townscape types and within these the geographically unique character areas. **Landscape/townscape types** are generic areas of consistent character, predominantly defined by combinations of natural features and built features and their relationship. 11 generic landscape/townscape types have been identified across Oxford.

3.3 Defining Landscape/Townscape Areas

3.3.1 **Landscape/townscape character areas** are geographically specific areas of a landscape/townscape type, which have their own individual character or ‘sense of place’. They are particularly useful in planning and management terms, allowing appropriate policies or actions to be applied at a local level. Within the City of Oxford and its setting, there are 52 discrete landscape/townscape character areas.

3.3.2 The following table (4.1) presents the list of landscape/townscape types and their constituent character areas. Refer to figure 2.3.1¹¹ for the location of these areas.

Table 2.3.1 Landscape/Townscape Classification

Townscape Type	Townscape Character Area
1. Historic Core	A Historic City Core
2. Historic Fringe	A University Fringe B Western Fringe
3. Historic Village Cores	A Old Marston Core B Old Headington Core C Temple Cowley D Church Cowley Core E Littlemore Village

¹¹ Figure 2.3.1 has been updated to include minor boundary amendments as a result of the 2022 Study review process



	F Iffley Village G Wolvercote H Headington Quarry
4. Victorian Suburbs and Villages	A North Oxford B Jericho C Grandpont D East Oxford E New Osney F Summertown G New Headington H New Marston Village
5. Inter-war/Post-war Suburbs	A Rose Hill B Cowley Residential Suburb C Florence Park and Cowley Marsh D The Slade E New Headington F New Marston G Cutteslowe/ Sunnymead H North Oxford Fringes I New Hinksey J Botley Road K Barton L Littlemore M Sandhills and Risinghurst
6. Post 1960s Suburbs	A Blackbird Leys B Wood Farm C Horspath Road Area
7. Open Hills (with Institutions)	A Headington Hill B Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex C John Radcliffe Hospital
8. 20 th Century Fringe Business, Industry and Retail	A Cowley Motor Works B Littlemore Business and Science Parks C Botley Industrial and Retail Parks
9. Pastoral Floodplains	A Thames (Isis) North B Cherwell C Bayswater Brook D Thames (Isis) South E Hinksey/Bulstake Streams
10. Open River Terraces	A North Oxford Open River Terrace B Peartree Open River Terrace C Marston Open River Terrace D St Clements Open River Terrace E New Hinksey Open River Terrace
11. Garden Suburbs	A Headington Hill

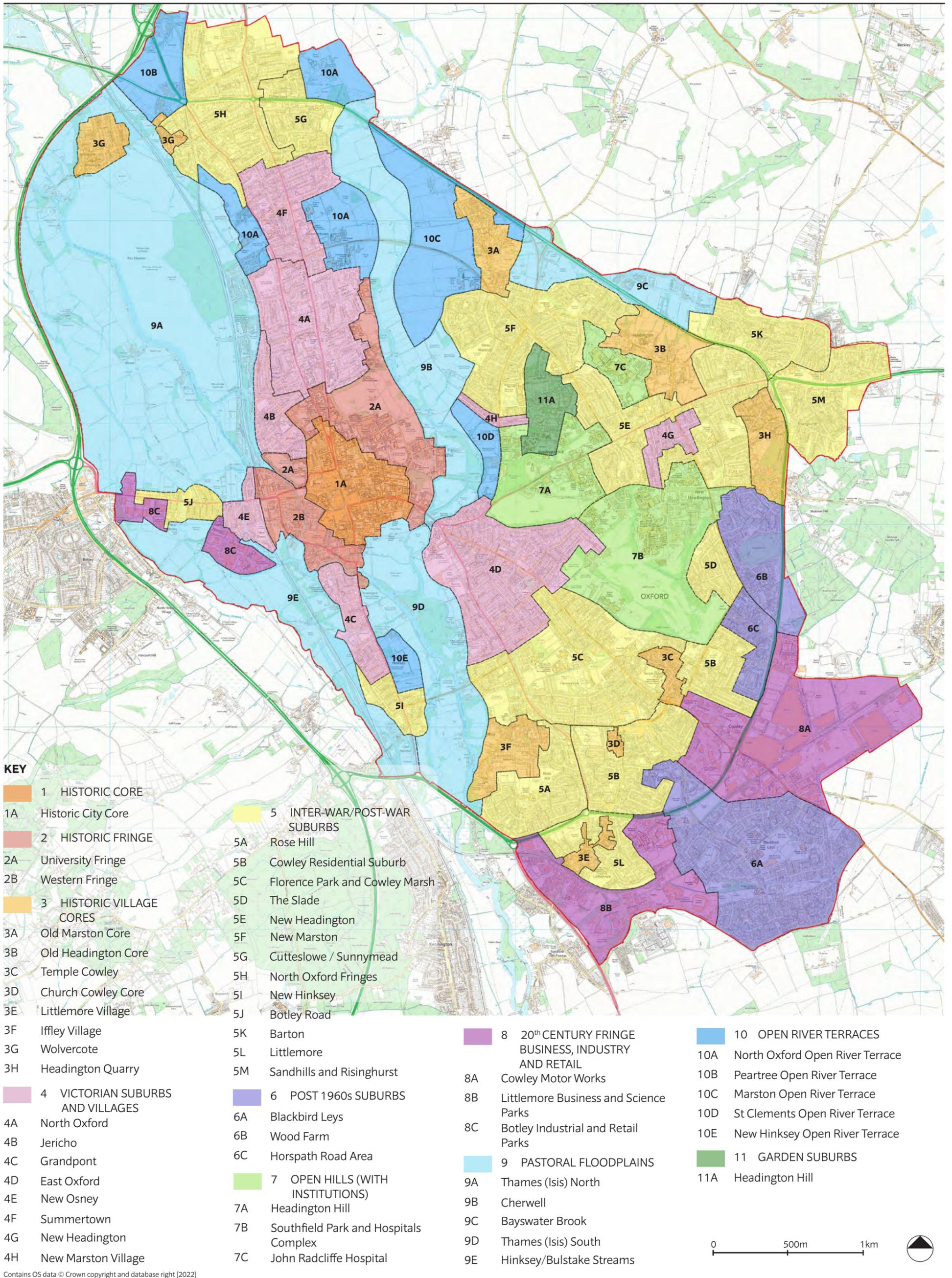
3.4 Description and Evaluation

3.4.1 A short, generic description is provided for each landscape/townscape type. This is followed by a detailed description of each character area and consists of:

- A specific character area description
- A checklist table of key characteristics for easy reference and access to specific data for each area

- An evaluation of the area's strength of character and perceptions of quality
- An evaluation of the area's indicators of landscape value
- An evaluation of the area's sensitivity to change
- An evaluation of the area's contribution to good design / place-making principles
- Identification and evaluation of the area's green infrastructure assets

3.4.2 This format is followed for the remainder of this section.



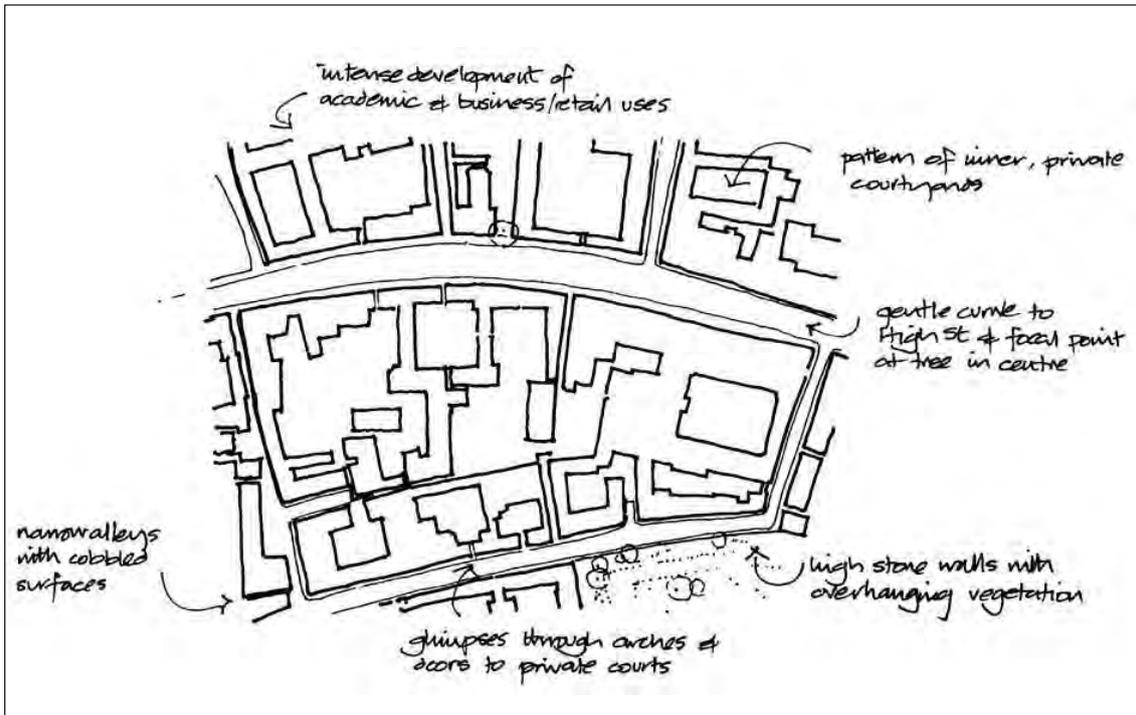
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right [2022]

A CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF
 OXFORD IN ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING
 2022 UPDATE - ADDENDUM REPORT
 OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

FIGURE 2.3.1
 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE
 CHARACTER TYPES AND AREAS



1 HISTORIC CORE



Example: 1A Historic City Core

1A HISTORIC CITY CORE



Photo 1: The view of the hisotric core from Headington Hill has been recorded by many artists



Photo 2: View down Cornmarket Street from the former Saxon north gate of the city



Photo 3: A maze of medieval alley and streets are hidden behind the main streets



Photo 4: High density of architectually distinctive buidlings contribute to townscape quality



Photo 5: Landmark Sycamore at a nodal point in the High Street



Photo 6: Narrow streets heighten the impression of scale of buildings



Photo 7: Street furniture and paving materials are distinctive



Photo 8: The historic core has a sense of vitality



Photo 9: Tantalising glimpses through doorways



Photo 10: Private college grounds form a network of open space



Photo 11: Modern development at Northgate contrasting with the historic facades



Photo 12: Wide open space at St Giles, fronted with Georgian townhouses

1 HISTORIC CORE

Generic Description

The Historic Core of Oxford is one of the best-loved and most well known city centres in England. The core area is defined largely by the boundaries of the medieval walled town (former town walls are indicated by the red line in figure 1.2.5) and the historic University buildings that overlie the former medieval town walls to the north and east. The core area displays many characteristics which are generic in such historic centres, including the surviving structure of medieval streets, an eclectic mix of architectural styles and ages, and historic landmark buildings.

It is an area which is a focus on both visitor and academic activity, as well as retail, commercial and administrative functions. The issues faced in the core area include the accommodation of development needs and practical considerations such as transport and access, against a backdrop of the sensitivity of the historic environment.

The historic core evolved on the drier land of this floodplain landscape, on the Settled and Open River Terraces landscape type (refer to landscape type 3 in Part 2, Chapter 2 of this report).

Key Characteristics

Key characteristics of the Historic City Core include:

- It is the focal point of the city for residents and visitors alike
- The surviving medieval street pattern
- The dense pattern of development
- The distinctive pattern of perimeter development with private courtyards behind
- The harmony of much of the built form and materials used, despite the variation in architectural styles
- The historic and landmark buildings and trees
- The dominance of hard landscape features with limited public open space
- The diverse mix of land uses
- The vibrant and busy city streets

Character Areas

1A Oxford Historic City Core

1A HISTORIC CITY CORE

Description

The Oxford Historic City Core character area comprises the oldest part of Oxford, dating back to the 10th century. It originates on the tip of the river terrace that separates the floodplains of the Thames and Cherwell Rivers. The underlying landscape type is part of the Settled and Open River Terrace, which gives rise to the gently domed topography of this central area. This is noticeable in the steep rises when approaching the centre from the west along New Road or Castle Street, from the south along St Aldate's, and from the east on approach to High Street.

The Oxford Historic City Core is known for its skyline of spires and domes, which are best viewed from the surrounding hills and have been painted by many artists, including the great English artist J.M.W Turner. Turner had a long-lasting love of Oxford and the architecture of the city core provided subjects to which he returned again and again.

The city core exhibits a distinct hierarchy of streets. The wide streets of St Giles, Cornmarket, St Aldate's, Broad Street and High Street form a loose grid. The connecting streets and narrow alleys overlay an irregular pattern, in which the older colleges are located. The curved High Street is rich in landmark buildings.

At the centre of this character area is a dense network of streets and buildings. Cornmarket, along with Queen Street and George Street, form the bustling city core with a variety of commercial activity and large numbers of shoppers, tourists and students. Behind the main shopping thoroughfares, the character of the medieval town is retained by the presence of enclosed yards, back lanes and medieval tenement boundaries. Blocks of 20th and 21st century development, particularly the innovative redevelopment of Northgate on the corner of Cornmarket and Market Street, contrast with the smaller scale, timber framed medieval buildings and quiet side alleys, backstreets and college quads. Jan Morris described the streets of Oxford as reflecting 'a hybrid culture that exists nowhere else'.

The iconic medieval and post-medieval gothic colleges and halls of the University form the east of the character area. The historic streets are quieter and calmer than the commercial core. Some of the most unexpected views and historic buildings and spaces are hidden in this part of the city. St Giles is a wide, medieval thoroughfare to the north of the city core that is framed by the churches of St Giles and St Mary Magdalen and fronted by distinctive stone-built college buildings and townhouses. It continues to host one of the great country fairs of medieval England, that closes the street for a couple of days each year. The street pattern and built form is less dense than in the core, characterised by medieval colleges with traditional quadrangles and the 19th century Ashmolean Museum complex with surrounding post-medieval and Victorian colleges with internal quads and gardens.

The growth of the University over time is evidenced by a variety of impressive buildings, an example of which being the varied façade of Broad Street, where the Palladian Clarendon Building, Wren's Sheldonian and the classic Old Ashmolean sit side by side. The sheer density of architecturally distinctive and 'landmark' buildings illustrates the level of craftsmanship and quality of the built environment in the Oxford Historic City Core. This is reflected in the high density of listed buildings within the centre of Oxford. Street furniture and paving materials are also distinctive in contributing to the character of the core area, in particular the stone paving, setts, cobbles, railings, wall-mounted streetlights and timber or cast iron bollards.

The Oxford Historic City Core contains a high density of buildings that lie cheek by jowl. The narrowness of the backstreets heightens the impression of the scale of the buildings,

although they are rarely more than three- to four-storeys high. Continuous street frontages, provided by building facades or high rubblestone boundary walls, provide a clear division between the public and private realm. Frequent doorways and arches provide tantalising glimpses through to quadrangles and gardens behind the buildings, which form the 'inner sanctum' of the historic core. Solid gates in archways often hide serviced parts of the buildings from the street scene.

The town gates have long disappeared, but their locations are recorded in place names, such as Westgate Shopping Centre in the south and St Michael at the North Gate. The Saxon tower of St Michael's is the oldest building in Oxford and stands amidst the 20th century dominated shopping street of Cornmarket. 21st century development is generally limited to incremental modernisation of existing buildings. The most substantial modern development in the character area is the new Westgate Shopping Centre in the south, a rear extension to the Ashmolean Museum and construction of the Levine Building at Trinity College, all of which are well-integrated and respectful of the historic network of buildings. Jesus College redevelopment of Northgate

Private college grounds form a network of open spaces particularly through the north of the character area. These comprise small courtyards and gardens, many of which are historic parks and gardens. Large mature trees are notable in this character area. They often form landmark features in the public realm, such as the pink blossom of the almond tree outside St Mary the Virgin that makes a spectacular display in February and the tree at the apex of High Street that the town planner Thomas Sharpe called 'one of the most important trees in the world'. Trees within the core are also an indication of private space, when visible over a wall or through doorways.

The high density of building and streets results in limited public open space in the Oxford Historic City Core. Public open spaces are generally small such as the churchyards of St Mary Magdalen and St Giles and comprise square paved areas on street corners such as Bonn Square by the Westgate Shopping Centre. Alongside this, there are few sites of ecological importance. Remaining sections of the medieval town walls preserved in the grounds of New College and Merton College, are important archaeological features that provide a refuge for cliff plant communities. The mature trees, including pockets of traditional orchard, and ivy covered walls in and around the college squares also provide a quiet refuge for song birds.

The centre of Oxford is brought to life by the sounds of shoppers, students and the ringing of bells. Elmer Davis wrote that 'Oxford is a city where too many bells are always ringing in the rain'. The best known of these is the Great Tom of Christ Church. Private car traffic is excluded from the central area but buses and taxis ferry tourists and shoppers around the city, with academics on their bicycles weaving between the traffic and pedestrians. The unexpected quiet corners, backstreets and alleys are never far away from the busiest nodes of the city centre. These quiet backwaters, with their stone setts and enclosing buildings, create a distinctive quality of sound as one walks or cycles through.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled and Open River Terrace which gives rise to the gently domed topography of this central area
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multitude of periods are represented in the historic core, from the medieval town walls and core college buildings to late 20th and early 21st century buildings such as the redevelopment at Northgate, Sackler Library, Ashmolean Museum extension and new Westgate Shopping Centre.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carfax is a historic crossing point of two routes and forms the 'central node'. • Post-Georgian infill and superimposed 20th/21st century shop frontages a dominant at the street level in the centre.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic medieval streets and tenements within Saxon and later defences (town walls), with principal buildings of city and university. • North and south suburbs of medieval town with college and university buildings. • Various medieval buildings. • Roman and late Saxon long distance routes • Prehistoric landscape of barrows and henge
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide streets of St Giles, Cornmarket, St Aldate's, Broad Street and High Street on a loose grid pattern with irregular pattern of narrow backstreets and alleys overlaid. • Continuous street frontages – building or boundary walls with frequent glimpses through to quadrangles and gardens behind.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear division between public and private realms, but with tantalising glimpses of the private spaces from the public realm, leading to the impression of 'inner sanctum'.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High density buildings, often narrow widths, lie cheek by jowl. • Narrow alleys create an enclosed streetscape, although buildings are rarely more than three- to four-storeys high.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of building scales. • Large scale, limestone college buildings with quadrangles and cloisters. • Small, timber framed medieval buildings with characteristic render and painted. • A large number of distinctive buildings over a large area, demonstrating great attention to detail and high quality craftsmanship.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast between wide open main streets and narrow, enclosed backstreets/side alleys. • Paving materials are varied from tarmac and concrete paving slabs of the main thoroughfares to cobbles and stone setts in the backstreets. • Square stone setts are often set into the footway at vehicular entrances, contributing to variety in texture and surfacing. • Black painted, cast iron lamp posts, bollards and road name/street signs convey a sense of continuity through the core. • Trees are often landmark features (for example the almond outside St Mary the Virgin and Sycamore outside All Soul's College on High Street) and are markers of private open space where they become visible over walls or through doorways to the passers by.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few open spaces due to the high density of buildings. • Public open space is limited to small square paved areas on street corners and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bonn Square memorial garden by the Westgate Shopping Centre, created in 1897 ➤ Churchyards of St Mary Magdalen and St Giles, enclosed by railings • Private college grounds form a network of open spaces throughout the colleges, including small courtyards and gardens
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: Traditional orchards, near the Oxford Quaker Meeting House and Trinity College front quad • Broadleaved woodland in The Gardens at St John's College/Trinity College • No statutory or locally designated sites

Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant city centre with motorists, buses, tourists, shoppers, cyclists, academia/students, office-workers all using the same space • Unexpected quiet corners and alleys – contrast between vitality/tranquillity is a unique and special feature • Academic associations are very strong – students walking/cycling contribute to a continuous vitality and movement linking the busy core streets to the back streets and connecting side alleys
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through routes are diverted around the edges of the historic core, leaving the city centre to buses, taxis, pedestrians and cyclists. The result is a vibrant, but pedestrian friendly environment
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skyline of the historic core, as seen from the surrounding hills, is iconic and critical to the perception of Oxford. It forms the focus of the ten view cones identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). • Internal views are generally confined by the street and block pattern, although there are many tantalising glimpses of quadrangles, courtyards and cloisters through doorways/gates/arches and long views across Christ Church meadow from the edge of the historic core. • There are several elevated views from buildings, out from the city (identified in 'Oxford High Buildings Study', 2018), that allow an appreciation of the setting of the city • Visual sequences are continually changing with views towards landmarks of spires, domes, towers and trees.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character area is within the Central Oxford conservation area. • Oxford City Walls scheduled monument • New College and Christ Church Grade I listed parks and gardens • St John's College, Trinity College, Wadham College, Merton College and Corpus Christi Grade II listed parks and gardens • An abundance of Grade I, II* and II listed buildings, reflects the unique and valuable historic character of the city centre.
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The Oxford Historic City Core is unique and internationally recognised for its historic buildings, unique skyline and academic history. The area is clearly definable through its street pattern, building density, architectural character and streetscape detailing such as furniture and paving materials. Townscape quality is generally exceptional. There are clear views along streets, to landmark buildings/structures and historic facades.

Negative/weak characteristics and features

Streetscape detail including business frontages, signage and street furniture in the commercial centre often detract from the quality of the built fabric. Whilst traffic is generally minimised in this character area, buses are often dominant features along the main streets.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – local interest only
Historic Integrity	High – Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, listed parks and gardens and the character area is within the Central Area conservation area
Re-creatability	Low – impossible to recreate
Intervisibility	High – significant views in and out of the area
Open Space	Low

Sensitivity to change

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its distinctive street and block pattern, historic time depth, its visibility from the surrounding hills and its international renown.

Despite some post-war infill development and streetscape changes, particularly along Cornmarket and Queen Street, the core has retained its historic integrity. More recent changes, such as the Sackler Library and extension to the Ashmolean Museum and the new Westgate Shopping Centre, demonstrate that change can be positive if it pays due regard to scale, material, detail and the quality of the landscape/townscape surrounding it.

Threats to local character could arise as a result of:

- Inappropriate shop frontages that obscure the historic built fabric at the pedestrian level
- New built development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape and results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New tall development that is highly visible in the context of existing urban form and iconic historic buildings
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are insensitive to the historic vernacular
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including, street furniture, paving, boundary walls and buildings through misuse, air pollution, vibration from passing traffic and pedestrian traffic
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing number of buses that could dominate the townscape
- Alteration to key views along the streets and alleys, towards landmark historic buildings
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of city centre trees, both in the public and private realm
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design/place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Strong historic context and sense of place. Modern development is generally well-integrated and respectful of this. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Positive and coherent identity with strong University/collegiate associations. Modern development is generally attractive and contribute to the iconic identify of the city core. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is generally compact, makes efficient use of land with a well-defined and legible historic street pattern. Numerous memorable features/groupings of buildings. Accessible public transport, services and facilities. Significant
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally good movement network, prioritising pedestrian, cycle and public transport users. Very good signage of destinations and routes. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Pockets of generally private green space within the University area. Occasional street trees. Some connectivity of green space through the colleges, to green spaces in the adjoining character areas. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Small paved squares, pedestrianised streets with benches, small churchyards, some outside seating at cafes/bars. College grounds provide space for students and academics. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	The area provides a range of services. The east is dominated by university buildings and college accommodation. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well-designed in relation to their function. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Historic and modern university/college buildings have been adapted over time. New developments are often of innovative design and well-designed with regard to materials and resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	As evidenced by the historic character of this area, particularly the east, the buildings and spaces are well-designed for the long-term. The streetscape is generally well-managed. Moderate

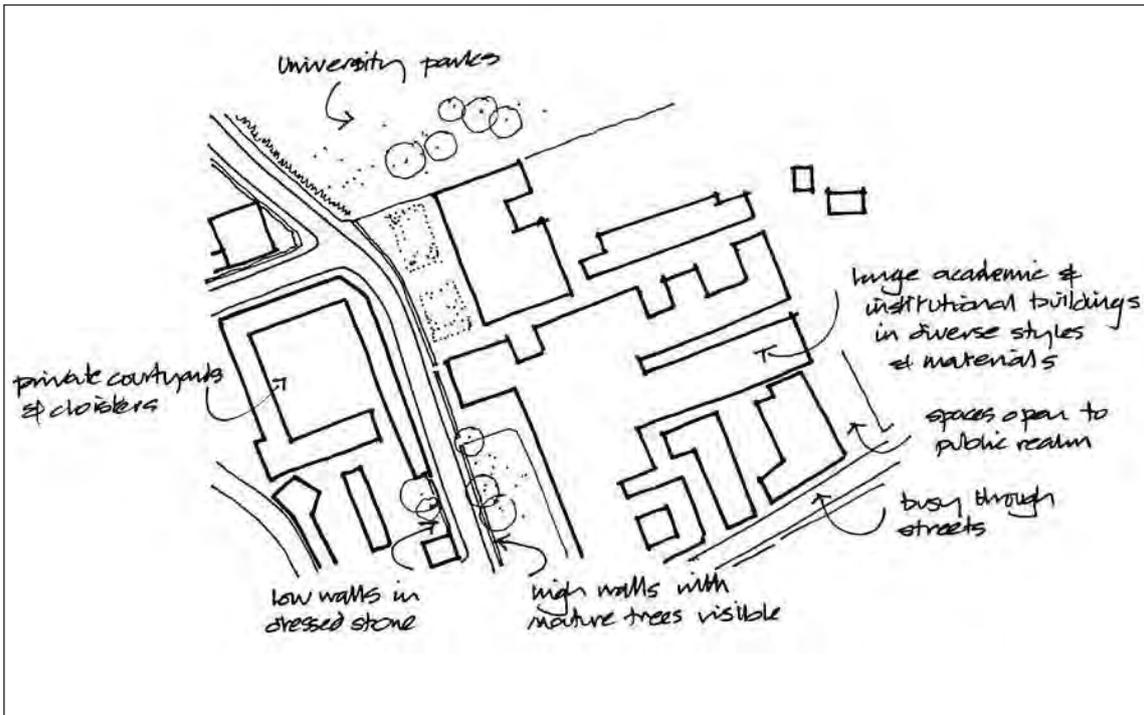
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Historic City Core character area is summarised below:

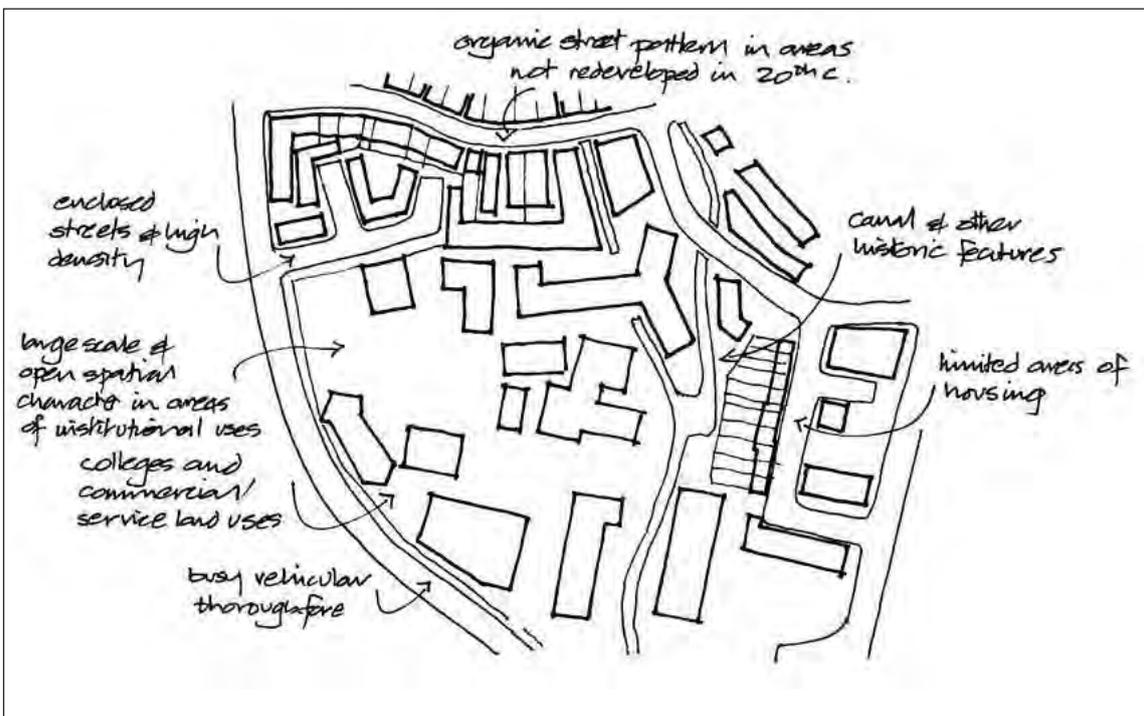
Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Wellington Square and Memorial Garden</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: None</p> <p>Play Space: None</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: None</p> <p>Civic Space: Gloucester Green and Bonn Square</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: Few pockets including St Giles Church, St Mary Magdalen and St Ebbe's Church</p> <p>Private Open Space: Many college quads including St Johns College, Merton College and Christ Church College</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: None</p>
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	<p>Deciduous woodland: small areas within college grounds</p> <p>Traditional orchards: isolated, small areas</p>
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St John's College • Trinity College • Wadham College • New College • Merton College • Corpus Christi • Christ Church College

The above green infrastructure assets within the Historic City Core character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

2 HISTORIC FRINGE



Example 1: 2A University Fringe



Example 2: 2B Western Fringe

2 HISTORIC FRINGE

Generic Description

The Historic Fringes character type borders the historic core of Oxford. These areas have strong links with the historic core but have a separate identity because of their later period of development, scale and detailing. The Historic Fringe is located mostly on the Settled River Terrace landscape type, but has expanded onto the Pastoral floodplain, particularly to the west of the city. The University and Western Fringes have distinct differences in character, with the University Fringe host to numerous, iconic college buildings and green spaces, and the Western Fringe contains more varied and dense built form.

Key Characteristics

- Areas bordering the historic core of Oxford
- Larger scale layout than the historic core
- Often contain modern infill or redevelopment
- Typically have a large amount of greenspace

Character Areas

2A University Fringe

2B Western Fringe

2A UNIVERSITY FRINGE



Photo 1: More open spatial quality and mature vegetation on edge of historic core



Photo 2: Quiet academic quarter with variation in buildings and boundaries



Photo 3: Mix of architectural styles and ages



Photo 4: Boundary walls and glimpses through entrances



Photo 5: Wide open space at University Parks



Photo 6: Ongoing redevelopment that disrupts the public realm in places

2A UNIVERSITY FRINGE

Description

The University Fringe character area is located largely to the north and east of the historic core, as well as a small pocket to the west around Worcester College. It is characterised by college and university buildings of mixed ages, with a generally more open spatial quality in contrast with the historic core. The area developed as academic institutions grew during the 19th century, gradually spreading towards the River Cherwell. Density of development has increased through the 20th and into the 21st centuries, as technologies have changed and the University has expanded. There are extensive areas of open space in this character area, including the Victorian University Parks, Botanic Gardens and college playing fields, as well as the network of formal open spaces that are integral to the quad and cloisters layout of the Colleges.

Much of the area is characterised by University and College buildings in the Victorian neo-gothic style, using stone or multi-coloured brick, including Mansfield (1838) and Keble (1868) Colleges as well as the University Museum (1855) and the Oxford Union (1857). The 20th century architecture of St Catherine's (1963) and Wolfson (1966) Colleges also reflects the traditional geometric layout of buildings surrounding a quad. Older buildings within this fringe include Worcester College, founded in 1714 on the site of the 13th century monastic college on the former fringes of Oxford, and the original Radcliffe Infirmary (1759), the building upon which the University Observatory stands.

The classic quads and cloisters layout of the Colleges are iconic, particularly in the south of this area, including Magdalen College, where the central 15th century Cloister is surrounded by quads. Magdalen College lies on the site of the former St John's Hospital, whose buildings covered a large area outside the city walls.

There has been some large scale 20th and 21st century development, with substantial ongoing in the Science Quarter and around the Royal Observatory in the west. Modern laboratory and teaching buildings have been introduced to the science area, the massing of which dominates the streets to the south of University Parks behind the University Museum. Most recently, there has been substantial redevelopment of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, with demolition of the Radcliffe Hospital and replacement with new University buildings in various, often incoherent styles. Ongoing redevelopment in the Science Quarter, including the new Life and Mind Building and refurbishment of Reuben College, will introduce new, innovative buildings as well as making old buildings fit for purpose and integrated with the new.

Piecemeal and ongoing redevelopment has altered the legibility of the Science Quarter. The works often alter pedestrian routes and have blocked off access in places. Large gateways and drives off the main roads provide access to the university buildings, but it is not always clear where public pedestrian routes link through the area particularly into the University Parks. Vehicular circulation is a noticeable feature particularly on the edges of the area along St Cross Road, South Parks Road, Parks Road and Walton Street.

There is substantial green space that characterises the east of the character area, including locally and nationally designated sites of ecological importance. This provides multifunctional greenspace including extensive areas of parkland habitat to the west of the River Cherwell, linking with pockets of broadleaved woodland, with many veteran trees. This contrasts with the density of buildings, particularly in the Science Quarter within this character area. The canal towpath is a popular footpath on the west edge of the area around Worcester College, with links to the Thames Path.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled River Terrace which gives rise to the gently domed topography.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominant period 18th - 19th century, with significant 20th century expansion such as the university science buildings, in former fields of St Giles and Holywell. Further 21st century expansion is evident in the science area, characterised by modern architecture, with building and development ongoing.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site of the 13th century monastic college on the former fringes of Oxford, and the original Radcliffe infirmary The Botanic Gardens were founded as Oxford's Physic Garden in 1621 Prehistoric landscape of barrows and henge
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large blocks accommodating large scale college buildings Main, vehicular through routes separate large blocks of high density buildings
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In places, the clarity of the public private realm is lost, especially in areas of 20th and 21st century development such as in pedestrian spaces between large buildings
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many university buildings and their settings are large scale, with some small scale residential streets including St John's Street, Pusey Lane and Little Clarendon Street. Nearer the historic core and around the older buildings, stone walls enclose and define the street, but in other areas of later development the buildings have more space between them and no enclosing features. 20th and 21st century growth of the university science area has given rise to large scale buildings around the University Parks.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College buildings and hospitals typically of brick or limestone. An array of modern materials, such as concrete that contrast with the old, particularly noticeable in Little Clarendon Street.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone boundary walls, stone setts at vehicular accesses. Trees act as landmark features lining the streets Cycle lanes and bike storage spaces are more modern features that contrast with the old
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Parks was designed and laid out as a park for sports and recreational purposes in 1864, on the site of former meadows belonging to Merton College. The parks cover approximately 90 acres of largely parkland and playing fields. It contains the only first-class cricket ground in England with free public viewing. The Botanic Gardens are home to over 5,000 plant species and was founded as Oxford's Physic Garden in 1621. College Playing Fields, open amenity grassland, often with vegetation and tree lined margins. Courtyards/squares within the colleges are not often evident from the public realm but provide private spaces Canal corridor in the west of the area – green banks of the canal, tree cover and well-used towpath
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: Traditional orchards, in Worcester College and deciduous woodland along the canal OCWS: University Parks and St Cross Cemetery. The University Parks, designated for its ecological interest, provides extensive areas of parkland habitat including herb-rich grassland and veteran trees that provide important habitats for a range of invertebrates and birds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Wildlife Site: University Parks Parkland habitats in Magdalen Grove and the Botanic Gardens are particularly notable. Magdalen Grove is a designated SSSI for its fossiliferous river terrace deposits. The canal provides an important linear habitat and in combination with the adjacent Castle Mill Stream
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy academic area containing the main university buildings including university museum and laboratories, with an oasis of peacefulness in the Parks and access to the tranquil Cherwell valley.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University Parks are openly accessible to the public, providing a range of walking routes. Local cycle paths, including the Marston Cycle path that connects across the Cherwell Valley to Sustrans route 51 Longwall Street to Parks Road is used as the main alternative vehicular route to the High Street, which can lead to congestion. There are footpaths along parts of the River Cherwell and the river is navigable by boat, with punts available for hire.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The spatial character allows views past buildings and above walls, to other buildings and a skyline of trees and roofs. The University Parks falls within the edge of the Elsfield View cone identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The historic college building rooflines contribute to the iconic the skyline of Oxford, particularly noting the Magdalen Tower.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the character area is within the Central Oxford conservation area. The northern part of the character area is within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation area. The University Parks is a substantial Grade II listed park and garden at the heart of the character area. Grade I listed Landscape at St Catherine's College, Magdalen College and Oxford Botanic Garden park and gardens form the south of the character area. Part of Wadham College Grade II listed park and garden is also in this character area. Numerous Grade I, II* and II listed buildings, largely associated with Oxford University colleges
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Castle Mill stream runs along the western boundary of Worcester College grounds, on the edge of this character area

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive /strong characteristics and features

The University Fringe character area is closely linked to the historic core, with the college buildings, open spaces and riverside contributing strongly to the sense of place. The spatial character here begins to be less dense and larger scale than the city centre, helping in the orientation and legibility of the area as one which is close to, but not part of, the core historic area. The historic buildings, integrity of built form and good condition of streetscape elements contribute to a perception of high landscape/ townscape quality.

Negative /weak characteristics and features

There is limited evidence of negative characteristics and features within this character area. Occasionally boundary fencing and modern infrastructure/services intrude on the

generally unified street scene. Recent development of large scale buildings in the science area encroaches into the open space to the west of the Cherwell River. It is not always apparent which areas are private and which have public access, particularly pedestrian routes through the science area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High- several important local designations as well as a small SSSI at Magdalen Grove
Historic Integrity	High- listed parks and gardens and the character area is within the Central Area and North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation areas
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High- views of historic core
Open Space	High- University Parks and Botanic Gardens provides large amount of open space close to historic core

Sensitivity to change

The University Fringe character area is sensitive to change as a result of its historic landscapes, tranquil open spaces, biodiversity interest and its position on the edge of the Cherwell Valley and as a setting to the historic core.

The main change to the area since the intensive building during the Victorian period has been the building of the science area since 1900. Infill development has generally been well integrated into the street and block pattern and is often of innovative design and respectful of the historic college buildings. Increase in traffic over time has severed the integration of this character area with the historic core and detracts from the area's quiet character in places.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form and the historic city core, particularly considering the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are insensitive to the historic vernacular
- New built development on the edges of the urban area that encroaches on and results in loss of connectivity with the rural floodplain of the River Cherwell
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and Deterioration of the built fabric and details including, street furniture, paving, boundary walls and buildings through misuse, air pollution, vibration from passing traffic and pedestrian traffic
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character/result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space, both in the public and private realm
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development is generally well-integrated and respects the rich historic and cultural setting of the collegiate buildings. Some legibility is lost and functional elements aren't always well-integrated. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a strong sense of place and identity associated with collegiate buildings, University Parks and Botanic Gardens. Modern development generally respects the scale and vernacular of the historic elements. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is generally compact, makes efficient use of land and often memorable. The building and street pattern is not always well-defined and there isn't always clear distinction between public and private spaces. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally good movement network, including priority for active travel. Pedestrian and cycle connections are sometimes lost between buildings Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	The University Parks is well connected to the Cherwell Valley, contributing to a valued green-blue infrastructure network. Pockets of ecologically rich spaces provide habitats for a number of important species. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	The University Parks and Botanic Gardens provide valued recreational and culturally rich assets to the east of the city centre. Smaller, integrated public spaces are less present/accessible. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a predominantly educational/academic area, comprising various university department buildings with college accommodation. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well-designed in relation to their function. They are not always well-related to the surrounding public/private spaces. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Historic and modern university/college buildings have been adapted over time. This is a relatively compact neighbourhood. New developments are often of innovative design and well-designed with regard to materials and resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally well-managed with a sense of ownership pertaining to the university and college buildings. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the University Fringe character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Small area in Worcester College grounds</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: University Park</p> <p>Play Space: None</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: None</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: Holywell Cemetery</p> <p>Private Open Space: scattered college quads including St Anne’s College, Keble College and Mansfield College, and parkland at Magdalen College</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Worcester College, New College, Lady Margaret and Balliol College sports grounds</p>
Strategic blue GI	<p>River Cherwell along east boundary</p> <p>Holywell Mill Stream flows through the east of the area</p> <p>Ponds within Worcester College</p> <p>Oxford Canal along the west boundary of Worcester College</p>
Green belt land	<p>Across University Parks and New College sports ground</p>
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	<p>SSSI: Magdalen Grove</p> <p>Local Wildlife Site: University Parks</p> <p>Oxford City Wildlife Sites: University Parks and St Cross cemetery</p>
Priority habitat Index	<p>Deciduous woodland: small, connected areas particularly in University Parks</p> <p>Traditional orchard: in Worcester College</p>
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape at St Catherine’s College • Part of Wadham College • Worcester College • Magdalen College • Oxford Botanic Garden • The University Parks

The above green infrastructure assets within the University Fringe character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

2B WESTERN FRINGE



Photo 1: A mix of land uses and development styles and ages



Photo 2: An open spatial character at the approach to the city centre



Photo 3: Mixed ages of development with the Norman castle in the background



Photo 4: Traffic dominated streetscape near the railway station



Photo 6: Contrast of modern and historic architecture



Photo 7: Belt of distinctive vegetation along the Oxpens Road contrasts with the modern architecture of the Westgate Centre



Photo 5: Castle Mill Stream provides a linear green space through the urban area



Photo 6: Housing overlooking the river, with some attractive pedestrian routes



Photo 7: Castle Mound is a distinctive feature behind the buildings



Photo 8: Blocks of residential properties amongst commercial buildings

2B WESTERN FRINGE

Description

The Western Fringe character area wraps around the western edge of the historic core of Oxford. The area accommodates diverse land uses and ages of development. It is dominated in parts by the busy Oxpens Road (A420) and key vehicular conduits into the centre such as Park End Street, as well as the railway station and bus station. Between these busy roads and nodes, lies a dense jumble of historic buildings, retail and service development, and residential and academic land uses.

The area has evolved in a piecemeal way, with remnants of Victorian residential development, largely cleared in the post war period, making way for commercial development and later, in the 1960s, for the broad sweep of Oxpens Road. The Westgate Shopping Centre, built in 2016, replaced the original 1960s shopping centre. It is a dominant, modern feature building that occupies a substantial part of the character area.

The large scale buildings of the Western Fringe lie mostly on the alluvial floodplain of the Thames (Isis), although the remnant historic centres of St Ebbes and St Thomas' correspond to the river terrace gravels. There are a variety of residential areas, including apartment blocks, terraced houses and flats over commercial premises, dispersed within the commercial development in this character area.

The area is characterised by juxtaposition of large scale modern commercial and educational development such as the Said Business School and Westgate Shopping Centre, with smaller scale historic buildings such as Royal Oxford Hotel, The Malthouse and features along Castle Mill Stream. This juxtaposition is particularly evident around the castle, where modern structures are integrated with the old.

Castle Mill Stream is a key feature of this area, creating a linear greenspace, alongside which is a public footpath, flowing north-south through the area. A secondary tributary, Wareham Stream, also flows through this character area, although is largely absorbed by the dense urban areas. Castle Mound is a dominant and often visible feature, with the steeply sloping, green grass sides of the mound standing out against the surrounding blocks of built form.

This is an area dominated by busy roads, large modern buildings and piecemeal commercial and residential development, which strongly influence the perception of the western approach to the historic city. Development of this character area is ongoing, including new accommodation blocks near to the railway in the west of the area and pockets of redevelopment.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pastoral Floodplain forming the large scale, flat landscape. Also located partly on the River Terrace.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The area comprises various ages of development from Victorian onwards. Major clearance and redevelopment in 1940s and 1960s.• 21st Century development introduces large scale, modern public and private buildings.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The station is on the site of the old Rewley Abbey and pastures.• The main area of commercial development in the south is on the former Greyfriars and Blackfriars monastic precincts.• Oxford Castle & Prison• Medieval western suburb of St Thomas'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of late Saxon and medieval southern suburb along St Aldate's and the Norman Grandpont Causeway
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dominated by the sweep of Oxpens Road with major routes into centre, with deformed grid behind and large single-use development plots.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst most street frontages are densely developed, the piecemeal development of the area has created, in places, a lack of clarity about which areas are private or public, especially in late 20th century housing and around the Westgate Centre.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies from open and wide streets, to enclosed and human scale in areas close to historic core.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dominated by large scale public and commercial buildings, but with buildings from all periods from Victorian onwards. Some Victorian red brick buildings with stone detailing and window surrounds. Stone, buff brick, red brick, concrete and glass buildings of inter/post war era. Dark brown brick of the 1950s town houses bordering the inner ring road. Use of expanses of glass/large windows on modern buildings, contrasting with the buff stone.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse, from Victorian paving and waterside details, to modern street lamps and furniture. Roadside signage produces a cluttered streetscape. Cycle lanes and bike storage spaces a more modern features in the streetscape
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited open space. Grass verges on street corners. Small public courtyards adjacent to churches e.g St Ebbes. Landmark features within townscape e.g mature trees associated with older districts and mature willows of floodplain. Deciduous trees border the ring road and separate housing from the busy road. Castle Mill Stream corridor- a green link into the heart of the area. Green banks including a well-used footpath. Open grass areas and large amount of tree cover. Churchyard of St. Thomas's- small area of rough species-poor grassland and scattered mature trees. Castle Mound within the grounds of the castle and prison, provides wide views over the roofs of the city
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: Deciduous woodland along part of Castle Mill Stream and on the edge of the River Thames in the south Contains no designated sites of ecological importance. The streams provide an important linear habitat mosaic including marginal vegetation, bankside trees and freshwater and provides a corridor for migration. The watercourses support a range of common wetland birds, a population of coarse fish and the nationally protected water vole. The rail corridor along the west area boundary supports pioneer communities that may be important for invertebrates.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public and commercial buildings with pockets of post war residential housing along the ring road and more modern residential apartments around watercourses the rail corridor. Busy area - key transport nodes and routes into historic city centre, and active retail and service sector. Dispersed university and college buildings.

Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car access constrained with no-through roads. • Footpaths along the Castle Mill Stream provide a green link, north-south through the area. • Sustrans route 5 connects the area to the city centre and the southern suburbs, as well as local cycle paths. • Pedestrian and cycle access contorted and Oxpens Road is a major barrier to movement. • Good pedestrian connectivity between the historic city core and Westgate Shopping Centre.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse, from open views on main thoroughfares, to enclosed spaces and contorted streets and routes of dense areas. • The area forms part of the landscape in the views from Raleigh Park and Boars Hill, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The Westgate Centre and Council offices at Castle Street are noted as intrusive elements against the historic roofscape. • Panoramic views out over Oxford to its wider setting from the upper levels of the Westgate Centre
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the area falls within the Central Oxford Conservation Area • Scheduled monuments within the area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Oxford Castle and settlement remains ➢ Rewley Abbey ➢ Part of Swing Bridge, LNWR ➢ Part of Grandport Causeway • Several listed buildings, including Oxford Castle and religious buildings
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Castle Mill Stream and The Wareham Stream flow north-south through the area. Several buildings of historic and architectural interest including Royal Oxford Hotel and former Castle Hotel

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive / strong characteristics and features

There is a rich historic time depth, indicated by the varying ages of buildings and presence of historic features such as the castle mound. More recent development has sought to improve the juxtaposition of old and new and improve connectivity through parts of the character area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

This part of the city is one where change has been incremental and some of this is poorly integrated into the older fabric and context of the historic city. Despite its proximity to the historic core, this area has a confusing street and block pattern and poor legibility. It is not an easy area to get around on car, bicycle or foot and there is little open space and poor visibility/connectivity with the watercourses that flow through this part of the city. There are areas of neglect, particularly along the west/south sides of Oxpens Road.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – few areas of ecological importance
Historic Integrity	Moderate - rich history that is well recorded although modern development has been altered - Oxford Castle, Conservation Area status
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High- views of historic core
Open Space	Low- limited to canal corridor

Sensitivity to change

This area has some sensitivity to change as a result of its historic time depth and its gateway location, and proximity, to the historic core. It also lies within the view cones of the key viewpoints identified from Raleigh Park and Boar's Hill and this heightens its sensitivity to tall built elements. This area has undergone many changes over the years, that has led to a loss of clarity of the urban form in part.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not have respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly in the context of existing urban form and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are insensitive to the historic vernacular
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and Deterioration of the built fabric including, street furniture, paving, boundary walls and buildings through misuse, air pollution, vibration from passing traffic and pedestrian traffic
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character/result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increases in traffic along the inner ring road
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space and private gardens
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Incremental changes and development have resulted in some poorly integrated developments that do not correspond with the heritage of the historic city. More recent development is more respectful of characteristic materials and vernacular. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	This area has an incoherent identity due to incremental development that does not always contribute to local distinctiveness. Some historic identity in places and new development seeks to resolve some of the issues. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is generally compact and makes efficient use of land with a variety of land uses. The building and street pattern is not always well-defined and there isn't always clear distinction between public and private spaces. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally good movement network, including some priority for active travel on main vehicular routes. Roads and buildings occasionally interrupt pedestrian and cycle routes. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Castle Mill Stream is an important blue-green corridor through this area. Other, small green spaces have limited functionality and are poorly connected. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited public spaces that are isolated or poorly connected. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This area contains a mix of land uses including residential, commercial and services. It provides a mix of residential tenures, types and sizes. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	It is a generally densely developed area with limited quality external spaces. Buildings are generally well-designed and contribute positively to the streetscape. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Development of the area has taken place to modernise and be more sustainable. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	A complex area with a mix of public and private realm that is not well-designed for long-term stewardship. It is not very adaptable to changing needs and evolving technologies. Limited

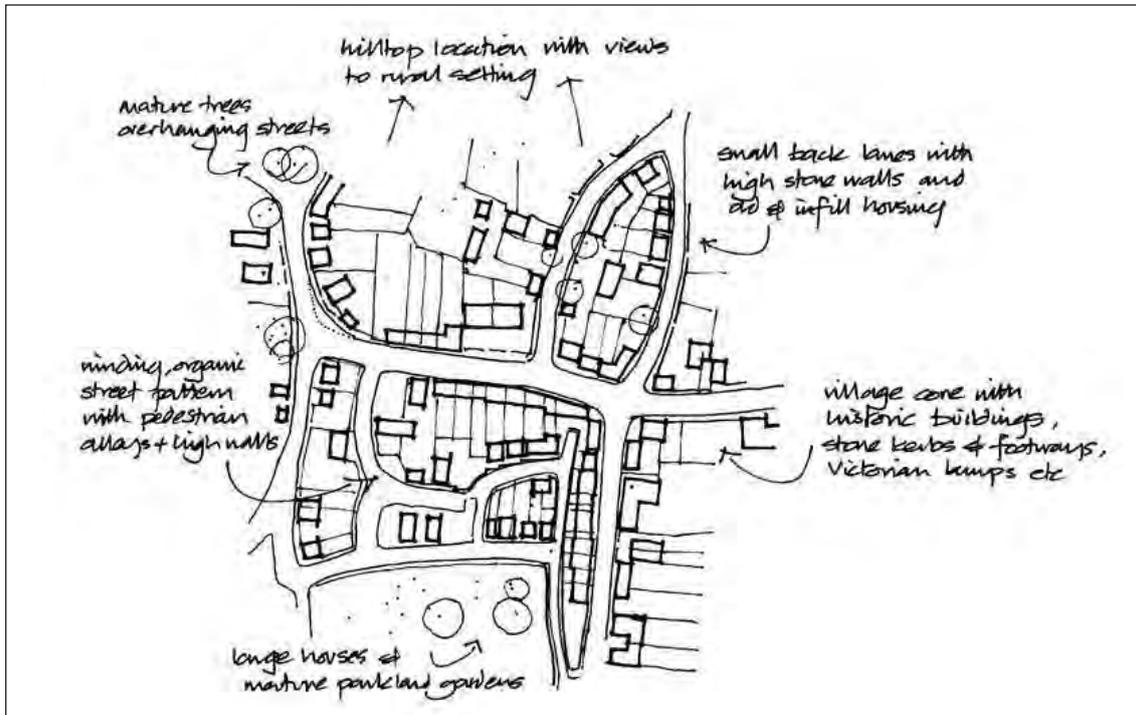
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Western Fringe character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Small areas at Fish Road Gardens, Dale Close and Friars Walk Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: Friars Wharf Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Thomas the Martyr Church Private Open Space: Said Business School and Castle Hill Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Castle Mill Stream flows through the area River Thames around the south boundary
Green belt land	Slither on southeast boundary
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small areas along watercourses
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Western Fringe character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3 HISTORIC VILLAGE CORES



Example: 3B Old Headington Core

3 HISTORIC VILLAGE CORES

Generic Description

A number of former satellite villages to the city have now become absorbed into the urban area. Each village has its own identity, although a number of townscape characteristics are common to all, such as the organic street patterns and the use of local Coral Rag stone. In some cases, the village character has remained intact despite the growth of the city around and into the village, whereas in other places subsequent development has all but destroyed the historic features.

The villages are identifiable on maps of 1751, but subsequently became engulfed by the expanding city, as demand for housing grew around areas in easy reach of the city centre. In most cases the villages are situated on high ground, gravel or stone outcrops, on the drier ground overlooking the Thames floodplain.

The village cores are defined by their small scale village streets, the use of coarse Coral Rag stone and soft red brick as principle building materials, village greens and historic street features such as stone kerbs and black cast iron lamp posts. Winding streets and alleys and rising ground are typical and create intimate, enclosed settlements with continuously unfolding visual patterns.

The presence of mature trees, of both parkland and native woodland or wetland species, is a common feature, overhanging garden walls or creating interesting skyline views in association with roofs and chimneys. The villages are also often adjacent to areas of ecological interest and historic patterns of land use, often related to watercourses.

Key characteristics

- Location on high ground or drier areas adjacent to the floodplain
- Discrete village cores with a cluster of historic buildings, often focussed around a church
- Winding streets and an organic layout responding to topography and natural features
- Cottages and walls constructed from coarse 'Coral Rag', and later buildings in soft red brick with ashlar stone details such as mullions
- Stone kerbs, historic lamp posts and street furniture are important details
- Village greens and verges with specimen trees
- Significant areas of ecological interest adjoin the village cores, especially meadow and common land
- Views over surrounding landscape.

Character Areas

3A Old Marston Core

3B Old Headington Core

3C Temple Cowley Core

3D Church Cowley Core

3E Littlemore Village

3F Iffley Village

3G Wolvercote

3H Headington Quarry

3A OLD MARSTON CORE



Photo 1: Winding village street with stone kerbs and grass verges



Photo 2: Cottages of local limestone and soft red brick



Photo 3: Substantial green space within the community allotments



Photo 4: Glimpses of modern infill development along private drives



Photo 5: Small scale housing development expansion on the edges of the village



Photo 6: Traffic calming measures are generally well integrated

3A OLD MARSTON CORE

Description

Marston began life as a small hamlet of the manor of Headington, growing up on an 'island' surrounded by marshy ground. This island corresponds to the drier land of the second river terrace of the River Cherwell. This village is focused around a 14th century church and 17th century manor house. The surrounding properties are loosely clustered small houses and cottages, built in the local vernacular style, and scattered along a winding lane with raised walkways. They vary in date from medieval to 19th century and are typically local limestone with stone, thatch or slate roofs. Red brick and clay tiles are also present, but rarely seen together.

20th century development saw further expansion of the village, particularly to the north of Ponds Lane. More recently, some of this housing has been replaced by a substantial, modern care home. There has been some 21st century development, limited to individual infill plots and some small scale housing development expansion on the edges of the village. Further expansion is planned to the northwest, away from the historic core. Modern building styles, materials and rendering contrast and occasionally stand out against the historic vernacular.

The public realm is tightly defined by street frontages and stone walls. Large gardens are typically enclosed by stone or brick walls and contribute to the open greenspace. Cottages within the village core are separated from the narrow lane by raised walkways, stone walls, formal hedges or grass verges that are characteristic of the streetscape. Black cast iron lamp posts, stone kerbs and grass verges are also features of the landscape.

Marston is set within a rural landscape, surrounded by small fields to the east and west, with substantial tree and hedgerow boundaries. Large areas of allotments form the north and east of the village, with several public rights of way linking through to the northeast suburbs of Oxford. Court Place Farm Allotments have a strong community feel and provide a large, quiet green space at the centre of the village. Large gardens with open lawns, ornamental shrubs and parkland trees further enhance the leafy rural village character.

It is a generally peaceful, rural village. The A40 forms the north edge of the village and the vehicular noise from this is locally intrusive. The B4495 forms a distinct boundary between the village and surrounding suburbs to the south.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled River Terrace – drier land surrounded by marshy land
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medieval village centre of Marston with later infilling and expansion surrounded by open arable fields of Marston Field.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">14th century church17th century Manor HouseMedieval historic core
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Winding, organic main streets, with narrow winding leafy lanes and dead-end streets and modern cul-de-sacs leading off
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public realm is tightly defined by street frontages and stone walls within the historic core.This is less evident in more recent expansion of the village

Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various scales of buildings are represented - from small, terraced cottages to the manor house and school buildings. • Characteristic loosely scattered building pattern as a result of large plot size in the central part of the village. Infilling and extensions to properties have altered this in places
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post medieval buildings of Coral rag stone. • Soft red brick cottages and houses, some with colour render, and with slate or clay tile roofs and varying frontages to the road. • Different building ages and styles and scales contribute to a varied character. • Ashlar limestone details including stone mullions. • Buildings up to three storeys but mostly with low roof heights.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black cast iron lamp posts, stone kerbs and grass embankments. • Overhanging mature vegetation in places • Modern traffic calming chicanes within the centre of the village are generally well integrated with appropriate bollards and limited signage
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a large amount of greenspace throughout the village, particularly noting the substantial areas of allotments in the north and centre of the village, as well as grass verges, cemetery and private gardens. • The village is surrounded by fields, which provides a rural setting for the village. • Large gardens and grounds to larger houses with open lawns, ornamental shrubs and trees. • Public open space includes the recreation ground of mown amenity grassland with scattered trees and small area of play equipment near the library, large areas of allotments and Elsfield Road cemetery.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitat: small areas of Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchard • The village is adjacent to the extensive meadow areas of the Cherwell Valley, including New Marston Meadows SSSI. • Small areas of mown and grazed semi-improved grassland, surrounded by hedgerows occur within the village.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential village centre on the outskirts of Oxford.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A40 ring road encroaches on rural setting to the north and east. • Main village street ends in a dead end at Mill Lane discouraging through-traffic, although there is access to the A40 ring road via Elsfield Road. • Local cycle connections link the area to the Cherwell Valley, city centre and eastern suburbs. • Public footpath networks link east through the allotments to the northeast suburbs of Oxford. More extensive routes link west and south through the Cherwell Valley to the city centre.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winding village streets, close street frontages and walls create varied visual sequences and a sense of expectancy. • The area falls partly within the Elsfield view cone, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The historic core of Old Marston can be glimpsed through the tree cover, in the middle ground of the view.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the area falls within the Marston Oxford Conservation area. • Several listed buildings within the character area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Church of St Nicholas (Grade I) ➢ Manor House and front wall (Grade II) • A number of Grade II listed residential buildings

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets
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Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive/ strong characteristics and features

Marston village is distinctive with a largely intact core, and a strong sense of its post-medieval character. The winding village street, stone and soft red brick buildings, stone walls and mature trees make Marston Village distinctive from its surrounding suburbs. There is a strong sense of place in its old rural village character and the quality of landscape and streetscape is high.

Negative/ weak characteristics

Piecemeal, suburban style housing development on the edge of the village is less distinctive and somewhat detracting from the character of the historic village core. The dominance of hard landscaping in these developments also threatens the green and rural character of the village. High volumes of traffic often use the narrow roads, leading to queues along the main street which is detrimental to the quiet village character.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate - local nature conservation and pockets of ecological importance
Historic Integrity	Moderate - medieval church and conservation area
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Moderate – the historic village core forms the middle ground of the view from Elsfield (noted view cone)
Open Space	Moderate – large allotments, private greenspace in gardens, verges and surrounding fields

Sensitivity to change

The Old Marston Core character area is sensitive to change as a result of its historic vernacular, rural setting adjacent to the Cherwell valley and its distinctive village streetscape.

Whilst new development has taken place on the on the edges of the village, including road improvements and pockets of 20th/21st century housing development, the historic character of the village core is largely intact.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics nor respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the village edge and in the context of existing built form
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the street character

- New built development on the edges of the village that intrudes into the setting to the village
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the character of the village street and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric, original materials and details and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity movement
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space and gardens, both in the public and private realm could threaten the rural character
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species such as *Leylandii* as wind breaks, visual screening and boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Presence of local and distinctive building materials provide a sense of heritage within the village core. Incremental expansion of the village is not always respectful of the village character and setting Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	A strong sense of place is associated with the distinctive village core. Modern development weakens the coherence and identity of the village. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Compact development creates a walkable neighbourhood, with accessible routes and public transport links to the surrounding facilities. Several memorable buildings and spaces. Significant
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally good movement network, with public rights of way connections to the wider countryside. A40 is a barrier to the north. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Substantial areas of allotments within the village and tree boundaries through the surrounding fields. Connectivity to ecologically rich and extensive Cherwell Valley meadows. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A public park, churchyard and substantial community allotments provide safe attractive spaces for people to use. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	A mix of tenure and housing types provides a range of opportunities. Housing types are generally segregated, reducing inclusivity. Moderate
Homes and buildings –	Buildings are generally well designed in relation to their function and relate positively to the spaces around them.

functional, healthy and sustainable	Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Some adaptation of historic buildings has taken place over time. Walkable neighbourhood. Limited energy efficient technology/design. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	As evidenced by their historic nature, the buildings within the village core are well-designed for the long term. There is a strong sense of community within the village core. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Old Marston Core character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Court Place Farm and Mill Lane Amenity Green Space: Land adjacent to Court Place Farm allotments, Orchard Triangle and Oxford Road Parks and Recreation Grounds: Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground Play Space: Old Marston Park Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: S Nicholas Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	Within the east of the area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small area in the south Traditional orchard: in the west
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Old Marston Core character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3B OLD HEADINGTON CORE



Photo 1: The village centre with St Andrew's Church in the background



Photo 2: Tight street frontages, mature trees and stone walls



Photo 3: High stone walls are a key feature of the village



Photo 4: Distinctive street lighting and boundary walls



Photo 5: Narrow lanes



Photo 6: Wide, long distance views out across north Oxford from the cemetery



Photo 7: Wide, roadside grass verges and mature trees in the public and private realm



Photo 8: Distinctive Coral rag stone wall boundaries along the roadside with overhanging vegetation

3B OLD HEADINGTON CORE

Description

Old Headington is a former village which has now been absorbed into the suburbs of Oxford. The village retains the character of a typical Oxfordshire 17th-19th century village, set around a winding village street, with a network of smaller lanes and alleys with high stone walls leading off.

The village lies within the ancient bounds of the royal forest of Shotover and Stoward and has its origins in a Saxon manor house on the hills to the east of Oxford. The manor was ruined by medieval times, but many of the post-medieval stone houses and the medieval Church of St Andrew have survived and now form the historic core of Old Headington. There has been some, incremental 20th century expansion of the village, including small cul-de-sac developments behind more historic properties.

A church and some large houses, set in extensive grounds, are juxtaposed with smaller cottages and houses, some fronting directly onto the street. The buildings and walls are generally of stone or brick, some white washed with slate and clay tile as the dominant roofing materials. Rough stone kerb, Victorian black cast iron lamp posts, drain pipes and road name signs are notable features of the streetscape.

Remaining fields in the north, generally well maintained private gardens and mature trees give the area a leafy character. This feeling of space is enhanced by Bury Knowle Park to the south, Dunston Park in the northwest, and views northwards, downhill to the countryside beyond. The A40 ring road forms the north boundary to this character area. It is largely screened and vehicle noise is dampened by trees along its length and along field boundaries downslope from the village core.

The Old Headington Campus became the primary location for Ruskin College in 2012, with large scale development taking place to make it fit for purpose, including a new three-storey building that contrasts with the adjoining Georgian architecture of The Rookery. The John Radcliffe Hospital is a dominant, modern development to the west of the character area, and intrudes on wide views from the cemetery. The narrow main roads of the village are used as a through route between the adjoining suburbs of Northway and Headington, and as a result are busy and often congested.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled Plateaux – the village is in an elevated position on a plateau above the floodplain to the east of Oxford
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Part of a Saxon manorKey period of remaining historic buildings is 17-19th century, with later evidence of infill development that is largely in-keeping with the village character.21st century development on the Headington Campus of Ruskin College (now its primary location) introduced contrasting modern buildings to the area. The campus is generally well integrated, by surrounding tree canopy cover.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medieval centre of Headington, based around St Andrews Church.The village core is bounded by fields to the north which formed part of the Headington Meads, former meadows on the side of Headington Hill now fragmented by the northern bypass.Middle/late Saxon royal estate and lodge

Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winding, organic main streets, with narrow winding leafy lanes and pedestrian alleys with high stone walls.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public realm is tightly defined by street frontages and stone walls. Some access to backs of through alleys.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous scales of buildings are represented - from terraced cottages to the large houses and school buildings. Larger scale buildings evident on Ruskin College campus.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral Rag stone or brick cottages and houses with slate or clay tile roofs and varying frontages to the road. Ashlar limestone details including stone mullions. Brick mostly soft red with some buff details. Buildings up to three storeys but mostly with low storey heights. Former agricultural buildings in the area have been converted to residential uses, retaining characteristic features such as stable doors or distinctive window features
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black cast iron lamp posts, stone kerbs and grass embankments. Overhanging mature vegetation. Stone walls, or brick with half round red or blue brick coping.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private open space: Ruskin College grounds and large gardens, typically enclosed by stone or brick walls, with mature trees including parkland species. Dunstan Park - a relatively small public park of amenity grassland, a spring-fed stream and areas of broadleaved woodland. Bury Knowle Park - closely mown grass scattered with equipped play area, courts, mature trees and formal planting, enclosed by stone wall. Church and cemetery grounds
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority Habitats: small areas of deciduous woodland and traditional orchards Old Headington is an ecologically rich area, with gardens and churchyards providing a mosaic of wildlife habitats, notably mature trees, scrub and rough grassland. Mature lime, oak, beech and ornamental garden trees are well connected through the character area.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet residential village centre on the outskirts of Oxford with several important facilities including pubs, village hall, sports club and Headington Library. The main campus of Ruskin College is located in the north of the village
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A40 ring road forms the northern edge of the area, but is generally well-screened by vegetation Dunstan Road/St Andrew's Road/Barton Lane/Old High Street are often busy with through-traffic between the adjoining suburbs Public footpaths extending north from the area, connect the village core to the wider countryside, hills and woodlands to the north of Oxford.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated position allows glimpses from public realm to open space, countryside and 20th century elements, which will be more evident from private areas at the backs and edges of the developed area. Wide views across north Oxford from the cemetery, towards the hills beyond – intruded upon by John Radcliffe Hospital Winding streets, close street frontages and walls create varied visual sequences and a sense of expectancy.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the area comprises the Old Headington Oxford Conservation Area. Several listed buildings within the area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Church of St Andrew (Grade II*) ➤ The Rookery, Ruskin College (Grade II) Numerous listed residential dwellings

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Cuckoo Lane historic carriage road enters the southwest of the character area
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Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive/ strong characteristics and features

The village is distinctive and largely intact, with a strong sense of its post-medieval character. The winding lanes and alleys, stone and soft red brick buildings, stone walls and mature trees make Old Headington one of the city's most well loved suburbs. There is a strong sense of place in its old rural village character and landscape quality is perceived as being high.

Negative/ weak characteristics

Some boundary features, such as security fencing along Cuckoo Lane form intrusive elements in the landscape that are out of keeping with the character of the area. In addition, the visual impact of traffic management, some architecturally unsympathetic rear extensions and clutter in the public realm, such as traffic signs and wheelie bins, are locally intrusive features. Use of the main roads as through routes between adjoining suburbs is also intrusive.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – local interest with some connectivity between private/public greenspaces and countryside in the north of the character area
Historic Integrity	High - medieval centre and conservation area
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low - no views of historic core skyline.
Open Space	Moderate – Bury Knowle Park, Dunstan Park and cemetery, as well as retained small fields around the north and east

Sensitivity to change

Old Headington Core character area is highly sensitive to adverse change as a result of its rural character, historic vernacular and elevated position on a hill. Whilst new development has taken place on the edges of the village and small infill plots, the historic character has remained largely intact.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New infill development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- new housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access through the area via the existing distinctive alleys

- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are insensitive to the historic vernacular (particularly those elevations that face onto the street)
- New built development on the edges of the village that intrudes into the setting to the village
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the character of the village street and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including, streetscape features such as lamp posts, Coral rag stone boundary walls and stone kerbs and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space, gardens and remaining fields, both in the public and private realm could threaten the rural character
Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species such as *Leylandii* as wind breaks / visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The leafy village core is well integrated into the surrounding green network of fields and parks. There is a strong sense of the local heritage. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a strong sense of place achieved through distinctive local vernacular and retained rural features. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A dispersed village with recognisable buildings and features. A mix of building types, forms and scale with public spaces. Generally well defined streets, although narrow back lanes are less coherent Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally good movement network along raised pedestrian walkways through the village. Limited connections to the wider countryside and the A40 is a barrier to the north. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Ecologically rich area with parks, networks of street trees and vegetation as well as connectivity to the wider green network of fields and hedgerows. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Public parks, churchyard and the cemetery provide dispersed, inclusive and safe spaces for people to enjoy around the village, but aren't well linked. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	Variety of services and facilities within the character area. There is a range of housing type. Moderate

Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well designed in relation to their function and relate positively to the spaces around them. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Some adaptation of historic buildings has taken place over time. The new Ruskin College buildings are well designed and with regard to materials and resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	As evidenced by the historic character of this area, the buildings are well designed for the long term. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Old Headington Core character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Bury Knowle Park and part of Foxwell Drive Park Play Space: Bury Knowle Park Accessible Natural Green Space: Dunston Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Headington Cemetery and St Andrew's church Private Open Space: Ruskin College and Headington House Outdoor Sport: Bury Knowle Park tennis courts
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	N/A
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat index	Deciduous woodland: clusters in private grounds and Dunstan Park Traditional orchard: pockets in the east
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Old Headington Core character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3C TEMPLE COWLEY



Photo 1: A few remaining cottages and ragstone walls



Photo 2: Ragstone boundary walls are all that is left of the former village, with 19th and 20th century development behind them



Photo 3: Long views to the city centre from the elevated ground at Crescent Road



Photo 4: New cul-de-sac development has created a new townscape pattern



Photo 5: Road blocks limit through traffic and retain a more quiet character



Photo 6: Modern development on the elevated land often stands in contrast to the boundary walls

3C TEMPLE COWLEY

Description

Temple Cowley is an 18th century rural settlement named after the long lost medieval house of the Knights of Templar. The historic core has now largely been infilled and overlain by 19th and 20th century suburbs and institutional buildings, eroding its character as a historic core village. Despite this, it is still possible to distinguish the character of the village core with a small number of stone houses and cottages unified by boundary walls of the typical coarse Coral rag stone.

20th century suburbs have overwhelmed the setting and character of the village core. Some of the main routes through the area have been blocked up, to restrict through traffic between these suburbs. This has helped to retain a quieter, village sense of place in contrast to the surrounding bust suburbs.

There are important kinetic views from the high point in the north of this area, towards the historic core of Oxford, in which the Radcliffe Camera and St Mary's church spire form prominent landmarks above the tree line in the middle ground.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the edge of the Settled Plateaux which gives rise to steep, elevated topography with views over the city below.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic 18th century core with significant 19th and 20th century infill development.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval village centre of one of Cowley's manors, and location of the former house of Knights Templar.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small scale streets with overlying larger scale 19th and 20th century institutional buildings and late 20th century cul-de-sac housing.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of public/ private areas partially lost in areas of cul-de-sac housing.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse densities and plot sizes. The roads are generally tight and small scale, created by density of buildings and boundary walls, and their proximity to the roadside. High density of cul-de-sacs behind the road fronting properties along the main roads
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older residential buildings in coarse Coral rag stone with some ashlar stone detailing, with clay or slate roof tiles More recent buildings of red brick with stone detailing and clay tiles with some render.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ragstone walls and some stone kerbs as the only remaining distinctive detail. 19th and 20th century development has led to a variety of materials in both buildings and boundary features Influence of traffic calming measures, with evidence of modern black bollards lining the streets and reducing street width in places, as well as road blocks to limit through traffic.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small public park containing area of short mown amenity grass with few trees and play equipment.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area does not contain any areas of particular ecological note, although it is in proximity to the important local wildlife site of Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh and OCWS at Barracks Lane Meadow.

Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet historic core close to the modern centre of Cowley.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet, narrow residential streets.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the area is 'Crescent Road View', identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). It provides a view over the historic city core, with the Radcliffe Camera and the spire of St Mary's Church in view and is noted as transforming this 'apparently ordinary suburban street into a part of a world-famous historic city'.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the area is within Temple Cowley conservation area. • Few listed buildings within the area, including the Manor House (Grade II).
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive/ strong characteristics and features

This area retains some of its distinctive details, such as Coral rag stone walls and some buildings typical of 18th century Oxford villages.

Negative/ weak characteristics

19th and 20th century development has significantly broken down both streetscape patterns and integrity of materials and building styles, leading to erosion of the quality of the landscape/townscape.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate – retains some key historic townscape features
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Moderate - survival of some historic features and the Conservation Area
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate - restricted view from Crescent Road to the historic core skyline
Open Space	Low - little open space

Sensitivity to change

This area is moderately sensitive to change. It occupies an elevated position, with a noted key view, and contains some historic elements that are sensitive to change. However, the village character of the area has been significantly compromised already, reducing its sensitivity to future change.

Threats to local character include:

- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape

- New housing infill that results in further fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access through the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are insensitive to the historic vernacular
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including, streetscape features such as lamp posts, Coral rag stone boundary walls and stone kerbs and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core from Crescent Road from new built development / mis-management of vegetation
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The historic character of the village has been largely subsumed by the surrounding suburbs. Incremental development has had little respect for the historic context. Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Some distinctive features retained within the old village core, with suburban development eroding the historic context of the area. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The built form is generally compact, making efficient use of land. Incoherent mix of built form. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	The streetscape has limited features that encourage walking and cycling. Although, road blocks to limit vehicular through traffic result in quieter streets for cyclists and pedestrians. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Limited space for nature. Local Wildlife Sites are easily accessible to the north of the area. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited to a small, isolated, equipped play park with few trees. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	A range of housing types, that are well integrated. Some community services. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well designed in relation to their function. Moderate

Resources – efficient and resilient	Dominance of residential built form. Walkable neighbourhood. Limited energy efficient technology/design. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	A range of housing types and tenures makes the built form adaptable to changing needs. The buildings are largely well maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Temple Cowley character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Crescent Road Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: part of St Christopher's Primary School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Temple Cowley character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3D CHURCH COWLEY CORE



Photo 1: Narrow intimate street with stone cottages and mature trees



Photo 2: St James Church



Photo 3: Historic walls and buildings



Photo 4: Leafy streets, stone walls and overhanging vegetation



Photo 5: Beauchamp Lane has recently been blocked off to vehicular through traffic



Photo 6: Sensitive development using locally characteristic materials

3D CHURCH COWLEY CORE

Description

Church Cowley Core is a fragment of a small rural village centred on the Beauchamp Lane and the 12th century church of St James. It lies on an elevated area of sandstone to the south of the city. From this vantage point there are glimpsed views towards the city centre.

It is a small surviving remnant of an historic village, set within a green oasis created by the treed churchyard, substantial trees within private gardens and vegetation overhanging the high walls.

It is surrounded by the inter-war and later suburbs and shopping centre of Cowley. Although it is small, and has long lost its rural settings, the core is distinct and characterised by the Coral rag stone cottages and walls which are a feature of all the historic village cores. Clay tiles and thatch are the typical roofing material.

More recent development on Beauchamp Place is less characteristic but is well integrated behind the Coral rag stone boundary walls and surrounding trees. Sensitive renovation and redevelopment of properties has generally taken place within the village core, making use of local and characteristic materials.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the edge of the Settled Plateaux which gives rise to steep, elevated topography.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12th- 18th century remnant village core.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12th century Church of St James the Apostle. Medieval village centre of one of the Cowley's manors.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow street with Coral rag stone built cottages and walls. Many properties accessed from the rear, along Lewin Close from Crowell Road.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cottages opening straight on to the street and stone walls provide clear boundaries between the public and private realm
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intimate scale of street and buildings provides sense of enclosure. The imposing, large scale multi-storey car park to the east of the area is of such a scale that it greatly influences the northern entrance onto Beauchamp Road.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone cottages of coarse Coral rag stone with clay tiles and thatch roofing. Contrast with its suburban surrounding, with traditional building materials and rural cottage architecture.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral rag stone walls, black bollards, hedges and mature trees, as well as limited vehicular access provide a rural sense of place to Beauchamp Lane. More modern street furniture such as lampposts, urban style signage and modern infill development threatens the historic rural character.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St James' Church grounds provides a substantial green space comprising with many mature trees.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No designated sites of ecological importance, although the mature trees and grassland within the churchyard have local biodiversity value.

Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential streets with enclosed, small cul-de-sacs
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauchamp Lane has recently been blocked off to vehicular through traffic, with continued passage for pedestrians and cyclists. • There is a public footpath from the churchyard through to Cowley cemetery, with broken connections through to the River Thames (Isis).
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glimpsed views over the city to the north
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area comprises the Beauchamp Lane Oxford Conservation Area. • There are a few listed buildings within the area, including the Church of St James (Grade II*) and stone cottages (Grade II).
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive/ strong characteristics and features

The area is typical of 18th century rural settlements in Oxford, with the dominant use of local stone. Its small scale streets, stone cottages and walls and glimpsed views to the city create a small pocket of high quality and distinctiveness in the urban environment of Oxford. Large, mature trees contribute to the intimate rural character of the area, reflecting its history as a distinct village settlement.

Negative/ weak characteristics

The multi-storey car park at the northern end of Beauchamp Lane is imposing and detracts from the smaller scale, historic cottages, particularly the unique no.1 Beauchamp Lane. Replacement of historic street materials with modern treatments is detracting from the traditional street scene in places.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate – substantial churchyard and mature trees throughout
Historic Integrity	Moderate - survival of some historic features and designated conservation area
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low – glimpsed views out, over the city
Open Space	Moderate – churchyard and footpath links through to cemetery

Sensitivity to change

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its position on elevated land south of the city, its survival of historic features and leafy character. Change has generally been successfully integrated into the street and block pattern of the village core with sensitive use of local materials.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New housing infill that results in further fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access through the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are insensitive to the historic vernacular (particularly those elevations that face onto the street)
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including, streetscape features such as lamp posts, Coral rag stone boundary walls and stone kerbs and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The historic character of the village has been retained but subsumed by the surrounding suburbs, which detract from the distinctive village character. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a strong historic identity to Beauchamp Lane, creating a rural oasis within a suburban context. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A recognisable street that has easily identifiable buildings and features. The built form is compact, creating a walkable neighbourhood, with links to the nearby services. Significant
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Public rights of way and cycle networks providing sustainable and accessible links to the wider city and countryside. Car access is limited. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Substantial churchyard with mature trees and connectivity with nearby public and private green spaces. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	St James' churchyard and public right of way link through to the cemetery Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	A mix of housing types, from large detached houses to flats. A lack of services within the area, but close proximity to a large shopping centre and with a range of facilities. Moderate
Homes and buildings –	Buildings are generally well designed for their function. The layout of the village does not promote social interaction. Moderate

functional, healthy and sustainable	
Resources – efficient and resilient	It is a compact and walkable neighbourhood. Some adaptation of historic buildings has taken place over time. Varying levels of energy efficiency/climate resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The streetscape and built form, in the public and private realm is generally well managed. The historic and more modern development is designed for the long term. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Church Cowley Core character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St James Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Church Cowley Core character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

3E LITTLEMORE VILLAGE



Photo 1: Littlemore retains a distinct village character, despite being part of the suburbs of Oxford



Photo 2: Victorian cottages



Photo 3: Rural agricultural buildings in the village core



Photo 4: Local stone and slate are common



Photo 5: The curving village street has landmark trees along its length



Photo 6: Recent cul-de-sac development at the edge of the village, using a mix of materials

3E LITTLEMORE VILLAGE

Description

Littlemore Village character area lies on the Settled Plateaux landscape type, on a plateau some 15m above the Thames floodplain to the west. The oldest part of the village consists of a manor house, farmhouse and associated barns which date from the 15th to 18th centuries. Subsequent construction of two schools, cottages and houses, and surviving Coral rag stone walls, completed its character as an 18th century Oxfordshire village. In the 1830s the Vicar of the University Church in Oxford, Revd John Henry Newman built St Mary and St Nicholas parish church and converted former farm buildings in Newman's College. Today it forms part of the suburbs of Oxford, but despite this it has retained a distinct village character. There has been some 20th and 21st century infill development within village core, which is generally well integrated.

The curved street layout with its blind side-alleys and the organic block pattern of short terraces and larger detached dwellings is characteristic of a village settlement. Roadside verges and stone kerbs contribute to the historic character. The building density is varied, with a range of building styles and ages and orientation within a small area. More recent development has taken place along dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs leading to small housing developments on the outer edge of the village, such as Astrop Lane and Lawn Upton Close.

The underlying geology of sands and calcareous sandstones of the Corallian formation is reflected in the building materials. Coral rag stone cottages and boundary walls are a feature of the village. The area has a warm tone from red brick cottages complimenting the older rag stone buildings.

The streetscape is characterised by the winding village street that provides an unfolding sequence of views. Views to landmarks such as the church and mature trees form important features of the village street. Many of the cottages face directly onto the street or lie behind narrow front gardens bounded by low Coral rag stone walls. In places the boundary walls are high and provide a sense of enclosure, which emphasises the line of the street.

The centre of the village is characterised by the spacing between the mix of properties. Spacing reduces within the areas of newer development, towards the edges of the village where it meets more suburban areas. There is limited public open space within the village. Mature trees within the school grounds, church grounds and on roadside verges are important features of the skyline. The black road name signs are common and a distinctive feature across the city of Oxford.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Located on the Settled Plateaux, a flat plateau south of the ring road.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15th century Oxfordshire hamlet 3 miles south of Oxford consisting of manor houses, farmhouse and barns.• Erection of parish church and College by Newman in 1840s.• Later 20th and 21st century small-scale infill in the core, some backland development and small housing developments along cul-de-sacs at the edges of the village.

Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th- 18th century building cluster at the core of the village.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curvilinear streets merge at an important nodal point in the village. • Organic block pattern with short terraces and detached houses with spaces between buildings in the historic core and short blind alleys. • Mix of building types and plot sizes with no clear street pattern, within more recent incremental development
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear distinction between fronts and backs of properties. • Variety of boundary treatments, often stone walls in the historic core and fencing in newer developments
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous scales of buildings are represented - from terraced cottages to manor houses and school buildings.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly two storey properties, with some three storey to the north of the area. • Diverse mix of type and orientation of architecture, with traditional styles and use of local Coral rag stone in the historic core and a rich time-depth, associated with the 15th- 19th century properties. This contrasts with more modern developments that are often small cul-de-sac developments of red-brick properties. • The Church of St Mary's and St Nicholas, set within a walled enclosure and dense tree cover, provides a focal point in the centre of the village.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature trees prominent on the skyline and act as landmarks, particularly the cedar in the church grounds. • Black road name signs, common to Oxford and high and low coarse Coral rag stone boundary walls. • Traffic calming measures in place, with more modern signage and street markings.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church grounds, school grounds and occasional roadside verges. • Properties on Oxford Road back onto the local equipped play space and playing field in the adjoining character area. • Trees contribute to a leafy character, particularly around the church and school.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none • Contains no designated sites of ecological importance. • Locally important biodiversity habitat, such as grassland and mature trees, are found in the churchyard and school grounds. Trees along the southern edge of the area link along the railway to nearby habitats and green spaces.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quiet residential suburb of Oxford that has retained a distinct village character. • There are academic links to Oxford through Newman's College (The College), the home of Saint John Henry Newman from 1842-1846, which is now established as the International Centre of Newman Friends.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main streets are busy thorough-routes. • The nodal point of the village is the roundabout outside the church. • Local cycle routes provide connections from the area into the city centre and suburbs.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long views along Sandford Road and Oxford Road contrast with unfolding views along the other gently curving village roads. • Blind alleys to the sides constrain views.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area comprises the Littlemore conservation area. • There are a few listed buildings within the area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Church of St Mary and St Nicholas (Grade II*)

	➤ The College (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	•

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive/ strong characteristics and features

The heart of the area is recognisable as an Oxfordshire village by virtue of its gently curving village street, organic pattern of buildings representing a diverse range of ages and its characteristic Coral rag stone buildings and boundary walls. These features combine to give an impression of high townscape quality.

Negative/ weak characteristics

The multi-storey car park at the northern end of Beauchamp Lane is imposing and detracts from the smaller scale, historic cottages, particularly the unique no.1 Beauchamp Lane. Replacement of historic street materials with modern treatments is detracting from the traditional street scene in places.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – local interest
Historic Integrity	Moderate – some preservation of historic features within the conservation area
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic city core
Open Space	Low – limited open green space

Sensitivity to change

The village is highly sensitive to change as a result of its historic features, unfolding sequence of views along the village street and its scenic quality.

Littlemore's conservation area status has helped to conserve the built fabric of the village core. However, incremental development has altered the character of the village wider over time.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of quality landscape between the buildings
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New housing infill that results in further fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access through the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the street character

- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the character of the village street and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including, streetscape features such as lamp posts, Coral rag stone boundary walls and stone kerbs and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels through the village and increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space and gardens, both in the public and private realm could threaten the rural character
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as wind breaks / visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development is largely well-integrated with historical character of the village core. Piecemeal, edge of village expansion feels ‘tagged-on’ in places. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Use of historical building material and rural style village streetscape provides a distinctive sense of place within the village core. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A coherent built form provides a walkable neighbourhood with a distinctive and recognisable core to the village. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	The main roads are heavily trafficked. Sustainable transport links are encouraged through cycle networks to the city centre and eastern suburbs. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Limited to grass verges and mature trees within private gardens, the churchyard and school. No multi-functional network. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Small, isolated green spaces with a lack of variety. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	An integrated mix of housing types. Few services/facilities within the area. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Housing is generally well- designed in relation to its function, providing connections between the internal and external spaces. Moderate

Resources – efficient and resilient	Some adaptation of historic buildings has taken place over time. Varying levels of energy efficiency/climate resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Private and public buildings and outdoor spaces are generally well maintained and built for the long term. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Littlemore Village character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: edge of Oxford Road Park Play Space: edge of Littlemore play space Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Mary and St Nicholas and Blessed Dominic Barberi Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Littlemore Village character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3F IFFLEY VILLAGE



Photo 1: Leafy streets, stone walls and old cottages



Photo 2: Enclosed streets, rising ground and mature trees



Photo 3: New development behind old walls



Photo 4: Village green and large villas



Photo 5: Thames floodplain forms a setting to the village



Photo 6: Modern architecture is well-integrated and respects the streetscape

3F IFFLEY VILLAGE

Description

Iffley Village character area is located to the south of the city, on the northern edge of Rose Hill and bound by the River Thames (Isis) to the west. It has strong connections to river and beyond to Iffley Meadows. Its leafy, winding lanes are populated with a range of historic cottages and later residential development.

Its character as a medieval agricultural village began to alter from the end of the 18th century with the building of country houses in landscaped grounds that were within easy reach of the city. These large houses have since been redeveloped and altered, but the large plots character retained.

Today, the area has a rural suburban, residential character, although it has retained its distinct village core around the historic winding leafy lane of Church Way and the Norman Church of St Mary. In the historic core of the village, stone walls and stone cottages covered with thatch or tile are typical.

19th and 20th century expansion of the village has taken place along long, straight, parallel roads. Large properties are set back behind wide walkways and substantial front gardens, within large plots with mature trees enclosing private gardens. Recent redevelopment/extensions and infill is generally well-integrated, using locally characteristic materials and styles and maintaining the low density character of the village. The rural character of the village survives in the meandering narrow lanes, presence of stone walls and properties and connections to the River Thames (Isis) and Iffley Lock.

The generally low density of development has allowed green spaces and mature trees to play an important part in the character of the area, with the survival of village greens and verges. Properties on the west side of the village, on Church Lane, have long gardens leading down to the floodplain.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the edge of the Settled Plateaux type, on the rocky promontory of Rose Hill, which gives rise to steep, elevated topography and a wooded skyline.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted in the Domesday Book Development ranges from the 12th- 21st centuries. It developed as a rural suburb for Oxford in the 18th century, as wealthy citizens of Oxford built substantial country houses.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until 19th century was the main way to Henley. Tree Lane was a medieval sheep way. Notable Norman church of St Mary and ancient rectory. Medieval village core
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently winding lanes, with streets rising from Church Way. Long plots extend from detached houses, with some larger houses and infill development.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear boundaries except in infill development areas, where houses back onto the main street.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winding streets, mature vegetation and stone walls create a strong sense of enclosure.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cottages and walls of coarse Coral rag stone with clay tiles or thatch roofing. Red brick and stone villas with clay or slate tiles.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th and 19th century country houses within landscaped grounds. • 20th century infill development along main roads and within loose cul-de-sac formations contrasts with the more historic built form.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winding village street with coarse Coral rag stone walls and cottages. • Black Victorian street lamps, hedges, village greens and mature trees.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant mature trees and vegetation in private gardens, as well as on grass verges and village greens contribute to the leafy, rural character of the area. • Rivermead Nature Park provides a green space on the southern edge of the village. • A public right of way and cycle path over the River Thames, on the western boundary, connects the area to Iffley Meadows.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: Deciduous woodland in the south of the area, connecting into Rivermead Nature Park (OCWS), in the south of the area • Iffley Meadows is a substantial SSSI to the west of the area. • Large private gardens with mature trees, village greens, St Mary's churchyard and adjacent low fertility grassland fields and road verges provide important habitats for wildlife.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet, residential rural suburb on the edge of the River Thames (Isis).
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local cycle routes connect the area to Sustrans route 57 into the city centre, as well as the Thames floodplain and Iffley meadows • No significant traffic issues.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glimpses out to the Thames floodplain. • The area falls partly within the Rose Hill view cone, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The historic rooftops of Iffley that were once in the view are now largely hidden by foliage.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the area is within the Iffley conservation area. • Listed buildings concentrated along Church Way. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Church of St Mary (Grade I) and associated buildings and structures ➢ Rectory (Grade II*) ➢ The Priory (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive/ strong characteristics and features

Iffley Village is sought after as a place to live and commute to the centre of the city. Its location, overlooking the river and floodplain, and its leafy winding streets and cottages with a predominant use of local stone, combine to create an area of very high quality.

Negative/ weak characteristics

Occasional redevelopment, extensions to properties and infill development that locally detracts from the distinctive character of the village core.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate – leafy suburb with connectivity small green spaces in the south of the area with nearby meadows
Historic Integrity	High – survival of historic features and village form
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low – no clear views of the historic city core
Open Space	Moderate

Sensitivity to change

Iffley Village character area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its historic integrity, biodiversity interest and proximity to the Thames floodplain.

Whilst the core historic areas on Church Way have been little affected by recent development, other areas have been subject to limited infill development and changes to architectural detailing.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the village greens / public green spaces / ecologically sensitive sites
- New built development results in the erosion of quality landscape between the buildings
- New development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and insensitive to the historic vernacular (particularly those elevations that face onto the street)
- New built development on the edges of the village that intrudes into the setting to the village and results in loss of connectivity with the surrounding rural floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the character of the village streets and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including, streetscape features such as lamp posts, Coral rag stone boundary walls and stone kerbs and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space including village greens, grass verges, public open space, remaining small fields and gardens, both in the public and private realm could threaten the rural character

- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as wind breaks / visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development is largely well-integrated and respects and responds to the leafy suburban and historic village character of this area. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Predominant use of local and distinctive materials and leafy, winding lanes create a rural sense of place that is highly sought after. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The built form is generally compact, and neighbourhoods are walkable. There are distinctive groups of buildings, making the streetscape legible, although incremental, small developments at the edges of the village are less coherent. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Pedestrian and cycle routes through the village and into the surrounding countryside and adjoining suburbs, promoting sustainable mobility. Direct pedestrian/cycle access to Iffley Meadows and the Thames floodplain is notable. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	A range of publicly accessible and private green spaces that provide important ecologically diverse habitats. Easy access to wider areas of multifunctional, enhanced blue-green infrastructure is also present Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A hierarchy of public open space, within the area and adjacent. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	A mixed residential area with some facilities and services. A range of housing types, although often grouped in types so some segregation Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Residential development generally well-designed in relation to the function. Generally positive, clear boundaries between public and private space. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Some adaptation of historic buildings has taken place over time. Varying levels of energy efficiency/climate resilience. Walkable neighbourhood. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The public and private realm is generally well-managed. Buildings are generally designed for the long term. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Iffley Village character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: edge of Lenthall Road allotments Amenity Green Space: Woodhouse Way Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: Woodhouse Way Nature Area Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Mary the Virgin Church Private Outdoor Space: edge of Iffley Academy Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	River Thames (Isis) along the west boundary
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: in the west along the river edge
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Iffley Village character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3G WOLVERCOTE



Photo 1: Historic village green and cottages of Lower Wolvercote with new development beyond



Photo 2: Upper Wolvercote overlooking Wolvercote Green



Photo 3: Village green encompassed by historic cottages, enclosed by fencing and jumble of street furniture



Photo 4: Inter-war development with variety in boundary details



Photo 5: Distinctive stone boundary walls and mature vegetation



Photo 6: Modern flats with semi public areas at ground level



Photo 7: New residential development on the former mill site, relates positively to the public realm, overlooking the mil pond



Photo 8: Substantial grass verges incorporaing SUDs through the new development on the former mill site

3G WOLVERCOTE

Description

Wolvercote character area is located at the northwest edge of Oxford District, on river terraces in the Thames floodplain. The village is formed of two parts: Lower Wolvercote is a distinct island in the floodplain to the west, and Upper Wolvercote forms the edge of the inter-war suburbs to the east.

Lower Wolvercote has a small medieval core that is focused on the winding street of Godstow Road and Mill Road, leading to the River Isis at Godstow Bridge and the well known Trout Inn and site of Godstow Abbey. The village is historically strongly linked to its waterside location, with both the river and its associated sluices and drains, and the Wolvercote Mill Stream that powered the former papermill in the north of the village. Distinctive views out from the village, into the floodplain are marked by the meadows, large willows and distant views to the city centre.

The village centre of Lower Wolvercote is focussed around a village green, surrounded by buildings of a variety of ages and types, including two public houses. Stone walls are a characteristic feature of the village, marking its boundary with the common land of the Thames floodplain as well as older property boundaries. The walls, uneven stone kerbs, unmarked roads and distinctive small black lampposts contribute to the character of the village core.

The village was once home to the paper mill that, in the 19-20th century was owned by Oxford University Press. The former mill site has recently been developed, providing homes of various types, styles and materials, that are sympathetic to the historic land use and styles of historic properties within the village. To the north and south of the historic village core, Edwardian and inter-war development includes a more regular grid of streets of semi-detached, rendered / pebble-dashed properties. Flat roofed, three-storey properties on Rowland Close are incongruous and visually conspicuous, particularly considering the relationship with the adjoining meadows.

Upper Wolvercote is located on ground that rises steeply and overlooks the floodplain. It is focussed around the existing Church of St Peter, which dates from the 14th century, although a church is recorded on this site from the late 13th century. The village core comprises a small scale, winding central street with old cottages and more recent infill properties. Its special character comes from its position on the edge of the floodplain, with distinctive properties overlooking the historic and locally valued Wolvercote Green. The green has allowed the village to maintain its rural setting on its western edge, whilst the suburbs of Oxford have encompassed the north, south and east. Coloured render on buildings, including a run of terraced cottages, is a distinctive feature.

Older properties in both parts of the village face onto and overlook the floodplain. Inter and post-war developments are more inward facing and back onto the surrounding landscape. New development on the former mill site has been designed to overlook the Wolvercote Mill Stream and ponds.

The two parts of the village have distinct and separate characters, further reinforced by their separation by the Oxford Canal and railway. Vehicular traffic on the nearby Western Bypass can be intrusive and Godstow Road is a popular route, particularly on summer days with visitors to the Thames riverside and the Trout Inn.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Wolvercote – on the edge of the North River Terrace that gives rise to gently rising landform on which the village is built, overlooking the floodplain • Lower Wolvercote – on a River Terrace Outlier forming a low-level island within the Thames floodplain
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Wolvercote is an ancient settlement, dating back to Saxon times. Upper Wolvercote grew around the original 13th century church of St Peter. • Nearby Godstow Abbey influenced the development of Wolvercote. • The villages were separated by the canal and railway in the 18th and 19th centuries respectively. • Many properties dating from 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late Saxon/medieval village cores at Upper and Lower Wolvercote • Surviving village green on the floodplain
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winding medieval village streets, with more regular blocks of 20th and 21st century residential development particularly to the north of Lower Wolvercote.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small public spaces within the village including equipped play parks and church yards, as well as smaller open spaces within the new development. • Low-level boundary walls generally mark the division between public and private realm. • Substantial common land along the canal to the west of Upper Wolvercote and south across Wolvercote Common.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tightly developed areas, with a more open village core and glimpses to the floodplain from historic core areas. • Modern development is often of greater mass that is not in keeping with historic grain.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale Coral rag stone cottages and red brick buildings with thatch, clay or stone tile roofs, in historic areas. White or coloured render is also characteristic. • Modern infill adds a variety of colour and texture. • Larger scale, modern flats and houses using uncharacteristic materials encroach on the historic setting in places. • New development on the old Wolvercote Mill site responds to historic materials and styles and the context of the former mill.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coarse, Coral rag stone walls, stone kerbs to unmarked roads. • Open nature of verges and village green with park in the core. • Traditional lantern street lights and black sign poles along main streets and in the village core. Less consistent in the more suburban areas.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong historic connections and access to Wolvercote Green in the floodplain to the south of the village. • Small village green at the centre of Lower Wolvercote – mown grass, specimen trees and equipped play space, bound by variety of fence types. • Trees (oak, horse chestnut, Scots Pine and ornamental garden trees contribute to a leafy character.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: adjacent to large areas of floodplain and lowland meadows. Lower Wolvercote is encompassed by deciduous woodland to the north, east and west. • Oxford Meadows SAC to the south and west of the village

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common & Green and Wolvercote Meadows SSSIs adjacent to the area to the south and west
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tranquil, predominantly residential village on the edge of the floodplain. Several public houses within the village, contributing to vibrant community at the centre.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Godstow Road is a strong, vehicular link through the village, providing access to the common land and linking to the riverside of the Thames to the west. Connection of the Oxford Canal Walk, Oxford Greenbelt Way and Thames Path promoted national routes, along Godstow Road. Open access common land to the south and northwest of the village.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important and noted view from the western edge, across Port Meadow towards the spires and towers of Oxford city centre identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015) and 'Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Appraisal' (2007). Other noted views out across Wolvercote Common, Upper Wolvercote and along the canal from Godstow Road.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two parts of the village form part of the Wolvercote with Godstow conservation area, which extends west across the floodplain and south to Godstow Lock. Small number of Grade II listed buildings including stone cottages on Mill Road, Church of St Peter and former farmhouse. Scheduled monument: ring ditches, barrows and associated closures, Port Meadow to the south of the area
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: 1-9 Cyprus Terrace in Upper Wolvercote

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive / strong characteristics and features

This is a distinctive village lying on an island of gravel within and beside the Thames floodplain. The historic centre of Lower Wolvercote focuses on the village green and winding Godstow Road to the floodplain, with much evidence of its waterside heritage in the drains, bridges, mill stream and river. The historic core areas and the association with the floodplain are highly distinctive and attractive settlements. 21st development of the old papermill site is well considered and uses appropriate building materials and styles in keeping with the heritage of the area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The historic character of the village has been impinged upon by 20th century development that is often more dense and of a larger scale that is out of context with the historic cores. Some of these are conspicuous in views towards the village, across the floodplain. In places, the layout of development breaks the historic pattern of houses overlooking the floodplain and much of the detailing of property boundaries has been executed without attention to the historic vernacular.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate – proximity to areas of international importance and substantial tree cover in the public and private realm
Historic Integrity	Moderate – Wolvercote to Godstow conservation area and some retained historic connections between the village cores and the Thames floodplain
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High – clear views from the west edge of the village, across Port Meadow to the Oxford city skyline
Open Space	Moderate – proximity to large areas of open space, with pockets of community space within the village core

Sensitivity to change

The Wolvercote village cores are highly sensitive to change as a result of their visible location on the edge of the Thames floodplain and expanse of common land, their cultural and ecological association with the floodplain and historic integrity.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New built features that would affect the open expansive character of the adjacent floodplain
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the village edge and in the context of existing urban form
- New built development on the village green
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, insensitive to the historic vernacular and result in conspicuous rooflines
- New built development on the edges of the village area that obscures its existing stone wall boundaries, results in loss of connectivity with the surrounding rural floodplains and encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the curvature of the village street and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Deterioration of the original materials and details including, street furniture, paving, boundary walls and buildings and replacement with uncharacteristic materials and features
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation both in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as wind breaks, visual screening or boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation, particularly associated with the floodplain
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Development is generally well-integrated and respectful of the historic village character and sense of place. Some edge of settlement development is uncharacteristic and conspicuous. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	This is strong in the village core of Lower Wolvercote, but has deteriorated over time through the wider area. New development in the north seeks to create an identity related to the former mill and remaining water features. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is generally compact, and neighbourhoods are walkable. The street pattern is legible and there are groups of historic buildings that contribute to sense of place and location. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Some pedestrian routes through the village, but mostly along pavements. Good access to adjacent common land. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Significant, designated nature sites adjoin this area. Mature trees throughout the private and public realm. Wooded settlement edge and connectivity with the river. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Small, isolated public green spaces within the villages. Good access to the adjoining common land. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	Residential area with some valued community services. Mix of housing tenures, types and sizes particularly in the new development. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well-designed in relation to their function. Incremental development has resulted in some poor relationships of housing to private, shared and public spaces. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	There is a mix of well-designed and poorly designed places in this area. It is a generally compact and walkable neighbourhood and new development uses appropriate materials. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The public realm and streetscape of the historic core of this area the is generally well-managed. Much of the area is privately owned and there is some mis-management. The new development is designed and planned for the long term. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Wolvercote character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Wolvercote Common and Wolvercote Mill Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: Wolvercote Children's Play Space Accessible Natural Green Space: edge of Wolvercote Lakes and Wolvercote Common Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Peter's Wolvercote Private Open Space: edge of Wolvercote Primary School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Wolvercote Mill Stream along west boundary, with weir and pond within the area Wolvercote Lakes to east boundary
Green belt land	Small part to northwest edge
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small areas on the outer edges Traditional orchard: small area in Upper Wolvercote
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Wolvercote character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

3H HEADINGTON QUARRY



Photo 1: Winding streets with stone and brick walls



Photo 2: A mix of old and new buildings, and a remnant village green



Photo 3: Pedestrian alleys with stone walls are a feature



Photo 4: Undulating ground of the old quarries now forms an area of public open space



Photo 5: Diverse orientation, height and aspect of old and new houses



Photo 6: Small cul-de-sacs around former quarry pits in the south of the character area

3H HEADINGTON QUARRY

Description

Headington Quarry is unique in the study area, overlying former quarried land that has established a sharply undulating landform and organic layout of cottages and other smaller buildings. It overlies the Corallian limestones that form part of the Settled Plateaux landscape type and was quarried from the medieval period, providing much of Oxford's building stone.

The area is now a densely developed residential suburb. It forms a definable entity, containing many stone and brick cottages from the 18th and 19th centuries, predominantly along the main routes. This is interspersed with more recent residential development in small to medium sized cul-de-sacs off the main routes.

Properties are generally detached, and their orientation is diverse in response to the undulating ground and street layout that is based on former cart tracks. There are some short terraces of varying character. A distinctive feature of the area is the organic layout and twisting lanes, set within the humps and bumps of the former quarry tips and woodland that has established on the hillside. It is also criss-crossed with footpaths often contained by rubble stone walls. The twisting, turning nature of the roads through the character area creates a distinctive pattern of visual sequences.

The northern part of the character area is densely developed with a variety of small to medium sized housing types including some low-level flats in short cul-de-sacs and tight courts. The large area of ancient woodland in the centre of this area links with the wooded slopes of Shotover to the east, visually, historically and ecologically. The south of the village is less-densely developed with generally larger properties in short cul-de-sacs that push into the edge of the woodland. Properties are set out around old quarry pits, from where stone was transported down Old Road into central Oxford. The old quarries provide public open spaces and are of industrial, archaeological and ecological interest.

More recent development includes replacement of individual dwellings with small cul-de-sac development that is encompassed by the woodland edges in the south of the character area and behind other properties in the north of the area. Substantial extensions and alterations to individual properties are often locally conspicuous but generally integrated by mature trees and woodland. There has also been expansion and modernisation of the Science Oxford Centre, set within the woodland and using innovative technologies and sympathetic materials.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled plateaux – local topography is influenced by old stone quarries
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medieval and later quarrying, followed by development in the 18th – 20th century and latterly infill and incremental development at the woodland edges
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Industrial archaeology – the quarries in this area have their origin in medieval times when much of Oxford's building stone was quarried from this area. The southern part of the character area forms part of the large historic area of Quarry Coppice in Shotover.There is a former Roman road to the eastern edge
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Twisting lanes and dramatic changes in level are characteristic, with connecting walled footpaths.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic layout and small plot sizes, particularly in the northern part. Short cul-de-sacs are typical of this area, on the edge of woodland in the south and behind street-fronting properties in the north.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The residential areas are generally permeable, with linking walled footpaths. Streets are tightly developed in the north, with continuous frontages and back gardens exposed to view. Small private cul-de-sacs are typical of the area. High standard but small areas of public realm.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinctive small scale, intimate and enclosed street and footpaths in the north. More dispersed settlement in the south.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18th century rubble stone cottages, late 19th century brick buildings and more recent residential infill in diverse materials. Buildings are generally detached with diverse orientation in response to the undulating ground and resultant street layout. Locally quarried Coral rag stone is the dominant material used for walls and buildings, with slate the dominant roofing material.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral rag stone walls, swan neck light standards, overhanging vegetation. Narrow streets and footways, some with rough stone kerbs. Buildings on the street frontages or set back up to 6m. Enclosed residential cul-de-sacs with mature woodland edges. Consistent and appropriate design of signs and uncluttered streets.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of tree cover, particularly with the historic oak woodland on the footslopes of Shotover, formerly part of the Quarry Coppice in Shotover. Old quarry pits that are unsuitable for building provide small areas of public open space within the built fabric, such as Quarry Hollow Play Park.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: Deciduous woodland in the central and southern parts of the character area Magdalen Quarry SSSI and LWS Stansfeld Field Study Centre and Old Road Land OCWS
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peaceful and often tranquil residential area with rural character. Morris dancing is a local tradition.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Road is a distinctive route, linking between Shotover and the old quarry area into central Oxford. Roads link through the north of the area to the bypass
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mosaic of built form at diverse orientation and variety of levels, creating quick succession of unfolding views within the area. Occasional views over rooflines to the backdrop of Shotover Woodland to the east. Generally enclosed views and none of the historic city core.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The north part of the character area is within Headington Quarry conservation area. Three Grade II listed buildings
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets

Strength of character and perceptions of quality

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Unique village character that has been retained, with change over time being generally well managed. It is distinctive in its layout and abrupt changes of level, with old cottages and more recent buildings set out in a tightly packed organic arrangement. The tight, close grain of the village is a unique characteristic in the city. The permeability of the village is also notable, due to its back alleys and overviews from higher to lower areas.

The local rubble stone buildings and walls express associations with the former quarries, which provided building stone for many of Oxford's colleges. It is an area which appears well kept and has a unique charm.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Front gardens have been replaced by parking areas, which have altered the consistency of the street scene in places. Extensions and alterations to properties introduce some uncharacteristic designs and materials. Incremental cul-de-sac development has resulted in localised removal of trees and woodland edges.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate – substantial area of ancient woodland and small designated SSSI, LNR and OCWS
Historic Integrity	Moderate – Headington Quarry conservation area, ancient woodland and survival of historic architectural features
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – large areas of woodland and small public spaces

Sensitivity to change

The Headington Quarry character area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its unique evolution, street/block pattern, rural village character and ecological/geological importance.

The area has developed in a largely unplanned, organic way and has successfully absorbed new houses throughout its history. The village and rural character could be compromised by further development.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape and does not respect the scale of built development typical of the area
- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area and loss of historic routes through the area (via the existing distinctive alleys)
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and insensitive to the historic vernacular and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape

- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and details including, street furniture, paving, boundary walls and buildings and replacement with other/uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Provision of car parking places, driveways and pull-offs from the winding lanes that results in the removal of the stone walls that characterise this area
- Changes that would sever historic connections along walled footpaths through the north of the area
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of woodland and mature trees within the village
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Development is generally well-integrated and respectful of the historic village character and sense of place. Some intrusion on woodland character in the south Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Generally positive and coherent identity within the village. Less distinct identity in the south, where incremental modern development has taken place. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is generally compact, makes efficient use of land with a well-defined and legible historic street pattern within the village. This is less apparent across the area as a whole. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally good pedestrian network, along walled footpaths in the village. More limited connectivity across the wider area and into adjacent areas. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Large area of private woodland and mature trees continue through the village. Small local nature sites. Not multi-functional and limited accessibility. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Small, isolated public green spaces. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	Residential area with few services. Mix of housing types. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well-designed in relation to their function. Incremental development has resulted in some poor relationships of housing to private, shared and public spaces in part. Moderate
Resources –	Modern development in this area is not generally innovative, energy efficient or resilient.

efficient and resilient	Limited
Lifespan – made to last	Much of the area is privately owned. As evidenced by the historic character of this area the streetscape is generally well-managed. Moderate

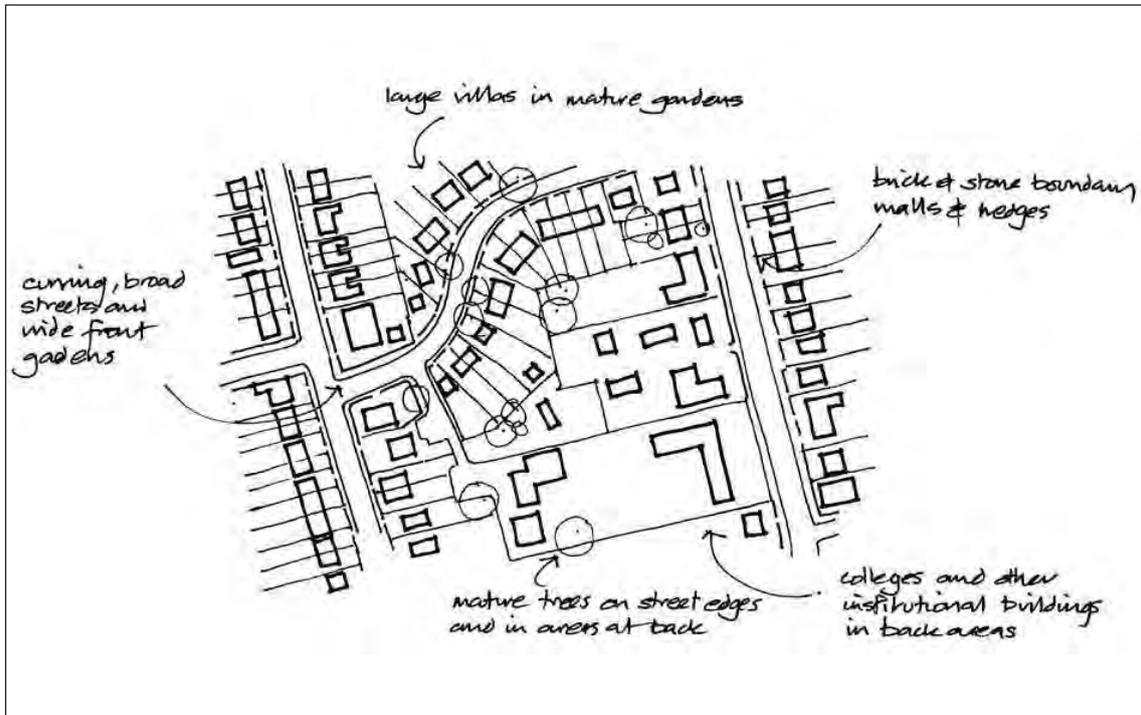
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Headington Quarry character area is summarised below:

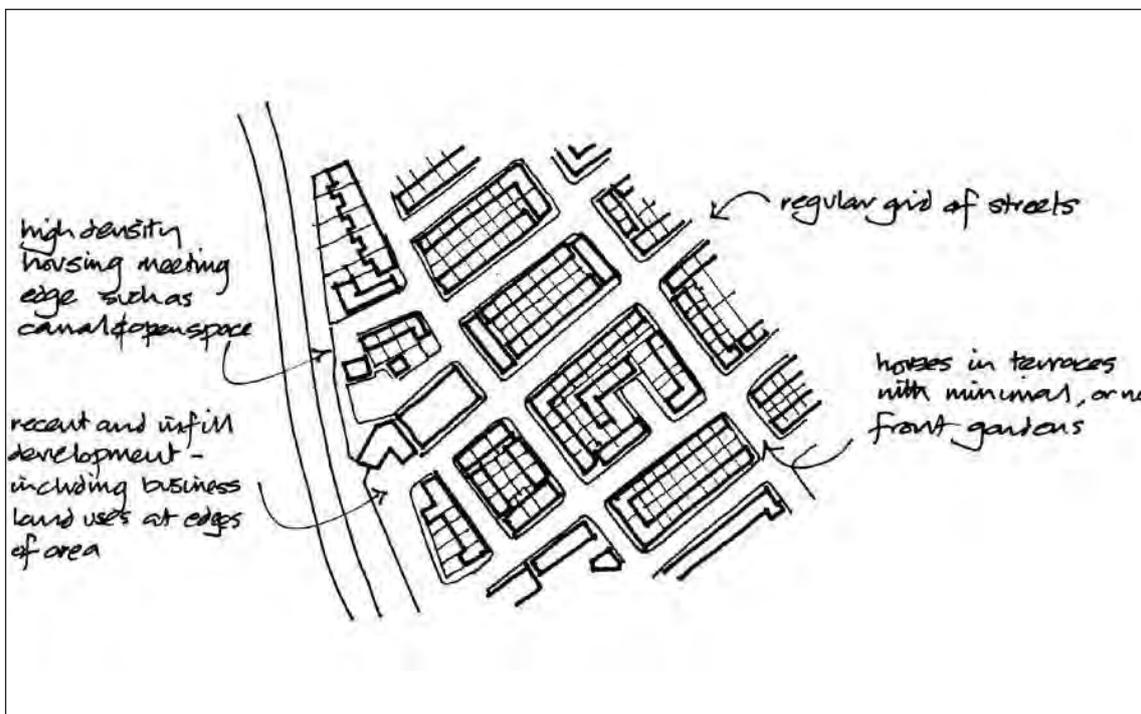
Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: edge of Ramsey Road Allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Quarry Hollow pocket park Play Space: Quarry Hollow Pocket Park Accessible Natural Green Space: Magdalen Quarry LNR Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Holy Trinity and Cornerstone Church Private Open Space: Stansfeld Park and Old Road Land Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	SSSI: Magdalen Quarry Local Wildlife Site: Magdalen Quarry Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Stansfeld Field Study Centre and Old Road Land
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: Substantial areas particularly in Stansfeld Park
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Headington Quarry character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4 VICTORIAN SUBURBS AND VILLAGES



Example 1: 4A North Oxford



Example 2: 4B Jericho

4 VICTORIAN SUBURBS AND VILLAGES

Generic Description

The Victorian Suburbs and Villages character type represents a significant period of growth of the city. All areas, except for New Headington, lie on the Settled and Open River Terrace where they have sometimes spilt onto the Pastoral Floodplains landscape types. The shapes of the areas reflect the limitations that the Victorians experienced in locating dry land for new built development. Where the river terraces form a narrow band or discontinuous islands, the oldest properties are found on the terraces and more recent development extends into adjacent areas of floodplain, for example as seen at Grandpont or New Osney. North Oxford contrasts with these areas where the broader river terrace allows more spacious residential development.

The Victorian Suburbs and Villages townscape type is defined by its regular street and block patterns, its red or buff brick houses with stone and tile detailing and slate roofing. The individual character of the houses is defined by differences in detailing and these subtle differences produce a streetscape of variety and colour. Front gardens play a large part in the character of the streets, adding colour through their ornamental trees and shrubs. Pubs and churches are features of the townscape and there are often factories associated with the larger suburbs such as North Oxford and East Oxford. Each Victorian suburb or village is distinct in its own right and each is described as a separate character area.

Key Characteristics

- Large areas of Victorian housing laid out in a regular street pattern
- Industrial premises often associated with each area of housing
- Pubs and churches are local features of the townscape, and often form landmarks
- Mature private gardens play an important role in the ecological fabric, providing a mosaic of habitat including mature trees, dead wood, ponds, scrub and flowering plants
- Historic 'Oxford style' lamp posts, street signs and street furniture

Character Areas

- 4A North Oxford
- 4B Jericho
- 4C Grandpont
- 4D East Oxford
- 4E New Osney
- 4F Summertown
- 4G New Headington
- 4H New Marston Village

4A NORTH OXFORD



Photo 1: The generous proportion of the street blocks reflects the scale of individual properties



Photo 2: Buff red brick detailing and gothic architecture is typical



Photo 3: Wide streets are bordered by generous front gardens



Photo 4: Trees within private gardens contribute to the leafy character of the area



Photo 5: Banbury Road is a major conduit of movement through the area



Photo 6: Low red brick boundary walls are distinctive



Photo 7: Front gardens have been replaced by parking areas and driveways in places



Photo 8: Modern architecture of the University of Oxford China Centre is well-integrated by mature trees and set back from the road



Photo 9: Variety of architectural styles and individuality of properties



Photo 10: Modern development integrating characteristic styles and materials

4A NORTH OXFORD

Generic Description

North Oxford is a clearly defined character area. It lies on the North Oxford River Terrace, which forms a domed ridge of gravels between the floodplain of the rivers Thames and Cherwell. It represents one of the first extensions of the historic core, starting on land pertaining to St John's College. It is located between the University Fringe to the south and Summertown to the north.

The suburb is the product of a handful of local architects and builders, resulting in gradual urbanisation from 1854 with the construction of the formally laid out villas, terraces and ornamental gardens of Park Town. Substantial villas were then developed in Norham Gardens in the 1860s. Gradual development of the suburb continued through the rest of the century, incrementally spreading north.

The area is built on a loose, sometimes curvilinear, grid of broad streets. The generous proportion of the street blocks reflects the scale of the individual properties and their gardens. The planned streets of magnificent, individually designed villas dominate the suburb. There are some streets of inter-war semi-detached houses and there has been some late 20th century and 21st infill and redevelopment of properties to meet changing needs of residents, but these are well integrated and respectful of the overriding character. There is a contrast of Classical and Gothic styles, which give this suburb its unique character.

The view from the street is dominated by the interplay of the individual villas with mature and diverse trees and garden planting. Whilst there are no long views out of the character area, the patchwork of trees and buildings creates an ever-changing spatial quality and interplay of light and shade. The individuality of roofs and chimneys, and the silhouette of mature trees combine to create a locally distinctive skyline.

The low boundary walls are in many cases distinctive in their use of red brick and half-round coping, sometimes in conjunction with railing or clipped hedges, all overhung with trees and bushes.

Open space is almost all privately owned and is dominated by mature tree planting. This is a leafy and low density suburb. Banbury Road and Woodstock Road are particularly special for their leafy character, established by a variety of trees within private front gardens. These two roads provide the main routes between the historic city core and the northern suburbs.

Since its original purpose in providing accommodation for the Oxford Dons, North Oxford has retained close links with the university. There are a variety of properties owned by the University or by Oxford academics, including traditional red brick colleges such as St Hugh's that contrast with more modern, often innovative buildings such as the nearby China Centre, which is set back behind the street facing residential properties. North Oxford also contains many schools and colleges. Students on bicycles are a common sight along the quiet streets.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled River Terrace – gives rise to the gently domed topography
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned mid-late Victorian garden suburb Later 19th century development of middle-class and artisan housing in St Giles' fields Some inter-war semi-detached housing 20th century infill and redevelopment
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architectural fabric Park Town ornamental gardens Multi-period rural settlement remains on gravel terrace (Prehistoric to early Saxon)
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generous, loose grid with large blocks reflecting the large scale of properties and gardens. Gentle curvilinear streets
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear pattern of grid, block form, evidencing the incremental development moving north from the city core
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large, often detached properties with generous spaces between buildings Houses set well back from the streets behind low wall boundaries and substantial front gardens and latterly spacious driveways
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large, detached or semi-detached villas often gothic and Italianate with Ruskin influenced features or Arts and Craft detailing. Some prominent churches including St Philip and St James on Woodstock Road Buff and red brick detailing, carved stone capitals, ashlar lintels and mullions, red clay wall tiles and pitched porches Multi-faceted pitched roofs with mainly clay tiles and prominent chimneys
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mature vegetation in front gardens that softens architecture, screens/channels views and creates an overall leafy character to the area Front gardens average 5-10m, often incorporating gravel driveways and with brick wall, clipped hedge or iron railing boundaries Low, red brick walls with plinth detail and half round brick coping
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All open space is privately owned and is predominantly green space Large gardens, college and school grounds provide a significant amount of green space Mature garden planting provides a green backdrop and skyline to the leafy suburb
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: small areas of traditional orchard and deciduous woodland No designated nature sites The mature gardens contribute to a strong ecological network supporting a diversity of wildlife that is largely unrecorded
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet, residential suburb with wealth of educational facilities and strong links to the University Generally private spaces Cluster of commercial premises at Banbury Road/North Parade Avenue and scattered catering establishments across the area
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major through-routes along Banbury Road and Woodstock Road, linking the city core to the north suburbs Connections to the canal corridor to the west, with links to Port Meadow and Thames Path beyond

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct connections to the River Cherwell to the east
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views within the area are generally constrained along the streets by mature vegetation, block pattern and curving roads The southwest part of the area forms part of the landscape in the view from Port Meadow, identified in 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The prominent spire of St Philip and St James Church is identified in the description of this view, representing Gothic North Oxford.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of the character area is within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation area Park Town Grade II listed park and garden Church of St Philip and St James Grade I listed building Various Grade II listed buildings, particularly large properties around Norham Gardens in the south of the area
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

North Oxford is a distinctive and recognisable suburb of Oxford due mainly to its scale and individuality and high quality of the Classical and Gothic architecture, mature trees and wide leafy streets. It has strong associations with the University and ongoing links with academic institutions has a strong presence. There is a close relationship with the historic city core and strong sense of place that is distinctive to academic Oxford.

Banbury Road and Woodstock Road provide important gateways to the historic core from which many people perceive a sense of high townscape quality.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Incremental change has resulted in some negative features including large, open driveways in replacement of leafy front gardens. Localised deterioration in the fabric of the townscape including buildings, boundary walls and street furniture.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – pockets of priority woodland habitat and unrecorded garden habitats
Historic Integrity	High – unique Victorian suburb
Re-creatability	Low – distinctive Classical and Gothic architectural details
Intervisibility	Moderate – distinctive church spire within Port Meadow view of the historic city skyline
Open Space	Low – private gardens and college grounds

Sensitivity to change

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its distinctive street and block pattern, the distinctive architectural fabric and its cultural connections to the University.

Its status as a Conservation Area has been instrumental in conserving its character and much of the area has not suffered from inappropriate development or other changes. Incremental change has occurred over time in response to new uses, such as the increase in car ownership and conversion of buildings to business and institutional uses and for multiple-occupancy. Change should respect and respond to local character so that it enhances the townscape.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New tall development that is conspicuous and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cone
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in removal of distinctive architectural details and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including original materials and details of buildings, street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with other/uncharacteristic materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels that would reduce the quiet character of the area
- Provision of car parking places / new driveways that results in the removal of front gardens, vegetation and boundary walls that characterise this area
- Demolition of historic buildings that are no longer fit for purpose
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as visual screening or boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development is generally well-integrated and respects the rich historic and cultural character of the area. Some alterations to buildings are insensitive. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a strong sense of place and identity associated with Victorian development, with distinctive architectural details and street furniture including lantern and swan-neck street lights and cobble kerbsides. Significant

Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The building types, forms and scale are appropriate to their context and contribute to a coherent and distinctive form of development. It is not a compact or walkable neighbourhood. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority, although streets are generally quiet and cyclists are a common sight. Main bus routes into the historic core pass through the area. Limited
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised and there is no variety of green spaces. Large gardens with mature trees and shrubs contribute to the local ecological network. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited to the churchyard Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a predominantly residential area, comprising predominantly large single dwellings. Some large properties have been split for multiple occupancy. There are a various educational establishments and small number of services. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are generally well-designed in relation to their function and are well-integrated by coherent use of materials and styles. There are very limited communal spaces in this suburb. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	There are numerous Victorian properties, which have have been adapted to meet a change in demands. Modern adaptations are often difficult to integrate. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The private and public realm is generally well-managed with a sense of ownership pertaining to the historic features. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the North Oxford character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: None</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: None</p> <p>Play Space: None</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: None</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: small sites at St Margaret’s Church, Woodstock Road Baptist Church, St Andrew’s Church and St Philip and St James Church</p> <p>Private Open Space: scattered locations including St Hugh’s College grounds, Oxford Prep School, Kellogg College and Wycliffe Hall</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: St John’s College sports ground</p>

Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: in University China Centre grounds Traditional orchard: isolated pocket
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Town

The above green infrastructure assets within the North Oxford character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4B JERICHO



Photo 1: The architectural form is dominated by simple two storey terraced cottages



Photo 2: The trees in the grounds of St Barnabus School provide a leafy character



Photo 3: Walton Street is the main thoroughfare and heart of Jericho and has a lively character

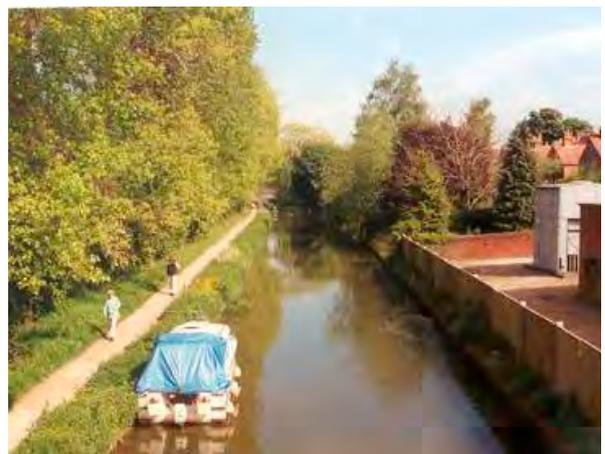


Photo 4: The Oxford Canal forms the western boundary of Jericho



Photo 5: Vibrant neighbourhood centre along Walton Street



Photo 6: Modern flats enclose the Victorian cemetery



Photo 7: Narrow streets of Victorian terraces



Photo 8: Blocks of modern development contrast with the Victorian terraces



Photo 9: Oxford University Press is still prominent in this area



Photo 10: More detail and front gardens to properties moving further north through the area

4B JERICO

Description

Jericho character area is immediately to the northwest of the city centre, on a first level river terrace of the Thames, between the Oxford Canal and Walton Street. It is Oxford's first purpose-built residential suburb, largely constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries. The suburb expanded in response to the need to accommodate workers in the expanding local business including the Oxford University Press and Jericho Iron and Brass Foundry (then Eagle Ironworks and now Lucy Group Ltd). It was historically a predominantly working-class area and was recorded as a slum in Thomas Hardy's novel "Jude the Obscure".

Industrial development in the west of Jericho began in the early 19th century, with the establishment of a boat builder's yard. Further development, including relocation of the Oxford University Press in 1825, was driven by use of the canal to transport raw materials. The University Press building is a large factory of late classical style. The buildings at the front of the site on Walton Street are more decorated and retain traditional features, than the more functional factory buildings to the rear.

Housing began to develop in the early to mid-19th century. The south of suburb is built on a tight grid street pattern. Narrow streets through much of the area are characterised by terraces of early Victorian, back-to-back cottages with enclosed, small rear gardens and flat frontages with front doors directly onto narrow footways. There was some substantial redevelopment in the mid- to late-20th century to improve the living conditions of the area, resulting in replacement of some Victorian terraces with mall blocks of flats and more modern terraces. There is little vegetation and the streetscape is often dominated by parked cars. Infill and backland development is common through this area. This, combined with phases of past redevelopment, has resulted in some incoherency of identity.

The density of development gradually reduces moving north through the character area, with larger gardens to properties on Juxon Street and more substantial, grander terraces along Southmoor Road to the north of the former Eagle Works site. The Eagle Works site was redeveloped in the early 21st century, and modern five-storey apartments within the footprint of the former factory buildings overlook the canal and St Sepulchre's Cemetery. This part of the character area is leafier, with the cemetery providing a substantial green space, mature trees in rear private gardens and hedges, small trees and shrubs in small front gardens.

The school grounds of St Barnabas C of E School, the Oxford University Press front quad and St Sepulchre's Cemetery provide small but important green spaces in this dense, urban area. The cemetery is the only public open space. It was opened in 1849 as an 'overflow' for the parishes of North Oxford whose churchyards were filled as a result of the 19th century Cholera epidemics. Modern development around the cemetery, impinges on the Victorian character of the green space in part. The Oxford Canal forms the boundary to the west of Jericho.

Once the home to bargemen and factory workers, it is now a fashionable and vibrant suburb of Oxford. Walton Street provides the main thoroughfare on the eastern edge of the area and is the heart of Jericho with a variety of exclusive shops and restaurants and a lively character both day and night.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled River Terrace – gives rise to the gently descending topography, west towards the canal
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of businesses in response to construction of the canal Oxford's first purpose-built residential suburb with a tight grid street pattern, to house the workers Early 19th century development of artisan housing in St Thomas' Field Late 20th century redevelopment and infill Early 21st century redevelopment of former factory site
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford canal along the western boundary Relocated Oxford University Press – 1825 Victorian architectural fabric including cemetery and remaining terraces
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight, geometric grid with small block size of back-to-back terraces in the south of the area Irregular blocks at the edges, adjacent to the canal
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined at front and back of properties, along the street. Breaks down along the canal where there is some access
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks of tight terraces High density of buildings around tight, enclosed streets
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple two-storey terraced houses with front doors directly onto the street More decorated / gothic terraces in the north, towards the North Oxford suburbs Red and buff brick or painted, rendered exteriors with slate roofs Stone lintels and wooden sash windows to Victorian terraces Mostly flat-fronted properties with little detailing Oxford University Press is remaining large, early 19th century factory St Barnabas Church (rubble wall with brick features) tower is a landmark
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow streets with sense of enclosure and shade Front doors lead onto the street in most cases Narrow footways Limited street furniture – black street sign posts and bollards with some 'Victoriana' wall-mounted lights Highly urban environment with few front gardens and dominance of cars parked along the streets
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly a hard built environment. Small private, back-to-back gardens Some small front gardens, particularly moving north through the area Formal, closely mown grass quad with specimen trees within the Oxford University Press land. Occasional mature trees on street corners, in private gardens and school grounds St Barnabas C of E school playing field with a row of trees within a wall and railing boundary St Sepulchre's Cemetery is a Victorian graveyard hidden behind modern apartments on the former Eagle Works site.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: none No designated nature sites The Oxford Canal is a OCWS along the west boundary to this character area
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A residential suburb built for the first industrial community in the city with close links to Oxford University Press, iron works and the canal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now a fashionable and in parts, vibrant Oxford suburb – particularly along Walton Street, which is a busy thoroughfare with variety of shop, bars and restaurants
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walton Street/Kingston Road is the only through-route, linking north from the city centre. • The network of narrow streets is often parked up with cars • Streets within Jericho run into dead-ends to the west, where the canal is a barrier to movement • There is a single pedestrian footbridge onto the canal towpath (Oxford Canal Walk long distance path), which has links in the wider area to Port Meadow
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views are generally constrained along the narrow streets, terminated by mature trees on street corners • Occasional glimpses of the canal along narrow streets in westerly direction • Glimpses through the gates of Oxford University Press to the private quad • The north part of the area forms part of the landscape in the view from Port Meadow, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The distinctive square Italianate campanile of St Barnabas is identified in the description of this view, marking the western edge of Jericho.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of the character area is within the Jericho conservation area • The north part of the character areas is within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation area • St Sepulchre's Cemetery Grade II listed park and garden • Church of St Barnabas Grade I listed building • The University Printing House Grade II* listed building • Small number of scattered Grade II listed properties including gothic terraces in the north and St Barnabas school in the south
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Jericho is an identifiable, self-contained district of Oxford. It has a unique charm owing to its narrow streets, high density of built form and human scale. It is regarded for its quality of lifestyle. There has been some recent, high quality improvements and redevelopment within the area.

Jericho has a close relationship with the historic core as a result of its proximity to the centre of Oxford. Oxford University Press contributes the unique 'Oxford character' to this suburb.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Some poor quality built fabric with signs of neglect in places. Alterations and infill development has resulted in contrasting and sometimes conflicting urban form and changes in scale of the area, and have altered continuity of the streetscape. Limited open space.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – small, unrecorded garden habitats. Adjacent to the Oxford Canal OCWS
Historic Integrity	Moderate – early Victorian suburb that has undergone more recent change
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – distinctive church campanile within Port Meadow view of the historic city skyline. No views out to the historic core.
Open Space	Low – open space is very limited

Sensitivity to change

Jericho is sensitive to change as a result of its distinctive and generally intact geometric, block pattern, the regularity of the streetscape and its location close to the city centre, on the edge of the Thames Floodplain.

Despite recent alterations and redevelopment, Jericho has remained largely intact in its characteristic simplicity of urban form and streetscape.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area/townscape
- New tall development that is highly visible in the context of the nearby floodplain and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cone
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character established by the regularity of the front elevations of the terraced cottages
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric, including original materials and details
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and increased parking on the narrow streets that would further intrude on the streetscape
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Redevelopment has generally had respect for the historic street and block pattern, although is not always well integrated in terms of style and materials used. Form and massing is appropriate and in context throughout. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally coherent local identity. Some low quality and less attractive building styles introduced in the late 20 th century. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A compact neighbourhood, with new development in the north generally making good use of land and contributing to a good mix of building types, forms and scale. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. The single through-route along Walton Street is often congested. Limited provision for pedestrians and cyclists. Limited
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised and there is limited green space. Small-scale, back-to-back gardens form isolated pockets for limited garden species. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited to the cemetery and access to the canal Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, comprising small terraces, flats and apartments, with some larger houses in the north. Taverns/pubs a common on street corners and there is a range of shops and services on Walton Street. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Phases of redevelopment required to modernise the area. Modern development makes use of new technologies and materials to improve durability. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The historic design and layout of this character area does not lend itself to community ownership and management. Limited

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Jericho character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: Great Clarendon Street Play Area Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Sepulchre's Cemetery and St Barnabas Church Private Open Space: St Barnabas C of E School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Oxford Canal along west boundary
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Oxford Canal
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Sepulchre's Cemetery

The above green infrastructure assets within the Jericho character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4C GRANDPONT



Photo 1: Doors lead directly onto the street



Photo 2: Narrow streets of terraces with parked cars dominating the streetscape



Photo 3: Red brick with buff and blue brick detailing is distinctive



Photo 4: Distinctive buildings with turrets and balconies on the Abingdon Road



Photo 5: Views to the floodplain



Photo 6: Incremental changes in doorways and fenestration alter the character of the streetscape



Photo 7: Lower density 20th century development defines public and private space less clearly



Photo 8: Modern apartments in the north of the area mimic Victorian details



Photo 9: Extensions to the rear of properties are often conspicuous from the street level



Photo 10: Pedestrian / cycle access to the adjoining Grandpont Rec and Nature Park in the floodplain to the west

4C GRANDPONT

Description

The Grandpont character area comprises a strip of Victorian development located on the river terrace deposits and floodplain of the River Thames, on the southern approach to the city to the south of Folly Bridge. The oldest Victorian properties are built on first river terrace deposits, with later Victorian development encroaching onto the adjacent areas of the floodplain.

This compact character area is built on a tight grid of streets and is characterised by its distinct blocks of back-to-back terraces and the long line of terraced cottages along Marlborough Road in the west. The area is a mix of Victorian two-storey cottages and townhouses through the south and along Marlborough Road, and three-storey Victorian townhouses and more modern apartment blocks in the north. The tight streets are lined with terraced properties, many with front doors directly onto the street or set back behind nominal front gardens with low walls, that contribute to a sense of enclosure and human scale. The northwest of the area is formed by a lower density pattern of 20th/21st century development, where the grid and block pattern is lost and the public/private realm interface is less clearly defined. This part of the character area is characterised by clusters of low-level blocks of flats of varying styles. The most recent addition is the buff-stone, new Geoffrey Arthur Building on the waterfront.

The terraces that characterise the Victorian suburb are largely built from red and buff brick with some blue brick detailing on the older properties. Roofs are typically slated. Generally, the cottages are notable for their absence of ornamentation. The grander, three- and four-storey villas and townhouses such as those along Abingdon Road have greater detailing such as stone pillars and cornices. The Abingdon Road forms a main approach to central Oxford and is largely only developed down the west side, allowing views out from the Grandpont character area, across the Thames Floodplain. The public houses along Abingdon Road are local landmarks.

The regularity of fenestration, doorways, low red brick garden walls and hedges, and black road name signs provide integrity, sense of place and contribute to a unified streetscape. The Abingdon Road presents a less intact frontage, with a variety of property designs, mix of residential and commercial premises and discontinuous avenue of mature lime trees. Throughout the area, alterations such as skylights and dormer windows, and extensions are often conspicuous from the street. Rear extensions are common and have altered rear garden spaces and massing of development in this area, but are not often identifiable from the street.

The density of development means that there are few street trees, although substantial gardens with a variety of trees and shrubs are glimpsed over boundary walls. The area has strong links with the surrounding floodplain with views east across the College grounds towards the river and mature trees along its banks. Hinksey Park is an important and valued recreational green space at the heart of the Grandpont character area. It provides a variety of facilities, including heated outdoor pool, water play space, equipped play and tennis courts, as well as connectivity with the wider floodplain at Hinksey Lake. There is a smaller, public park in the north of the character area and access into Grandpont Rec and Nature Park, an attractive natural park restored on the former Oxford Gasworks site to the west of the character area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled and Open River Terrace and Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains – give rise to the flat topography of this area
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earliest buildings upon the river terrace deposits Later 19th century development of ‘middle class’ housing extended along the Abingdon Road in the former St Aldate’s fields Late 20th and early 21st century development in the northwest
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architectural fabric Ancient routeway and Grandpont Norman causeway
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinctive grid and block pattern Distinct change in block pattern between south of Hinksey Park and north of Hinksey Park, with altered arrangement around Pegasus Grange in the north of the area Clustered developments of 20th/21st century flats in the northwest
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very well defined private property boundaries Public and private realms are in close proximity – many doors open onto the street Valued public space at the centre of this suburb
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight streets of terraces – with no or very small front gardens High density of buildings at a human scale Large massing in places, particularly considering rear extensions into garden spaces
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively simple two-storey terraced houses, often with front doors directly onto the street More detailed three and sometimes four-storey townhouses and villas General absence of ornamentation and detail except on public buildings and distinctive villas such as those with wooden balustrades and turrets on Abingdon Road Red and buff brick with some blue brick detailing or brick and render with slate roofs First and second storey bays with stone lintels and wooden sash windows Notable area of modern development in the northwest (complexes of flats, a school and health centre) Two late 19th century churches with modest details
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenestration and doorways contribute to general regularity of the streetscape – some variation in character between each street Narrow or no front gardens and narrow footways provide human scale streets and sense of enclosure Low red brick walls with half-round coping and some hedge boundaries provide a unified frontage onto the street Black road name signs Municipal lighting and sign posts Urban environment with limited garden vegetation and no street trees Sporadic line of lime trees along Abingdon Road
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly a hard built environment with pockets of greenspace and private back gardens Hinksey Park is a substantial public greenspace in the centre of the area, providing a range of facilities including heated outdoor pool, splash play area, equipped play area, tennis courts, sports field,
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: none No designated nature sites

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some local value in Hinksey Park, which is well connected to the adjacent Hinksey Lake and the wider floodplain
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet residential suburb close to the historic core Connectivity with the River Thames and waterfront A number of public houses along Abingdon Road Hinksey Park is a popular and valued space
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abingdon Road is a busy approach into central Oxford, although it passes along the east edge of the suburb and does not directly affect the character of the quiet backstreets Designated parking spaces on the streets
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views are generally constrained along the narrow streets Some views out to the floodplain, along dead-end streets to the west and Abingdon Road to the east The south part of the area forms part of the landscape in the view from Hinksey Hill/A34 Interchange, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). There are no features within Grandpont noted as visible within this view
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms the edge of the Central Area conservation area One Grade II listed buildings: Church of St John the Evangelist
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Former Gas Works Rail Bridge across the north boundary into the Western Fringe

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Grandpont is a residential suburb with a distinctive urban character owing to its position on a narrow 'bar' between two floodplains. The regularity of the streets and characteristic dead-end streets between Vicarage Road and Lake Street are distinctive and the suburb has the character of a 'neighbourhood village'. Low brick boundary walls and hedges create a unified streetscape.

The perception of townscape quality is high as a result of the largely intact Victorian street/block pattern and architectural integrity. Hinksey Park is a high quality and valued public open space with strong visual and physical links to adjoining green space and the floodplain.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Late 20th century development has introduced a different pattern of built form to the north of Whitehouse Road. The massing and style of the 20th and 21st century development to the west of Marlborough Road is out of context with the Victorian street pattern. Alterations to individual property frontages has affected the continuity of the streetscape in places.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – small, unrecorded garden habitats. Mature trees in Hinksey Park and links to the adjacent to the Thames floodplain
Historic Integrity	Moderate – intact Victorian suburb
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low –no views of the historic core skyline
Open Space	Moderate – Hinksey Park and good links to the river and floodplains

Sensitivity to change

The distinctive, regularity of the street and block pattern and simplicity of the urban form and streetscape in Grandpont character area is sensitive to change. Change should respect and respond to this character. It also lies partially within the view cone of the key view from Hinksey Hill/A34 Interchange, which heightens the area's sensitivity, particularly to tall buildings.

Where infill has occurred to date, it is generally discrete and does not disrupt the harmony of the Victorian street and block pattern. More recent development on Whitemore Road generally corresponds with the Victorian building styles, materials and heights, although provides a different street character.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge, in the context of existing urban form and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cone
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are, insensitive to the historic vernacular (particularly those elevations that face onto the street), result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the urban area that results in loss of connectivity with the surrounding rural floodplains
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and streetscape features such as boundary walls and stone kerbs, and replacement with uncharacteristic material
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the narrow streets that would alter the quiet character of the neighbourhood and result in conflicts between parking and access traffic
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of small front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	More recent development, particularly in the west of the character area, is out of context with the distinctive Victorian character of the neighbourhood. Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong identity, associated with the distinctive block and street pattern of the Victorian suburb. More recent development is less coherent. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a relatively compact neighbourhood and the built form defines a distinct and legible street pattern. Hinksey Park is an important destination at the heart of the area. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. Limited provision for pedestrians and cyclists. Limited
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised and there is generally limited green space within the suburb. Hinksey Park is a multi-functional green space with links to the adjoining floodplain vegetation. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Hinksey Park is a key public green space and destination within the suburb. Discrete pedestrian links into the adjoining Grandpont Red and Nature Park. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, providing a mix of housing types. There are limited services integrated in this suburb. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Victorian properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally well-managed public and private realm. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Grandpont character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Hinksey Park Play Space: Hinksey Splash Play and Play Area Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Mathew's Church Private Open Space: St Ebbe's C of E School Outdoor Sport: Hinksey Park tennis courts
Strategic blue GI	River Thames (Isis) around north boundary Small boating lake in Hinksey Park
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Grandpont character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4D EAST OXFORD



Photo 1: The Plain is the site of the Medieval church of St Clements



Photo 2: Trees around The Plain form a green gateway to the city centre



Photo 3: Large properites on the Iffley Road are reminiscent of North Oxford



Photo 4: Industrial buildings are local landmarks



Photo 5: Trees within the grounds of religious institutions provide a green backdrop



Photo 6: The Cowley Road is a major conduit of movement between the city centre and the outer eastern suburbs



Photo 7: The Friary flint buildings are particularly distinctive



Photo 8: Regular streets of Victorian terraced brick cottages and town houses have bay windows and small or no front gardens



Photo 9: Modern architecture is well integrated and respectful of the unified streetscape



Photo 10: Traffic calming, vehicular road blocks and restricted parking bays to limit vehicular travel through the side streets

4D EAST OXFORD

Description

East Oxford character area lies partly on the low lying Oxford clay and partly on the second river terrace east of the Cherwell Valley, where it is contained between the rising scarp of South Park to the north and by the Thames Valley floodplain to the south. It is comparable to the North Oxford Victorian suburb in size but is distinctly different as a higher density and more vibrant suburb.

The historic core of the East Oxford character area is St Clements, a medieval bridge-head settlement and site of the medieval Church of St Clement and St Edmund's Well (now The Plain). The majority of the East Oxford suburb was built after 1850, at a time when the town was expanding to accommodate the growing population working in connection with the University and its services.

East Oxford has a distinctive street and block pattern that radiates out from The Plain, which is the gateway to the suburb. The London, Cowley and Iffley Roads radiate from here and climb gradually in altitude as they move away from the river. Their interconnecting, narrow streets form a distinctive 'spider's web' formation on a tight grid. There is a general trend towards a larger street and block pattern, larger scale properties and more spacious gardens moving south and east through the area, away from the city centre.

Most of the historic buildings of St Clements were burnt or pulled down during the Civil War and the area now represents a mixture of building ages and styles. The Black Horse Pub (17th century), Stone's Almshouses and flat fronted plaster houses (18th century) contrast with the modern shape and materials found of the Florey building (1968-70), across the street. The majority of East Oxford, though, is characterised by terraced brick houses with bay-windows and small front gardens or older, simple terraced cottages, sometimes colour rendered, with doors directly onto the street. There are often larger buildings including pubs on the street corners. Three/ four-storey gothic, red brick houses with steeply pitched roofs and detailing reminiscent of the villas of North Oxford are distinctive features of Iffley Road and similarly common north of Cowley Road, on the route to Headington. The slate roofs are particularly distinctive of this area, as is the dominance of buff brick, often with red brick detailing.

Victorian industrial buildings, some derelict, fit comfortably within the urban fabric and are often landmark features. Another distinctive feature of this area is the religious institutions dispersed throughout the suburb. These are often unique and distinctive buildings, including the former Anglican All Saints Convent (now a care home) in Leopold Street, Church of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen's House Theological College, the unusual flint church and friary of St Edmund and St Frideswide, St Bartholomew's and almshouses on the site of a medieval hospital on Cowley Road and recently renovated Convent of the Incarnation. Trees within these grounds, along streets and in private rear gardens contribute to the characteristic green skyline of East Oxford.

The regularity of fenestration, doorways, low red brick front garden walls and hedges, and black road name signs provide integrity and contribute to a unified streetscape within the residential streets. Cowley Road is a busy commercial area with shops, bar and community facilities. It presents a less intact frontage, where post war buildings are sandwiched between Victorian properties, and shop frontages have masked the architecture at street level. Secondary, vibrant community areas are found nestled within the narrow side streets throughout this area.

Avenues of trees indicate the importance of the main routes into the city, particularly the mature trees of Iffley Road and Morrell Avenue. Cowley and Iffley Road are busy through-routes between the city centre and outer suburbs of East Oxford. Views of the University Church and Radcliffe Camera down Cowley Road visually connect this suburb to Central Oxford. Views through this character area are often channelled along the streets towards landmark buildings/features.

Modern architecture is generally well integrated and respectful of the Victorian features and detailing, as well as incorporating innovative/sustainable features. It does not try to compete with landmark historic buildings, rather complement them. Examples of this are the Dorothy Wadham Building on Iffley Road, redevelopment of the Convent of the Incarnation and new student accommodation behind The Angel and Greyhound. There are some mid- to late-20th century developments that stand out and detract from the unified streetscape in places.

There is limited public open space within East Oxford character area as a result of the density of built form. Manzil Gardens on Cowley Road, the scattered churchyards and allotments on the southern edge of the area provide pockets of tranquil green space within the busy suburb. There are various important, larger public open green spaces adjoining this character area, including meadows and woodland along the River Cherwell and River Thames to the north and west, South Park to the northeast and recreation grounds and allotments around the south. Private residential gardens and the University sports ground are also important contributors to the green character and ecology of this character area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled River Terrace – landform rises gently from the Cherwell floodplain, across the low lying Oxford clays and onto the gravels
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval bridge-head settlement with 19th century expansion along St Clements Street Radiating streets east from St Clements associated with the former open fields of Cowley, for mixed artisan middle-class housing Late 20th and early 21st century infill, modernisation and extensions
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site of medieval Church of St Clement and St Edmund's Well at The Plain The Black Horse Pub dating from the 17th century Architectural fabric of medieval bridge-head settlement of St Clements including the Stone's Almshouses, Port Mahon Pub and flat fronted plaster houses dating from the 18th century The hospital (16th century) and chapel (14th century) of St Bartholomew
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinctive 'spider's web' street pattern of interconnecting streets between the main radial roads Gentle curves of the main Iffley and Cowley Road and St Clements Street Straight connecting roads with regular block pattern Street and block size becomes larger, with more spacious layout towards the south and east
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear pattern following grid block form Some confusion at the western edge with exposed backs of properties to the floodplain and at St Clements where cul-de-sacs back onto the floodplain meadows
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight streets of terraces and tall townhouses with small front gardens contribute to the sense of enclosure High density of buildings along narrow streets with narrow footways

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More open character along the radial routes and around The Plain
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older buildings in St Clements are of Coral ragstone (rubblestone) – different building styles and ages contribute to a varied character • Close to St Clements are typical early Victorian, simple two-storey terraced houses with front doors directly onto the street, constructed from red and buff brick, often used together in patterns or colour rendered exteriors • Late Victorian/Edwardian properties in larger terraces with bay windows and front gardens – combination of red and buff brick with stone lintels and mullions, and gables to the front • Gothic style red brick houses several storeys high on Iffley Road • Larger Victorian industrial buildings and workshops with timber cladding, multi-faceted or asymmetric pitched roofs – some 20/21st century change of use and renovation • Slate or clay tile roofing and prominent chimneys • Some prominent churches
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low brick walls enclose front gardens, typically including tile creasing and half-round coping • Mature garden shrub planting often softens the street scene, although creation of driveways is altering this • Avenues of trees along Iffley Road, Morrell Avenue and more recently Cowley Road • Municipal lighting • Black road name signs
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly a hard urban environment – public open space is limited to grounds of religious institutions, allotments and Manzil Gardens on Iffley Road • University sports ground forms a large area of open space adjacent to the Thames floodplain • The Plain roundabout is a landmark green gateway but is inaccessible – trees enhance The Plain as a focal point and contribute to the setting of larger buildings • Trees in back gardens, along main routes and in the grounds of the religious institutions are important contributors to the skyline, particularly in combination with trees in the adjacent floodplain
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: isolated pockets of deciduous woodland and traditional orchard • No designated nature sites • Trees along the River Cherwell around St Clements provide an important, albeit narrow link, between the Cherwell Valley and the open spaces of South Park and Headington
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy, vibrant suburb – particularly along Cowley Road, which has a variety of shops and services as well as a thriving music scene and restaurant culture • Busy area – The Plain is the point at which key routes into Oxford, from the east, converge • Students and residents cycle between East Oxford and the city centre along the main London, Cowley and Iffley Roads
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Clements Street is the main route out of the city of Oxford towards Headington and the east. Cowley and Iffley Roads are also busy through-routes, converging on The Plain and crossing Magdalen Bridge gateway to the city centre • Side-streets are quiet although dominated by parked cars • Limited direct access to the Cherwell and Thames floodplains • Good access to South Park and Headington Hill to the north

Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views towards The Plain, the 'gateway' to east Oxford over Magdalen Bridge • Long views up and down the main roads, e.g. from Cowley Road to the spire of St Mary's church in the city centre • Views along side streets are constrained by block pattern and often end with a landmark/distinctive corner building • Views from the elevated ground at the top of Divinity Road over the suburb • Religious buildings and public houses are often landmarks • St Clements forms part of the landscape in the view from South Park, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The Georgian town houses at London Place and the distinctive Florey Building are noted within the description of the view. • East Oxford also form part of the landscape in the view from The Crescent. It is noted that trees in the middle ground of the view now obscure the rooftops of East Oxford in this view.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains the St Clements and Iffley Road and Bartlemas conservation areas • Various listed buildings including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Church of St John the Evangelist and Chapel of St Bartholomew Grade I ➤ Florey Building, Stone's Almshouses and St Bartholomew's Farmhouse Grade II* • Various Grade II listed
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: various buildings and spaces including Central Morrell Avenue, Divinity Walk trees, taverns/pubs, schools and religious buildings and residential properties

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The radiating street and block pattern, high quality of buildings and individuality of shops and businesses on Cowley Road provide a unique sense of place. This is an area of diversity and vitality, where minor landmark buildings on street corners and secondary neighbourhood hubs in converted buildings provide local sense of place. Views along Cowley Road connect it to the historic core of Oxford.

The perception of landscape and townscape quality is generally high. The London, Cowley and Iffley Roads are important gateways to the historic core, down which many people perceive a sense of townscape quality.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Some incongruous post-war development. Some signs of deterioration and neglect of commercial premises.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – small, unrecorded garden habitats. Pockets of isolated deciduous woodland habitat
Historic Integrity	High – intact Victorian suburb with medieval site of St Clements, notable landmark religious institutions, conservation area
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	High – views along Cowley Road to the historic core
Open Space	Low

Sensitivity to change

East Oxford is moderately sensitive to change as a result of its radial street and block pattern, architectural distinctiveness and its location on major routes into the city centre from the east. The historic core and nodal point at St Clements and The Plain is particularly sensitive. Part of the area also forms the landscape in the view from South Park, which heightens its sensitivity.

The area of St Clements and Iffley Road have been protected from inappropriate development through its designation as a conservation area. However, the wider area has experienced and continues to experience change including some incongruous and large scale development. There is evidence of some smaller scale infill and redevelopment, as well as incremental alterations to properties throughout the area.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge, in the context of existing urban form and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are, insensitive to the historic vernacular (particularly those elevations that face onto the street), result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the urban area that results in loss of connectivity with the surrounding floodplain landscape
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and streetscape features and replacement with uncharacteristic material
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Provision of car parking places and new driveways that results in the removal of front gardens/ vegetation / boundary walls that characterise this area
- Demolition of historic buildings such as Victorian industrial buildings
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Alteration to key views of the historic cite core from new development
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees, both in the public and private realm

- Deterioration of small front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Increase in size of shops, loss of local businesses and introduction of chain store on Cowley Road that would result in loss of its unique character
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development has generally been integrated in the Victorian street pattern – although some taller buildings are out of context. Intact local sense of place Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong identity, associated with the distinctive block and street pattern of the Victorian suburb. Some incoherent inter/post-war development. Most recent development largely well-designed. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a relatively compact neighbourhood and the built form defines a distinct and legible street pattern. Mix of building types but few destinations/public space Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. Some provision for cyclists on main routes. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised and there is generally limited green space within the suburb. Some vegetation along the River Cherwell and within grounds of religious institutions and private gardens. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Few public spaces. Discrete pedestrian links to adjoining green space of South Park and Headington to the north and Christ Church Meadows to the west. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, providing a mix of housing types. Commercial land uses are focussed along Cowley Road with other food and beverage outlets throughout Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Victorian properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally well-managed public and private realm. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the East Oxford character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Bartlemas Close Amenity Green Space: Square/Garden (The Plain) and Manzil Way Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: Manzil Way Play Area Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Mary & St John Church, St Bartholomew's Chapel, St Alban's Church and Greyfriars Private Open Space: Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies and St Hilda's College Outdoor Sport: Iffley Road Sports Centre, Magdalen College Courts, East Oxford Primary School and Oxford University Rugby Football Club
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small areas within grounds of institutions Traditional orchard: within convent garden
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the East Oxford character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4E NEW OSNEY



Photo 1: The Thames and its associated architecture is a major feature and often landmarks



Photo 2: The Thames National Trail follows the Thames towpath



Photo 3: Dead-end streets are common



Photo 4: Simple domestic mid 19th century terraces are typical of the built form



Photo 5: Osney cemetery is hidden behind walls and railings, but provide a large open space



Photo 6: Modern development in similar style to the Victorian properties on the opposite side of the road



Photo 7: Some decorative details to Victorian properties in the north of the area



Photo 8: Pedestrian access across the railway from the city centre, with glimpsed views into the cemetery

4E NEW OSNEY

Description

New Osney character area is dominated by residential town houses, constructed between 1850 and 1900. It is located on the alluvial floodplain of the Isis, to the west of the railway that marks the western fringe of the city centre. The River Thames (Isis) and its tributaries thread through this area, which gives it a unique character and sense of place and distinguishes it from the other Victorian suburbs. The distinctive area, known as Osney Island, is cut off by waterways and accessed by a single road bridge.

The history of the area goes back to the 12th century with the site of Osney Abbey (founded in 1129) located between the railway and the Mill. Osney Abbey was the largest and most important of the medieval monasteries of Oxford but all that remains is some 15th century stone work in Osney cemetery.

The River Thames is an important feature, including the locks, mill and industrial riverside architecture along it. Terraced cottages are tightly packed along narrow streets where front doors lead directly onto the street, creating a sense of shade and enclosure. Terraces are predominantly red brick, with some buff brick, rag stone and occasional pale-coloured render. The channels of the River Thames and tributaries contain the tight street and block pattern, with short dead-end streets at the water's edge. The regular block pattern breaks down in the south of the character area, where there is small-scale industry and abandoned residential flats around a crescent.

The flat-fronted terraced houses are relatively simple in comparison with other Victorian suburbs. There is some decorative brickwork to properties, including diapering around window edges and large stone lintels and ledges are characteristic features. The regularity of type and pattern of fenestration and doorways contributes to the strong sense of place and integrity of the streetscape throughout this area. This is enhanced by the low, brick garden walls, black road name signs and consistent width of roads and footways. The large, red brick, industrial buildings along the river stand out as local landmarks and contrast with the human scale of the domestic terraces. These and the old mill building provide hints of Oxford's industrial past.

There has been some recent development, including a run of three-storey short terraced houses in place of a warehouse and well-integrated with the buff brick properties opposite on Abbey Road, and modern, two-storey accommodation block of Cherwell College on Osney Lane, adjacent to the railway line.

Branches of the River Thames (Isis), with grassy banks lined with pollarded willows, are characteristic features of this area and provide a range of aquatic and marginal terrestrial habitats, contributing to multi-functional blue/green corridors through the urban area. The peaceful Osney cemetery is also an important green space for wildlife, providing an area of grassland and trees hidden behind the boundary wall and railings.

Osney Village is a quiet residential urban area. The River Thames (Isis) separates it from the rest of Oxford and contributes to a sense of tranquillity, despite its proximity to the main road and industrial heritage. Access is over a pedestrian footbridge, from which there are good views over the cemetery and along the surrounding terraced streets. The Thames Path National Trail follows the tow path through this area and provides good connectivity along the river north to Port Meadow and south towards Iffley.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Floodplain landscape type – many waterways dissecting the alluvial floodplain and creating a series of islands
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly Victorian with some older Georgian houses and cottages woven into the fabric. • A virtually self-contained community in the late 19th century. • More recently, some replacement of former industrial buildings, construction of imposing residential flats along the river and some 21st century infill.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic site of Osney Abbey (founded in 1129) between the railway and the Mill, with the remains of the former abbey church on the site of the cemetery • The River Thames (Isis) including the associated architecture and Osney Lock
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight grid of narrow streets with small block size • Dead-end streets contained by the river channels and railway line • Street and block pattern breaks down in the south of the area, where modern cul-de-sacs and crescents dominate
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very well defined at the front and rear of properties on linear streets and against the tow path along the river • Breaks down at sites on the edges of the area, particularly around the modern cul-de-sacs
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight streets of terraces – many have no front garden and contribute to enclosure of the narrow streets • High density of buildings at a human scale • Generally low storey heights with the exception of the dominant riverside, industrial buildings in the east
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally simple, domestic, two-storey terraced houses, often with front doors directly onto the street • Absence of ornamentation and detail, except on public buildings such as the church and pubs and also on the industrial riverside buildings • Occasional decorative, two-tone brick work including diapering around windows on short runs of terraced units • Red brick and render with some buff brick and ashlar detailing and predominantly slate roofs • Simple fenestration and doorways • Notable area of more recent development and different architectural styles in the south of the area • St Frideswide Church on the corner of Botley Road/West Street • Bridge on Bridge Street is a 'gateway' to Osney Island
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularity of the streetscape created by the repetition of design and features, flat-fronted terraces of properties and coherent use of materials • Narrow street, generally no front gardens and narrow footways provide human scale streets and sense of enclosure • Low red brick walls and hedges provide garden boundaries • Black road name signs • Municipal lighting • Highly urban environment with few front gardens and no street trees • Row of mature willows along the river on East Street
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly a hard urban environment with small back gardens containing trees that partly contribute to trees on the skyline • Osney Cemetery is a peaceful green space enclosed by stone wall and railing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Frideswide Church grounds are surrounded by mature Horse Chestnut trees that contribute to a treed skyline in the north of the area • Branches of the River Thames (Isis) with grassy banks and rows of pollarded willows provide the context for the Thames Path National Trail
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none within the area • No designated nature sites • Trees and grassland within Osney Cemetery provide a locally value green space for wildlife. Riverside trees provide some connectivity through the area. Backwaters of the River Thames (Isis) provide a range of aquatic and marginal terrestrial habitats and the waterways provide crucial wildlife links through the urban area.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb with some established industrial land uses adjacent to the river, Osney Mill and Lock and Osney Cemetery • Botley Road is a major route into the city from the west and is dominated by traffic – dividing the area north and south • The Thames Path National Trail along the tow path is a promoted and well used route that links north to Port Meadow and south towards Iffley. The perception of the townscape from this route is nationally important
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated 'island' surrounded by the branches of the River Thames (Isis) and separated from the city centre by the railway line • Access to the city centre is via a road underbridge or pedestrian overbridge to the railway • Botley Road separates the north and south of the character area • The Thames Path National Trail is an important footpath, connecting through this area
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views are generally contained along the narrow streets • Views open out along the river from East Street • Elevated views of the townscape and Osney Cemetery from the pedestrian bridge on Osney Lane • Large industrial buildings stand out above the regular rooflines of the terraces • The south of Osney Village character area forms part of the landscape in the view from Raleigh Park, identified in the '<i>Assessment of Oxford View Cones</i>' (2015). The red brick mill buildings are identified in the description of the view.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the Osney Town conservation area • Scheduled monument: remains of Osney Abbey • A few listed buildings including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Church of St Frideswide Grade II* ➢ Osney Mill Cottage Grade II
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: a number of building and structures including the site of Osney Abbey in the south of the area, the River Thames tow path and the former Oxford Electric Light Power Station

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The isolated 'island' position, urban character and relationship with the River Thames creates the unique character of Osney Village character area. The perception of townscape quality is generally high as a result of the intact street/block pattern and integrity of architectural styles. The quality of the landscape is generally high, with well-maintained

public realm including green/blue corridors along the river and peaceful green space within Osney Cemetery.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Deterioration and some neglect of buildings including the former mill and abandoned flats in the south. There is little evidence/reference to the site of Osney Abbey. More recent development in the south of the area is out of context with the distinct block pattern of the Victorian streets and there is confusion between the public and private realm around this part of the character area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – local interest
Historic Integrity	High – intact Victorian suburb with historic site of Osney Abbey (although not particularly evident) and designated conservation area
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – some visual links to the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – Thames Path and Osney Cemetery

Sensitivity to change

Osney Village character area is sensitive to change due to its unique location on a series of islands formed by branches of the River Thames (Isis) and its distinctive and intact street and block pattern. It also forms part of the landscape within the view from Raleigh Park.

The core architecture of Osney Village is protected by its conservation area status. The simplicity of the urban form and streetscape throughout is crucial to its character and change should respect and respond to this.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly in the context of existing urban form and the historic city core and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed (particularly those elevations that face onto the street) and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the outskirts of the urban area that encroaches on the and results in loss of connectivity with the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Demolition of historic buildings

- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, particularly along the river
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development has generally been integrated in the Victorian street pattern – although some taller buildings are out of context. Intact local sense of place Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong identity, associated with the distinctive block and street pattern of the Victorian suburb. Some incoherent post-war development. Most recent development largely well-designed. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a relatively compact neighbourhood and the built form defines a distinct and legible street pattern. Mix of building types and some local destinations and links to the city centre Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. Quiet streets, easily navigable by cyclists and pedestrians, with links along the tow path and into the city centre. Links between islands are not clear. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised within the urban fabric. Important green space within the cemetery and along the riverside Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	The cemetery is an important local space. Disrupted link north to Botley Park. The Thames Path provides a longer distance link to green space including Port Meadow to the north. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, providing a mix of housing types, with some commercial and industrial land uses. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Victorian properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally well-managed public and private realm. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the New Osney character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Gibbs Crescent Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Osney Cemetery and St Frideswide’s Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Arm of River Thames (Isis) flows through the area Bulstake Stream flows through the area
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Osney character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

4F SUMMERTOWN



Photo 1: Early Victorian terraced cottages have first storey bays and small front gardens



Photo 2: Summertown villas are larger, more ornate properties with larger front gardens



Photo 3: Mixed ages and styles of property through this area



Photo 4: Smaller scale, flat-fronted terraces on narrow streets contrast with more ornate townhouses



Photo 5: St Edward's School was built in a Gothic style in 1873



Photo 6: Decorative street details and tiled front paths are particularly distinctive on Beech Croft Road



Photo 7: Banbury Road is the commercial centre of Summertown



Photo 8: More independent businesses on South Parade, leading west from Banbury Road commercial centre

4F SUMMERTOWN

Description

The Summertown character area is the most northern of the Victorian Suburbs, to the north of North Oxford (area 4A). Summertown was a village until 1879, when it was annexed by Oxford City. It is an area of mixed ages and styles of building. The first buildings appeared in Summertown pre-1850, but the predominant period of development was late 19th century. The streets are typical of a Victorian suburb, with a regular grid pattern of blocks and streets. Rows of terraces are set out on a series of side-streets off the main Banbury and Woodstock Roads that run north to south through the area. Semi-detached and detached properties are more typical to the east of the area. The regularity of the block pattern varies to the south and west, around commercial properties, pockets of late 20th century development and educational institutions and open spaces along Woodstock Road.

Building styles are varied, with the earliest parts of this area characterised by long terraces of two-storey red or buff brick cottages with slate roofs, ground floor bay windows and small front gardens enclosed by low brick walls, such as those on Middle Way. More substantial, late Victorian, red and buff brick, three-storey townhouses with bay windows, ornate fenestrations and brick details characterise the south of the area. Beech Croft Road is particularly distinctive with tiled front pathways, painted road patterns and potted street trees as traffic calming measures. The Summertown Villas are larger country houses with Arts and Crafts detailing – gables to the front, tile hung fronts, carved stone capitals and ashlar lintels and mullions. The spaces between these villas are more generous and the front gardens wider and mature front garden vegetation which softens architecture and creates leafy character. In between the Victorian streets are detached inter-war houses. St Edward's School was built in a gothic style in 1873 and is a feature of the area, on Woodstock Road.

Woodstock and Banbury Roads form the main through routes. Woodstock Road is predominantly residential, while Banbury Road forms the vibrant commercial centre of Summertown. The western side of the commercial centre is characterised by the same, moderate sized terraced properties as in the surrounding streets, whose lower floors have been converted to shop/business frontages. Large 1960s to 21st century buildings including Helen & Douglas House and the easy Hotel dominate the east side of the shopping street, with wide pedestrian frontages and car parking behind. Their modern design and flat roofs contrast with traditional built form and they are a large scale compared to the rest of Summertown. Mature trees along Banbury and Woodstock Roads make an important contribution to the townscape, enhancing the appearance of these streets. Infill residential development has generally been well integrated in this area, using sympathetic materials and styles.

The built area of the North Oxford River Terrace is at its narrowest point, allowing the open fields of the River Terrace either side to have an influence on the character of the area. There is also a relatively large amount of greenspace within the townscape fabric, in the form of front and back gardens, recreation grounds and school grounds.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled River Terrace – gives rise to gently domed topography. Suburb lies on a river terrace between the Thames and Cherwell floodplains
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early 19th century suburban village that expanded in blocks, through the 19th century 20th century infill and commercial development along Banbury Road Some 20th and 21st century infill
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architectural fabric Roman rural settlement
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main routes into the city centre along Banbury and Woodstock Roads, running north to south through the area Connecting side streets run east to west from the through routes Areas of regular grid of streets, with looser grid and larger block size to the south and west
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear pattern following grid block form Distinct private boundaries on residential streets
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streets of terraces with small to moderate sized front gardens and moderate road widths, although often constrained by road parking Sense of enclosure provided by garden planting in areas with larger front gardens Wider streets with large detached or semi-detached properties with generous gaps between buildings along the western boundary (with Woodstock Road) and eastern boundary (with the Cherwell floodplain)
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early houses are two storey, long terraces of red or buff brick with ground floor bay windows and slate roofs, small gardens enclosed by low red brick walls More substantial, late Victorian, red and buff brick, three-storey townhouses with bay windows, ornate fenestrations and brick details characterise the south of the area The Summertown Villas country houses with Arts and Crafts detailing - gables to the front, tile hung fronts, carved stone capitals and ashlar lintels and mullions. Semi-detached inter-war housing with generous front gardens on the edges. Late 20th century commercial and business properties, including multi-storey blocks e.g. offices, along the Banbury Road.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier streets have narrow (2-4m) front gardens and little garden vegetation resulting in a hard urban streetscape. Later streets have wider front gardens (4-8m) and mature front garden vegetation which softens architecture and creates leafy character. Mature trees along the Banbury and Woodstock Roads make an important contribution to the townscape, enhancing the appearance of the streets. Municipal street lights Low red brick walls with plinth detail and hedges are typical Wide public space in front of commercial units providing a hub on Banbury Road.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is predominantly a hard urban environment Pockets of recreational space such as Alexandra Park School grounds (e.g. St Edward's School Grounds) although private, contribute to the greenspace and wooded skyline Mature garden planting provides a green backdrop along some roads
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: two small areas of deciduous woodland

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No designated nature sites Street trees and garden vegetation provide limited connectivity with green spaces in the adjoining floodplain character areas
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential suburb Busy commercial centre on Banbury Road and South Parade is a hub of activity with variety of services Side streets form a quiet residential suburb with schools, colleges and recreational spaces
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major through-routes along Banbury and Woodstock roads Connections to Open River Terraces either side of the urban area.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no notable views to or from the area as it lies in a flat area between two floodplains. The surrounding Open River Terraces act as visual buffers between the floodplain and built area Views within the area are typically along the straight streets, constrained by mature vegetation in summer Long views along the wide Banbury Road
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few listed buildings including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lodge Grade II* St Edwards School Grade II
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: properties on Lonsdale Road and South Parade

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

A distinctive and recognisable suburb of Oxford due mainly to the Arts and Crafts Summertown Villas, the vibrant commercial centre on Banbury Road and leafy streets. Banbury and Woodstock Roads are important gateways to the historic core, along which many people perceive a sense of the quality of the townscape. The suburb contains a variety of land uses that are well integrated and sympathetic to each other.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Some incongruous 20th century development along Banbury Road and occasional signs of neglect of private properties.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – local interest
Historic Integrity	Moderate – Arts and Crafts and gothic architectural interest
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Low

Sensitivity to change

Summertown character area is moderate sensitive to change. Whilst it has a distinctive street and block pattern in places, some distinctive architecture and is on the main routes into Oxford from the north, it is not in a highly prominent location and does not have valued historic sites or biodiversity interest.

Summertown has experienced various change over the years, perhaps most notable the post-war commercial development of Banbury Road. The suburb continues to experience incremental change, including changes in elevational and boundary detailing as well as some deterioration of materials due to wear and tear. Parallel with the deterioration in townscape fabric is the maturation of the landscape with street and garden trees growing and changing the streetscape.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly in the context of existing urban form
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Provision of new driveways that results in the removal of front gardens / vegetation / boundary walls
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape
- Alteration to key views along Banbury and Woodstock Roads, on the approaches to the city centre from the north
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation including street trees and in private gardens
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development has generally been integrated in the Victorian street pattern – although some taller buildings are out of context. Intact local sense of place Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong identity, associated with the distinctive block and street pattern of the Victorian suburb. Some incongruous post-war development. Most recent development largely well-integrated Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a relatively compact neighbourhood and the built form defines a distinct and legible street pattern. Mix of building types and distinct local destinations and links to the city centre Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. Quiet streets, easily navigable by cyclists and pedestrians. Main public transport routes into the city centre Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised within the urban fabric. Occasional street trees provide links to surrounding vegetation within the adjoining floodplains Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited public open space, with no hierarchy. What there is well-maintained and generally inclusive Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, providing a mix of housing types, with a commercial centre containing a variety of services and businesses Significant
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Some redevelopment. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally well-managed public and private realm. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Summertown character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Alexandra Courts Play Space: Alexandra Courts Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Michael and All Angel's Church and Summertown United Reformed Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: Alexandra tennis courts
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: isolated are along Richards Lane
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Summertown character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4G NEW HEADINGTON



Photo 1: Narrow streets of predominantly Victorian terraced cottages with on street parking are typical



Photo 2: Some later Victorian and Edwardian houses have gables to the front and two storey bays



Photo 3: Alterations and additions fragment the regularity of the streetscape



Photo 4: A mixture of housing styles is present, but the low red brick boundary walls are a unifying feature of the streetscape where retained



Photo 5: More recent development breaks up the continuity of the streetscape



Photo 6: Modernisation of Victorian properties and replacement of front gardens with driveways

4G NEW HEADINGTON

Description

New Headington character area is located on the Settled Plateaux, the only Victorian suburb not to be built on the River Terrace or Floodplain landscape character types. It is located on the road to London, to the south of the historic village of Old Headington. It was developed between 1850 and 1880 as a planned Victorian village, at a time when the windmill of Windmill Road would have still stood amongst open fields. The 'village' is now surrounded by inter- and post-war suburban housing.

This planned Victorian village is identifiable from its surroundings by the distinctive grid pattern of streets lined by short and long terraces with narrow gaps between them and narrow plot widths. The high density of dwellings and narrow street widths are typical of this period of development and result in a sense of enclosure and human scale in such neighbourhoods. The early cottages lie in long terraces of red or buff brick, some flat-fronted directly onto the street and some with ground floor bays and slate roofs. Low red brick walls, with half-rounded coping and hedges typically form boundaries to small front gardens, although many have been more recently replaced by concrete or Bradstone walls. Later Victorian and Edwardian houses are recognisable by their larger scale and more flamboyant style with tile hung fronts, gables to the front, two-storey bays and ashlar lintels and mullions. Inter-war and post-war infill of bow-fronted houses and low-level blocks of flats contributes to the variety of architecture within this character area.

Simple fenestration and doorways contribute to the regularity of the streetscape where they remain intact. Alterations and additions to properties, such as porches and replacement windows fragment this pattern. Views through the area are constrained by the street and block pattern, which channels the views down the long, straight streets. The shark protruding from the roof of a house at the end of New High Street has become a well-known landmark in Oxford since it appeared in 1986. Most recent development in this character area is limited to rear extensions that are not evident from the public realm, but have reduced public garden space.

This is an urban environment with no public open space and limited private greenspace as a result of the density of building. The ecological significance of the area is also limited, with private gardens contributing to small, enclosed habitats.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled Plateaux – gently undulating area at the foot of Shotover
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Victorian terraces developed following enclosure of Headington FieldsEvidence of incremental development of various agesNow surrounded and encroached upon by inter-war and post-war suburbs of Headington
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Victorian village architecture
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Traditional grid pattern of streets with small block size and narrow plotsMixed pattern of short terraces and long terraces with variety of infill including low-level flats, semi-detached and detached housesNarrow gaps between adjacent terraces
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Well defined at front and back on linear streets

Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight streets of high density, terraced dwellings • Narrow front gardens, narrow footways and narrow streets result in sense of enclosure and human scale • Very similar throughout despite the mix of ages and building styles
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early houses are two storey, long terraces of red or buff brick, some with flat fronts and some with ground floor bay windows and slate roofs, small gardens enclosed by low red brick walls • Later Victorian and Edwardian houses with gables to the front, tile hung fronts, two storey bays with ashlar lintels and mullions and larger front gardens • Alterations and additions to properties are common, including porches and replacement windows. Rear extensions are often substantial but not evident from the street • Infill of inter-war bow-fronted housing and post-war gable-fronted dwellings
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fenestration and doorways contribute a regularity to the streetscape where they remain intact • Narrow or no front gardens, narrow footways and narrow streets provide human scale streets and sense of enclosure • Low red brick walls, with half-rounded coping detail and hedges provide traditional garden boundaries although new concrete and Bradstone walls are common • Black road name signs • Municipal lighting • Highly urban environment with small front gardens and few street trees
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public open space • Predominantly a hard, built environment with limited front and rear garden space. Ornamental shrubs and trees within the gardens soften the streetscape where the overhang
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none • No designated nature sites • Private gardens contribute to small, enclosed habitats with limited connectivity and value
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential area entrapped within the Headington suburbs
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windmill Road provides the main through-route, between Old Headington and New Headington • The village is accessed through the surrounding inter- and post-war suburbs of Headington
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views within the area are typically constrained along the narrow streets • Shark protruding from the roof of a house at the top of New High Street is a local landmark
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: All Saints Church and two properties on Windsor Street and Holyoake Road

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Distinguishable from the surrounding suburbs of Headington as a result of its simplicity and regularity of the grid street pattern and the remaining distinctive Victorian and Edwardian architectural detailing.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Changes and alterations to individual buildings has resulted in changes to patterns in doorways and fenestration, which has altered the continuity of the street. Infill development is often of low quality and not sympathetic to the historic characteristics of the area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Low
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Low – poor survival of architectural detailing
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Low

Sensitivity to change

New Headington character area is moderately sensitive to change. Whilst it has a distinctive street and block pattern, much of the distinctive architectural detailing has already been lost. In addition, it is not in a highly prominent location and does not have valued historic sites or biodiversity interest.

This area has seen a large degree of incremental and incoherent change as a result of infill development, extensions, additions and increases in traffic. The simplicity and regularity of the urban form and streetscape throughout is crucial to New Headington's character and future change should respect and respond to this character.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not respect the street and block pattern or simplicity of built development typical of the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Sense of place has been eroded by uncharacteristic infill development and alterations to Victorian and Edwardian properties. Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong, local identity, associated with the distinctive block and street pattern of the Victorian suburb. New development is often low quality and uncharacteristic. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a compact neighbourhood and the built form defines a distinct and legible street pattern. There is little variety in housing type and no clear destinations. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. Quiet streets, easily navigable by cyclists and pedestrians, with cycle lanes on Windmill Lane. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised within the urban fabric. Limited vegetation within small, private gardens. Significant street trees along Stapleton Road. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	No public open space. Public realm along the streets is generally narrow, in varying condition and sometimes cluttered with street furniture. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, with little variation of housing types and few services/facilities within it (although these are located in proximity in the adjoining area) Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. There is limited amenity space and the narrow streets are not always fit for purpose. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in varying condition. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the New Headington character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: All Saints Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Headington character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

4H NEW MARSTON VILLAGE



Photo 1: Short and long Victorian terraces are typical of New Marston Village



Photo 2: A variety of housing styles are present



Photo 3: The wooded ridge of Headington Hill provides a backdrop to the village in this view from the Cherwell floodplain



Photo 4: Small village centre at the crossroads

4H NEW MARSTON VILLAGE

Description

New Marston Village character area is located on the East Oxford River Terrace, overlooking the Cherwell Valley. It consists of just three streets, namely Ferry Road, Edgeway Road and William Street. The main development of the village took place in 1890 amongst open fields, when there was a brickworks on Jack Straws Lane, to the north of the village. There are some houses on William Street that predate 1890 that are architecturally rare examples of Victorian style. Incremental development and infill have resulted in a great diversity of housing styles and ages through the village. The Inter-war /Post-war Suburb of New Marston extends north of the village, with the Open River Terrace and Pastoral Floodplain to the south.

The village is set out on gently curving, parallel streets with a small block size and narrow plot widths. The village developed incrementally, with short terraces and semi-detached Victorian properties that once had substantial gaps between them. The spaces have since been infilled by later Victorian and 20th century development, resulting in narrower gaps between blocks. The tight street of terraced and semi-detached dwellings is high density with narrow footways that creates a sense of enclosure and human scale.

Despite the great diversity of housing styles resulting from a history of infill and property alterations, the traditional Victorian architectural style is still present. Two-storey terraces of red or buff brick with ground floor bay windows, slate roofs and small front gardens enclosed by low walls are characteristic of the Victorian village. Many of the boundary walls have been removed or replaced by alternative materials or fencing. Infill housing is in a variety of forms but mostly two-storey, with occasional three-storey dwellings. Inter-war bow-fronted housing and post 1960s gable-fronted dwellings are also present between the Victorian architecture. The municipal lighting is not distinctive, but the ubiquitous black road name signs remind us that we are still in Oxford.

Marston Road is a bust through-route that divides the village into east and west. It is here that the village shop, Scout Hall and pub are located. There is a sense of a small, but distinct neighbourhood and community. There is limited green space within the character area, although good connectivity with the adjoining countryside of the river terrace and floodplain. The Cherwell Valley to the west and wooded backdrop of Headington Hill to the east form an important landscape setting for New Marston Village. The farm and small scale fields at the western end of Edgeway Road further enhance the rural setting of the character area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Located on the gently rising land of the East Oxford River Terrace, overlooking the Cherwell Valley
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Late 19th century development on the former open arable fields of Marston Field – main development from 1890 when there was a brickwork on Jack Straws Lane• Some properties predate 1890 on William Street• Incremental development and infill resulting in great diversity of housing styles and ages• Inter-war / Post-war suburbs of New Marston extend to the north and countryside to the south

Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some good examples of Victorian architecture
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently curving parallel streets with small block size and narrow plot widths Mixed pattern of short terraces, semi-detached and variety of infill with narrow gaps between properties
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well defined at front and back on linear streets
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight streets of high density, terraced dwellings Narrow front gardens, narrow footways and narrow streets result in sense of enclosure and human scale
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early houses are two storey, terraces of red or buff brick, with ground floor bay windows and slate roofs, small gardens enclosed by low brick walls that have been replaced in places Later Victorian and 20th century infill including inter-war bow-fronted and post 1960s gable-fronted properties Alterations and additions to properties are common, including side and rear extensions, flattening of front elevations and replacement windows. Rear extensions are often substantial but not evident from the street
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenestration and doorways contribute a regularity to the streetscape where they remain intact Narrow or no front gardens, narrow footways and narrow streets provide human scale streets and sense of enclosure Low red brick walls, with half-rounded coping detail and hedges provide traditional garden boundaries although new walls and fences are common Black road name signs Municipal lighting Highly urban environment with small front gardens and few street trees
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public open space within the dense, planned Victorian village. Easily accessible countryside to the southwest The Cherwell Valley provides a tranquil setting to the southwest and separates New Marston from central Oxford Vegetation in front and rear gardens softens the streetscape
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: none No designated nature sites Park Farm Meadows OCWS forms the west boundary of the character area Private gardens contribute to small, enclosed habitats have some connectivity with the adjoining countryside and allotments
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet residential area at the edge of the suburbs, with a countryside setting Local sense of neighbourhood and community
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marston Road is a major through-route that divides the village into east and west Side streets are quiet, dead-end roads
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views within the area are typically constrained along the narrow streets Eye is drawn to local landmark buildings including the old Scout Hall on Ferry Road Headington Hill provides a green backdrop to the village Properties along the south of Ferry Road are visible from the Cherwell floodplain, across the river terrace The area falls within the Elsfield and Doris Field Memorial Park view cones, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The

	low lying suburbs form the middle ground of the Elsfield view and do not interrupt views of the city skyline. The village absorbed by the suburb of New Marston and is not evident in the view from Doris Field Memorial Park.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Public House on Marston Road

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

A small but distinctive planned village core on the edge of the large suburb of New Marston. Distinguishable from the New Marston Inter-war/Post-war Suburb as a result of its regular grid street pattern and distinctive Victorian detailing. Countryside setting on the edge of the extensive suburb of New Marston.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Not as high quality townscape as other Victorian suburbs as a result of the mix of housing styles and materials introduced incrementally over time. Some of the Victorian architectural detailing has been lost through alterations to/modernisation of properties.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – local connectivity
Historic Integrity	Low – some survival of Victorian architectural detailing
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – no views of the historic core but the area forms part of the view cones from Elsfield and Doris Field Memorial Park
Open Space	Low

Sensitivity to change

New Marston Village character area is moderately sensitive to change. Whilst it has a distinctive street and block pattern, some of the distinctive architectural detailing has already been lost. Its position on the edge of the Cherwell Valley and on the side of Headington Hill makes it visible (particularly the roofscape) from sensitive locations within the Cherwell floodplain. It also lies within the view cones of key views identified from Elsfield and Doris Field Memorial Park.

This area has seen changes over time as a result of infill development as well as extensions and alterations to existing properties. Changes and alterations to individual buildings have resulted in changing patterns in doorways and fenestration, altering the continuity of the streetscape. The simplicity and regularity of the urban form and streetscape is characteristic of New Marston Village character area and change should respect and respond to this.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not respect the street and block pattern or simplicity of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge, in the context of existing urban form and in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the character area that intrudes into the setting to the village and encroaches on the Cherwell Valley
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Provision of car parking places / new driveways that results in the removal of front gardens and characteristic boundary walls
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Sense of place has been eroded by uncharacteristic infill development and alterations to Victorian and Edwardian properties. Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong, local identity, associated with the distinctive block and street pattern of the Victorian suburb and its location at the edge of the Cherwell Valley. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a compact neighbourhood and the built form defines a distinct and legible street pattern. Varied housing type and local destination at the cross-roads. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles have the priority and the narrow streets are often parked up with cars. Quiet streets, easily navigable by cyclists and pedestrians, with links to the countryside to the southwest Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised within the urban fabric. Limited vegetation within small, private gardens. Some boundary vegetation linking into adjoining countryside and allotments. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	No public open space. Public realm along the streets is generally narrow, in varying condition and sometimes cluttered with street furniture. Limited

Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a dense residential area, with some variation of housing types and some local services Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. There is limited amenity space and the narrow streets are not always fit for purpose. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in varying condition. Limited community management. Limited

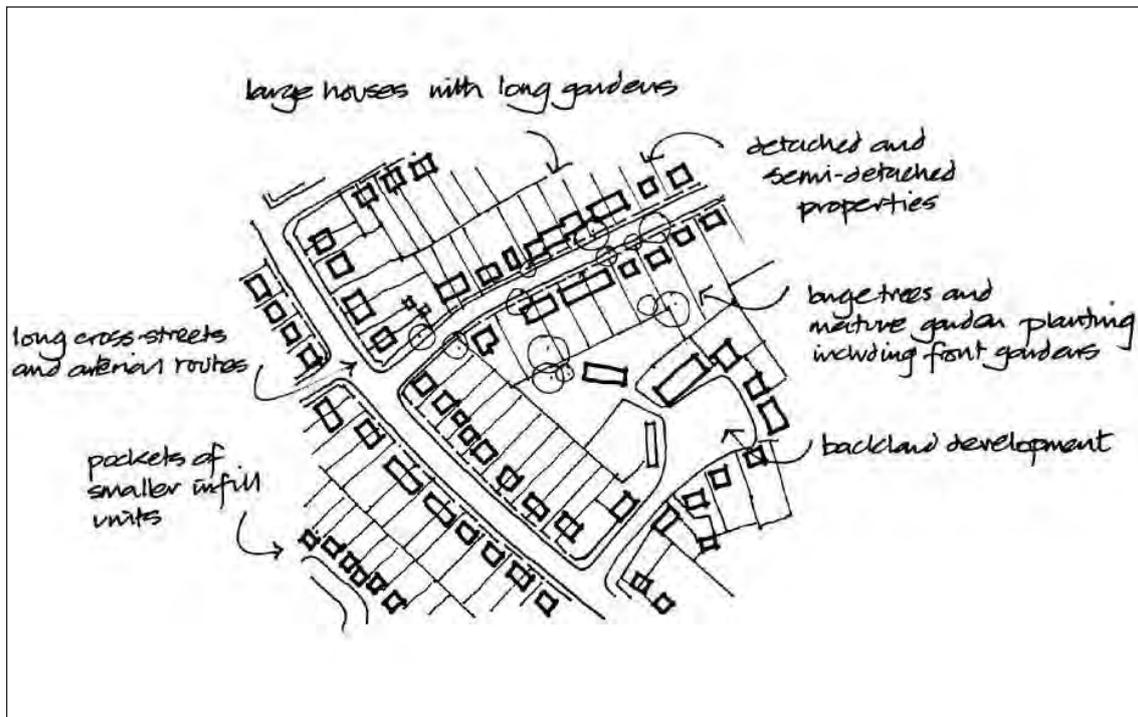
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the New Marston Village character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Marston Village character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

5 INTER-WAR/ POST-WAR SUBURBS



Example: 5G Cutteslowe / Sunnymead

5 INTER-WAR/POST-WAR SUBURBS

Generic Description

The Inter-war/Post-war Suburbs character type represents a significant period of growth of the city, linked with the industrialisation of Oxford and particularly the growth of the motor industry. The pattern of development is typified by wide streets with crescents and cul-de-sacs. Houses are typically semi-detached or in short terraces and the dominant materials are red brick, often with a render or pebbledash finish. The houses often have driveways and front gardens with shrubs and trees, which soften the streetscape. Front garden boundaries are one of the features which differentiate between these areas, ranging from unified patterns of low stone or brick walls to a variety of walls, fences and hedges.

Schools, community centres and recreation grounds often form part of the urban fabric. These suburbs tend to have a weak sense of place as a result of mass produced building materials, standard layouts, styles and details, although the ubiquitous black Oxford road name signs contribute a sense of place.

The key habitats in this type are neutral and wet grassland, woodland, wetland and ponds. The areas are otherwise often lacking in mature vegetation, with planting in front gardens being important in contributing to the townscape character.

Key Characteristics

- Wide streets with crescent and cul-de-sacs
- Houses are typically semi-detached or in short terraces
- Dominant materials are red brick, render or pebbledash finish over part or all of the building
- Front gardens, enclosed by low walls and hedges
- Schools, community centres and recreation grounds often form part of the urban fabric
- Tend to have a weak sense of place as a result of standard layouts, styles and details
- The suburbs have a good range of wildlife habitats, including a number of sites of national importance

Character Areas

- 5A Rose Hill
- 5B Cowley Residential Suburb
- 5C Florence Park and Cowley Marsh
- 5D The Slade
- 5E New Headington
- 5F New Marston
- 5G Cutteslowe and Sunnymead
- 5H North Oxford Fringe
- 5I New Hinksey
- 5J Botley Road
- 5K Barton

- 5L Littlemore
- 5M Sandhills and Risinghurst

5A ROSE HILL



Photo 1: Older houses are red brick with stone lintels and mullions



Photo 2: Street trees are features of the streetscape



Photo 3: The Oval forms a focal point for the surrounding residential properties



Photo 4: The distinctive topography allows views out to the surrounding wooded hills



Photo 5: Allotments provide open space on the hill top



Photo 6: Mature trees are important features of the open spaces



Photo 7: 21st century redevelopment of low-rise flats looking out across The Oval



Photo 8: More recent development introduces further diversity of materials to the area



Photo 9: Solar panels are a common sight on new builds and retrofitted to older properties in this area

5A ROSE HILL

Description

The Rose Hill character area is located on a distinctive domed hill – an outcrop of Ampthill Clay over the calcareous sandstone plateau. The area has a characteristic pattern of gently curving streets around the hillside and straighter interconnecting roads.

The inter-war area of housing was initially developed to the east, on the opposite side of the hill from Iffley Village. The area has a strong street pattern, with gently curving crescents responding to the landform. The houses are simple short terraces and semi-detached properties of red brick with wooden or stone window lintels and gently pitched roofs with clay tiles. Front and back gardens are bordered by a mix of red brick walls, hedges and wooden and wire fences. This creates a somewhat mismatched and cluttered streetscape character. The wide roads are bordered by grass verges in places, with some front gardens to the edge of the pavement and the occasional mature tree which provides a visual focus for the street.

Post-war development continued the pattern of gently curving crescents around the south side of Rose Hill, infilling the gap between Rose Hill and Iffley Village. The houses are generally two storey red brick houses with concrete tiles and smaller pebble dash dwellings with corrugated iron roofs. Low brick walls, hedges and chicken wire or wooden board fencing typically enclose the front gardens.

There are areas of 20th/21st century redevelopment and infill development of mixed styles, through the suburb. This includes short terraces and low-rise flats such as those around The Oval, as well as the new community centre adjacent to the recreation ground. This introduces further variety to the assortment of materials and built form, which has altered the coherence of the inter-war/ post-war suburb. New development across the area includes solar panels on the roofs and these are often visible retrofitted to rooflines through the area.

The focus of the neighbourhood is The Oval at the top of the hill where there is a small precinct of shops, Rose Hill Primary School and newly developed flats that look out over the central roundabout and public open green space. The crest of the hill, between Iffley and Rose Hill, remains as undeveloped small scale fields, now being used as a recreation ground and school playing fields. Mature oaks within and around the school grounds are important features and contribute to a green skyline. New woodland planting within the school grounds contributes to the habitats within this area, along with the allotments in the northwest that separate the neighbourhoods of Rose Hill and Iffley. There are no vehicular through routes between the two settlements and they remain separate in their identity. There is a strong hierarchy of green space through this suburb, including community lawns, small recreational fields and equipped play parks within the housing areas as well as the extensive green space in the north and links southwest into Rivermead Nature Park.

The 'Rose Hill' view cone, identified in the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones' document, is located within this area and provides raised, wooded views towards the city centre, providing a sense of elevation and individual sense of place

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms part of the Settled Plateaux landscape type, although Rose Hill is actually an isolated outcrop of Ampthill Clay.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-war development on former Iffley fields on the eastern side of Rose Hill Later, post-war development around the south of the hill 20th and 21st century infill development and redevelopment
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron Age rural settlement Roman pottery manufacturing zone
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned inter-war and post-war suburbs of short terraced houses with a distinctive road layout of gently curving crescents which reflects topography.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear distinction between public and private realm, defined by mixed boundary treatments to front gardens Less clarity around communal lawn spaces within the post-war development in the south Large areas of open public space on the hill top.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short terraces and semi-detached houses with moderate gaps between. Medium density suburb with some sense of enclosure within streets. Sense of exposure in open spaces on the hill top.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short terraces and semi-detached houses. Older houses are dark red brick with stone mullions and lintels and clay tiles. Many houses are finished in pebble dash typical of the inter-war period. Post war houses are a variety of materials and styles and include flats, terraces and semi-detached houses. Central focus provided by 'The Oval' with adjacent school the same age as surrounding housing. 21st century development on introduces more modern materials and a variety of housing types including redevelopment of modern flats overlooking The Oval. Strong presence of solar panels particularly on new buildings – particularly visible due to stepped topography of the street layout
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grass verges planted with municipal street trees. A range of thresholds between the public and private realm, including low brick walls, fences, hedges or simply a change in ground material. Front gardens and short driveways - cars are often parked off-road on short drives, in front of the house. Infill development gives rise to double parking spaces with no front garden.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong hierarchy of open space through the area. A substantial area of green space at the top of Rose Hill including the large recreation ground with equipped play area and school grounds with new woodland planting The 'Oval' is open mown grass space at the brow of the hill with paths, benches and mature trees. Active allotments have views over to the wooded ridge of Boar's Hill and Wytham Hill to the west and act as a green buffer between built up areas of Rose Hill and Iffley. Communal lawns and grass verges and road corners with trees Pockets of recreational fields and equipped play areas There is access to Rivermead Nature Reserve, an open, green space with ponds and outdoor meeting areas to the southwest

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small front gardens and larger back gardens typically contain ornamental shrubs and trees and grass.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none within the area but in close proximity to UK BAP species Deciduous Woodland in Rivermead Nature Reserve • No designated nature sites • Well-connected areas and variety of green space across the north of the area, which connects west through the edge of Iffley to the River Thames floodplain.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb of Oxford with an individual sense of community. • 21st century development of the community centre provides a hub for activities and community focused events.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No through roads - results in a peaceful and calm suburb. • Despite being adjacent, there are no vehicular through-routes between Rose Hill and Iffley Village and they retain separate identities. • Cycle and pedestrian routes connect to Rivermead Nature Park, Iffley Meadows and the River Thames, as well as to the wider suburbs and eventually into the city centre.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views to adjacent wooded skylines from many of the streets provide a sense of elevation and individual sense of place. • Ancient oaks are an important feature and contribute to the wooded skyline. • Within the area is 'Rose Hill' view cone, identified in <i>the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones'</i> (2015), which provides elevated views over the Thames Valley to the city's high buildings are afforded. However, foliage and mature trees dominate much of the view. The private allotments provide the best vantage point for these views.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of listed buildings in the north of the area on Rose Hill including the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry War Memorial, Grade II
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Two designations around Villiers Lane

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area is distinctive as a result of its underlying landscape. The distinctive topography, street layout and central focus of The Oval with its mature oaks gives the area a sense uniqueness. Redevelopment and infill housing is high quality and introduces innovative technology including solar panels to the area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The quality of built form is low in places and there is a general lack of maintenance and management of private spaces, which weakens the landscape quality. In addition, the erosion of original boundary materials weakens the coherence through the space and creates a somewhat cluttered streetscape.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate – although not designated, good connectivity and variety of green space particularly in the north of the area
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – views of the historic core from within the private allotments, although maturation of surrounding vegetation now limits the view
Open Space	Moderate – strong hierarchy of spaces with focus on the spaces in the north of the area

Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and absence of nationally valued historic or ecological features means these areas are not particularly sensitive to change. The distinctive topography and street pattern and part it plays in providing a setting to the Thames, contributing to a wooded skyline and means it has some sensitivity. Change should respect and respond to local character so that it enhances the townscape.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible on the hillside/top in the context of the adjoining River Thames floodplain
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core and wooded skylines
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern development generally follows the unique block pattern of the area, and positively impacts on the general quality of built form. However, it contributes to diminishing front gardens, through provision of parking spaces. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The elevated position and views provide a unique character. New development introduces new styles and types of housing, but is respectful of the overall identity and contributes to the strong community characteristic. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The lack of coherence in the built form makes legibility of the streetscape challenging. It is not a compact neighbourhood Limited
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Cycle and pedestrian routes connect between blocks of housing and to the wider landscape and surrounding suburbs. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Hierarchy of green spaces including substantial areas in the north that are well connected within the area and to the adjoining floodplain. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Pockets of public open space including small equipped play parks and allotments. Good footpath links into the surrounding countryside. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	Mix of terraced and semi-detached houses and low-rise flats in the residential area. There are various facilities, including a newly built community centre, educational facilities and a small shopping precinct Significant
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	A range in the quality and type of the built form. In many places, the public-private boundaries are degraded. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Evidence of solar panel provision particularly on new development. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally, the built form was not built for the long term, leading to degradation and erosion. Redevelopment of the area is more mindful of this and uses technologies to reduce environmental impact. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Rose Hill character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Lenthall Road Allotments Amenity Green Space: Williamson Way, Thames View Road and The Oval Parks and Recreation Grounds: Rosehill/Spencer Crescent Park Play Space: Rosehill Play Space and MUGA, Thames View Play Space Accessible Natural Green Space: Edge of Rivermead Nature Park in the west of the area Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Rose Hill Methodist Church Private Open Space: Rose Hill Primary School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small area links to Rivermead Nature Park to the west
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Rose Hill character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5B COWLEY RESIDENTIAL SUBURB



Photo 1: Inter-war bay fronted semi-detached houses with gables



Photo 2: Wide streets with reconstructed stone walls and driveways



Photo 3: Alterations to properties including new windows, doors and other features



Photo 4: The cemetery provides green space in an area otherwise lacking in vegetation



Photo 5: 1960s Templars Square complex of flats over retail units



Photo 6: Modern flats opposite Templars Square



Photo 7: Wooded backdrop of Shotover in views along streets to the north



Photo 8: Architectural details include arched lintels over front doors, two-storey bays with gables and hanging tiles

5B COWLEY RESIDENTIAL SUBURB

Description

Cowley Residential Suburb character area comprises two discrete suburbs to the east and south of Temple Cowley Historic Village Core (area 3C). The high-density, inter-war suburb grew up rapidly with the arrival of the motor industry. Morris bought up large areas of cheap land in Cowley and large estates were built by the council to house the factory workers. This is one such area, although many of the original factories have since gone.

Cowley Residential Suburb lies on the Settled Plateaux landscape type, an undulating platform of calcareous sandstone and limestone. These suburbs are characterised by enclosed street blocks with crescents and cul-de-sacs, which respond to the landform. The areas are densely developed with much consistency in the architectural style of building of the inter-war period. These are typically populated by two-storey, semi-detached houses with bay windows, pitched roofs and centrally placed chimney stacks. Building materials are predominantly brick and pebble dash, often painted white, and roofs are red clay or concrete tile.

Front gardens and short driveways and are enclosed by a variety of materials, including reconstituted stone, brick, or concrete, as well wooden fences and hedges in places. Vegetation is limited within the area, although planting in front gardens makes an important contribution to the street scene. There are few street trees and few features unique to Oxford.

The 1960s built shopping complex of Templars Square is located in the west of the area, providing suburban shopping opportunities with residential flats over. Large scale buildings and an open, busy streetscape quality introduces a more urban, town centre character to this part of area. New development of four/five-storey flats is focussed around the town centre, introducing modern materials and styles that contrast with the 1960s brutalist style of the shopping centre.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms part of the Settled Plateaux landscape type - an undulating area of calcareous sandstone.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-war residential and post-war commercial. 21st century redevelopment providing modern 4/5-storey flats and business premises in close proximity to the large 1960s shopping complex in the west
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rose Hill Cemetery Roman pottery manufacturing zone
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned street layout with long blocks of housing. Some cul-de-sacs and variable orientation. Lack of clarity of orientation, especially towards Rose Hill area.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly clear relationship with exception of some edges towards open areas.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached houses and some short terraces forming long blocks, with views contained at street ends, creating fairly enclosed street pattern. Large scale commercial complex in the west of the area, and focus of mid-rise flats provides an enclosed, high density, urban character.

Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of materials including red brick and pebble-dash finishes in light colours. Predominantly clay tile roofs with some in slate. Prominent bays and chimneys at apex of semi-detached properties. • Brutalist style architecture of the shopping centre and multi-storey car parks.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front gardens enclosed by low walls, in a variety of materials including reconstituted stone, brick and concrete, as well as wooden fences and hedges. Many front gardens have been converted into parking spaces, with incremental loss of front boundary walls. • Some, narrow grass verges between walkways and roads. • Tall late 20th century light columns. • Some stone setts at crossovers to vehicular entrances. • Some roads, including Mayfair Road, have been closed at one end to traffic, to stop residential streets becoming cut throughs.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hollow Way recreation ground, predominantly mowed grass with an equipped play area. Additional smaller recreational grounds and cemetery, predominantly mown grass with ornamental planting. Boundaries of local stone. • Small front gardens, larger back gardens. Typically ornamental shrubs, trees and grass. Priority for parking has led to some loss of front gardens. • Few trees are present in this area, but include ornamental trees in gardens and larger trees in the Rose Hill cemetery including pine and copper beech. • Narrow amenity grass verges and limited street trees.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none • No designated nature sites – Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh Local Wildlife Site abuts the northwest boundary to this area • Private gardens, small area of allotments, the cemetery and pockets of communal lawns and recreational space have the potential to support some wildlife habitats, including mature trees, scrub and flowering herbs.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburbs. • Commercial complex in the west of the area provides a busy activity hub, with a diverse suburban shopping offer and high density residential flats
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maze like quality to street layout. Acts as a disincentive to through traffic. • Open space areas are enclosed and access is limited. • Enclosed pedestrian cut throughs, between blocks of housing
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating pattern of streets of semi-detached houses with gables and chimneys. • Wooded backdrop of Shotover seen in views along streets to the north • Large industrial buildings at the end of streets in views to the east (in the northern part of the area)
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The northern part of the area is closely associated with Cowley Motor Works, and has a more open streetscape quality with wooded backdrop to views along streets to the north. The condition of the built form is generally good and there has been substantial redevelopment around Templars Square to rejuvenate the town centre.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The area is similar to many other inter-war suburbs in the city and does not have particularly distinctive characteristics. Boundary walls are in variable states of repair, with some completely eroded and there is evidence of incremental removal of front gardens for parking.

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 is not particularly sensitive to change. However, changes to architectural elements and the condition and style of front garden boundaries has in the past detracted from the townscape quality.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed,
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels that alter pedestrian movement
- Provision of new driveways that results in the removal of front gardens
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	New development responds to the context, particularly seeking to enhance the town centre. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The architectural style of the inter-war period provides a coherent building character. However, the incremental changes and some deterioration in the streetscape and boundaries has led to erosion of identity. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	There are few memorable and distinctive buildings within the area and it is not a compact neighbourhood, making legibility challenging. Limited
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Some road blocks introduced to the residential streets to discourage through traffic and encourage walking and cycling. Cycle links to the wider suburbs and city. Good public transport connections along main routes. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Biodiversity is not prioritised in this area and the pockets of green space are not multifunctional Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	There is a small amount of safe and attractive public green space that is not well connected. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with some variation of housing types and busy town centre. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	A range in the quality of the built form and in many places, the public-private boundaries are degraded. New residential development in the town centre provides limited external space Limited
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally, the built form was built to last. There are varying levels of maintenance and management in the private realm, contributing to a cluttered streetscape. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Cowley Residential Suburb character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Barns Court Allotment Amenity Green Space: Cowley Road and Gaisford Road Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: Gaisford Road Play Space Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Rose Hill Cemetery and Elmthorpe Convent Private Open Space: Our Lady's RC Primary School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Cowley Residential Suburb character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5C FLORENCE PARK AND COWLEY MARSH



Photo 1: Wide verges and mature trees form the approach to Florence Park



Photo 2: A few local commercial premises and public house along Florence Park Road



Photo 3: Wide streets with a variety of materials on elevations and to front walls



Photo 4: Well used allotments on former common land



Photo 5: Florence Park is an enclosed green space with formal paths between grass and mature trees



Photo 6: Mature street trees lining Iffley Road



Photo 7: Pockets of undeveloped green space at Cowley Marsh



Photo 8: High density, low-rise modern flats on former industrial land at Cowley Marsh

5C FLORENCE PARK AND COWLEY MARSH

Description

The Florence Park and Cowley Marsh character area lies on the flat landscape of the East Oxford River Terrace, which is an area of low lying clays, silts and gavel associated with the River Thames and its tributaries. Florence Park is a discrete residential suburb of inter-war and post-war housing focussed around Florence Park, a post-war designated city park.

A tributary stream flows east-west through the character area- a large proportion of open space in this area corresponds with the first river terrace and alluvium surrounding this tributary stream. A cycle way follows the course of the stream and bankside vegetation marks the course of the stream.

The southern edge of the character area is defined by a siltstone slope, with Between Towns Road running along its crest. The townscape pattern is particularly distinctive along this edge, the pattern of streets reflecting the landform and focussed around Florence Park with a wide avenue of trees creating a strong axis leading up to the entrance of the park. This is a small community focal area with local businesses and wide grass verges. Wide streets are lined with semi-detached houses with bay windows, pitched roofs and small front gardens surrounded by low brick or reconstituted stone walls. Many of the houses are finished in pebble dash and slate is the dominant roofing material. There has been some small scale modern infill and alterations to properties, as well as more substantial development of a care home and extension to St Gregory the Great Catholic School.

Major through routes include Oxford Road, Rymer's Lane and Iffley Road which can become congested with traffic. Iffley Road is notable for its mature avenue of limes which dominates the street and indicates its importance as an historic route into central Oxford.

The development of Cowley Marsh is unusual in that it is an area of mixed land uses, styles and ages of building. It is predominantly inter/post-war residential development with pockets of commercial land use, on former common land at the foot of Headington Hill, although some Victorian Terraces. There are also more recent estates that vary the street pattern, including conversion of a former commercial site to residential flats. Templars Shopping Park is a 20th century retail park, providing an extension to the north of Cowley town centre that introduces larger scale built form on the edge of the smaller scale residential suburb.

Cowley Marsh itself was a large area of meadows which has gradually been encroached upon by building. It is now an enclosed recreation ground, laid out as a sports area with tennis, cricket and football facilities, a lit 'streetsport' site with markings and equipment for roller hockey, basketball and a five-a-side football and an equipped play area. In the top corner at the edge of the recreation ground is a meadow and nature reserve. Many wildflowers, including some rare species such as the Common Spotted Orchid, flower along the edge of the copse.

Green space is generally well connected through the north of the area, between remaining small fields that are now recreational fields, allotments, school grounds, Florence Park, through to Cowley Marsh recreation ground and over the character area boundary to Ly Valley. From the north of Cowley Marsh it is possible to walk up and over what was formerly known as Lye Hill, now Southfield Golf Course, along to the Boundary Brook and up through the Lye Valley Nature Reserve.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florence Park on Settled River Terrace giving rise to a low-lying, flat landscape of clays, gravels and silts cut through by a tributary stream on the Isis. • Cowley Marsh on East Oxford River Terrace - a flat landscape at the bottom of Lye Hill.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A residential suburb of inter-war and post-war housing focused on Florence Park, a post-war designated city park opened in 1938. • Development on the former common land of Cowley Marsh.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neolithic pit circle • Fringe of medieval settlement at Temple Cowley • Inter-war/ post-war suburban development on Cowley and Iffley fields and part of the common land of Cowley Marsh.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An organic grid of long street blocks adjacent to Florence Park, but shorter streets and some crescents and cul-de-sacs to the east and west of the central area. • A more rectilinear grid in housing areas in Cowley Marsh, although modern infill development has altered this. • Institutional buildings in large plots.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear relationship of front and backs although back garden boundaries border the open space areas. • Public-private interfaces are usually in the form of low brick walls in the inter/post war developments, although have been eroded in places. The newer developments have less coherent and distinctive boundaries. • Areas around the open space and industrial land uses on Cowley Marsh include some exposed back garden or yard boundaries.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential areas marked by close spaced semi-detached properties in generally wide streets, with front gardens of generally three to six metres. The longer streets create an open spatial quality, contrasting with the more tightly developed pockets. • Diverse land uses adjacent to Cowley Marsh, as well St Gregory the Great school site to the north of Florence Park, are more open and larger in scale. • The large scale Templars Shopping Park in the south of the site, intrudes on the smaller scale residential surroundings.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. Materials are predominantly render or pebble-dash and red brick with clay tile roofs. Bay windows and gable ends are features of some streets. • Modern infill development contributes to the diversity of the area, with the addition of flats and cul-de-sacs. • Cowley Marsh area includes two/three-storey flats and some commercial/industrial buildings. • St Gregory the Great School, undergone 21st century development, introducing contrasting, large scale materials and form. Boundary vegetation buffers the site.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front gardens are enclosed by low walls of reconstituted stone, brick and concrete. Some streets have a lot of diversity in their boundary features, with no boundary features remaining at all in places, whilst others close to Florence Park have consistent brick wall detailing. • Large and mature street trees are notable features on some of the main thoroughfares and the wide avenue along Florence Park Road is particularly distinctive as a focus at the centre of the area.

Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An avenue of trees and wide grass verges creating a strong axis leading up to the entrance of Florence Park, a designed park which forms the focus of the area. • Florence Park is a large city park alongside Boundary Brook with ornamental planting, formal avenues, sports provision, equipped play area and open grass areas. • Some retention of former small fields as recreational fields and hedgerows and trees mark out former enclosure boundaries. • The Iffley Road contains a mature avenue of limes. • Two substantial areas of allotments within the area, one to the north of the school and the other either side of the stream on the former common land of Cowley Marsh. • The open areas of Cowley Marsh include open sports fields and a play area, bounded by a tree belt, with sparsely populated trees within the park. • The Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh local wildlife site extends into this area, providing access to a number of woodland walking and cycle routes.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: pocket of good quality semi-improved grassland near Cowley Marsh, small areas of traditional orchard, deciduous woodland of the Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh wildlife site extends into the east of the site. • No designated nature sites • Boundary Brook Nature Reserve OCWS - created from 2ha of allotments, the park scrub, woodland, a pond and a wildlife garden • This area contains a large amount of open space, extensive allotments and school grounds. These contain aquatic habitats, mature trees, short grassland, scrub and flowering.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb with small community focal areas such as Florence Park Road and Temple Road on the edge of the area. • Florence Park is a well used open space. • Templars Shopping Park at the south of the site provides a diverse shopping offering, with a large customer car park. • Oxford Road has a small shopping street, with a small selection of shops and restaurants. • A large primary and school secondary school site, as well as small commercial/industrial in the east of the area.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iffley Road and Cowley Road/ Oxford Road are major routes through the area to the city centre. • Sustrans route 57 runs along the northeast boundary of the area, connecting to Sustrans route 51, into the city centre, as well as into the wider countryside to the east of Oxford. • PROWs and local cycle routes connect the area to the Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh wildlife site, as well as to the surrounding suburbs.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views are generally contained within the area with the exception of some longer views to Temple Cowley and of mature trees above the skyline of roofs and chimneys. • The northeast of the area forms part of the landscape within view from Crescent Road, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The trees within Cowley Marsh sports field contribute to greenery in the low-lying middle ground of the view.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: East Ward Allotments and United Reformed Church on the corner of Temple Road
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Strong hierarchy of open space in the area, including Florence Park, Cowley Marsh and the corridor of Boundary Brook that are valuable components of the urban landscape. The area focused around Florence Park has a coherent pattern of inter-war development and is higher in landscape and townscape quality than the area to the east of Cowley Road. In places, street trees are mature and create an important sense of maturity to the urban environment.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The inter-war housing is similar to many other inter-war suburbs in the city. It does not have a particular identity or distinctive characteristics. The boundary features are eroded in places, a consequence of the desire for more parking space instead of front gardens.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate – variable across the area
Biodiversity	Moderate
Historic Integrity	Moderate – former common land retained as pockets of open space
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core, although forms part of the Crescent Road view cone
Open Space	High

Sensitivity to change

The inter-war housing areas are generally quite robust, other than in respect of incremental changes such as through home improvements and dilapidation of boundary walls. Cowley Marsh and Florence Park are historic and valued open spaces that are particularly sensitive to change. Vegetation within Cowley Marsh also forms part of the view from the key viewpoint identified at Crescent Road. The area is moderately sensitive to change.

The main changes to the area are evident in the Cowley Marsh area, where post war development has incrementally begun to erode the open character.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces and ecologically sensitive sites
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form and considering the view from Crescent Road

- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the character area that intrudes into open space around Cowley Marsh and Boundary Brook
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and increased parking on the roads that would alter the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature parkland trees, remnant hedgerows and pockets of deciduous woodland, in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and / or neglect of public and private green spaces
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space, private gardens, in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as wind breaks / visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Modern built form is generally larger scale than the characteristic inter/post-war properties, although generally well integrated. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Distinctive street pattern of similar properties that has Florence Park as its focus. Less identifiable pattern to the east and west of the central area. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The inter-war housing around Florence Park is generally coherent and has a strong relationship with the park. Development is more varied and less coherent around Cowley Marsh with few notable destinations Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Cycle networks and pedestrian routes connect the area to the public green spaces and along Boundary Brook to Cowley Marsh and the Lye Valley local wildlife site, as well as access to Sustrans routes into the city centre. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	A variety of green space, some of which prioritise nature and diverse ecosystems as well as connectivity to wildlife sites outside of the area. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A hierarchy of open spaces that encourage social and civic inclusion through a range of opportunities and functions. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with some variation of housing types and range of local services and facilities for retail, education and recreation. Significant

Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	A range in the quality of the built form. In many places, the public-private boundaries are degraded Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and redeveloped to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Florence Park and Cowley Marsh character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Cricket Road allotments, Elder Stubbs Gardens and Barracks Lane Community Garden Amenity Green Space: Townsend Square 1, 2, 3 and 4 and St Johns Parks and Recreation Grounds: Donnington Playing Field, Florence Park and Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground Play Space: Florence Park play areas and basketball, Arnold Road Play Area, Ridgefield Road Play Area, Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground Play Area and MUGA, John Allen Recreation Ground Play Area Accessible Natural Green Space: Barracks Lane Meadow Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: Larkrise Primary School, Townsend Square 5, St Christopher's Primary School and Iffley Academy Outdoor Sport: Florence Park bowling green and tennis courts, St Frideswide Primary School, Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground tennis courts
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Local Wildlife Site: Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Boundary Brook Nature Reserve and Barracks Lane Meadow
Priority habitat Index	Good quality semi-improved grassland: small area on north edge Traditional orchards: isolated, scattered pockets Deciduous woodland: small area near Cowley Marsh
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Florence Park and Cowley Marsh character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5D THE SLADE



Photo 1: Inter-war semi-detached, two-storey houses with some mature garden planting



Photo 2: A range of materials and finishes define front garden boundaries



Photo 3: Two-storey properties with bays and some front gardens have been converted to driveways



Photo 4: Small public green space on the edge of The Slade and Lye Valley



Photo 5: Enclosed playing field on the edge of the Lye Valley



Photo 6: Woodland along Boundary Brook forms the end of views along the residential streets

5D THE SLADE

Description

The Slade character area is an area of inter and post-war residential estates in the parish of Cowley. It was developed on an area known formerly as Headington Moors, an elevated area, grazed by cattle and sheep, overlooking east Oxford. It remains closely linked to the large open areas adjacent to the Boundary Brook.

The street layouts and building styles are typical of the inter-war and post war period, with defined street blocks with a regular proportion of front to rear garden space. Front garden boundary walls are a typical feature of the area in a range of materials, particularly reconstituted stone. Many front gardens have been converted to paved parking areas, with some removal of hedges and shrubs from the streetscape as a result. Properties are predominantly two-storey semi-detached, pebble dash or rendered, with features including ground floor bays, two-storey bays, arched door lintels and pitched front elevations.

This area of housing abuts a large open space to the west, which contains a number of natural features and recreational facilities and includes the area of fen along the Lye Valley. The woodland along Boundary Brook forms the end of the views through the area, along the roads that run northeast to southwest such as Coverley Road. Beyond this, the view extends over Oxford and to the wooded ridges beyond.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux landscape type - housing on the edge of the deeply incised Lye valley.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally the commons of the 'Hundred Acres' at the edge of Cowley Marsh Inter-war and post-war housing development.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship to remnant natural landscape of the Lye Valley.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular grid of long street blocks with some streets on a gentle curve.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private/ public realm interface is generally clear. In some places, the boundaries have been removed, making the interface less distinct.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street widths vary from wide streets with large front gardens which create an open spatial quality, to streets with a narrower proportion of street and garden. Predominantly consists of two storey, small scale residential built form.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally semi-detached properties, with some blocks of low-rise flats, mainly finished in render or pebble-dash with some red brick, with a mix of slate and clay tile roofs. Some ground floor bays, also two-storey bays with pitched front elevation. Occasional alterations and extensions including addition of porches to the front or side of properties.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable features include front garden boundaries, many of which are reconstituted stone, but with a variety of other elements including hedges and fences. A substantial number of front gardens have been replaced by paved parking areas, which results in a harder streetscape with limited vegetation.

Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited public open space, including Peat Moors playing field on the edge of the Lye Valley in the north of the area, which includes the woodland edge, grass sports pitches and an equipped play area. Few trees and shrubs overhang private boundaries. Allotments, an equipped play area and golf course extend from the boundary to the southwest of the area.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: Deciduous woodland extends into west edge in places No designated nature sites Bounded to the west by the Lye Valley and Cowley Mash local wildlife site, which includes deciduous woodland and lowland fens
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet residential suburb.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No through roads to the surrounding suburbs so generally quiet roads. Public footpaths lead from the west of the area into the Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh local wildlife site.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views along the straight roads, in a northwest-southeast direction, over the woodland edge towards the city of Oxford and beyond to the wooded hills.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Housing is in generally good condition and the consistency of housing style contributes to the local sense of place. The relationship to the open space of the Lye Valley to the west, with views to a wooded backdrop and beyond to wooded hills, contribute significantly to the quality of the urban environment.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The area is similar to other inter-war suburbs in the city. It does not have a particular identity or distinctive characteristics. Boundary walls are in variable states of repair, with many completely removed to allow for parking. There is limited vegetation within the area, resulting in dominance of built form.

Indicators of landscape value

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

Sensitivity to change

This area is not highly sensitive to change due to its lack of particular identity or distinctive characteristics. However, its elevated position above the Lye Valley makes the western edge visually sensitive to change. Changes such as minor changes to buildings through home improvements, and the incremental change to front gardens, in particular to boundaries, have resulted in minor changes in the townscape over time.

Threats to local character include:

- New tall development that is highly visible due to the elevated location, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form on the edge of the Lye Valley
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and removal of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development and alterations are generally well integrated and respectful of the block pattern, scale and coherency of housing type. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong, local identity, associated with the repetition of housing styles. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	It is a relatively compact neighbourhood, with a legible street pattern. There are limited recognisable edges, buildings or destinations. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles generally have priority, with on-road parking common in many streets. Limited provisions for cyclists and pedestrians through the area. Limited
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised in this suburban area, although is between the Lye Valley and Open Magdalen local wildlife sites. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Peat Moors recreation ground that provides access to inclusive community facilities and sports pitches. Easy access to larger, multi-functional wildlife site and equipped play area to the west and south edges. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	A dense residential area with predominantly semi-detached housing and some small blocks of flats. Few community services, including community centre and small number of retail/service units on The Slade. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in the quality of built form and public realm through this area. Streets are wide and generally fit for purpose. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient. Incremental changes in the streetscape and boundary features have taken place to meet changing circumstances. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the The Slade character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Peat Moors Recreation Ground Play Space: Peat Moors Recreation Ground Play Area and MUGA Accessible Natural Green Space: Lye Valley extends into the area Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Lye Valley forms wet boundary
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: extends into west edge form the Lye Valley
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the The Slade character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5E NEW HEADINGTON



Photo 1: Long streets with uniform semi-detached houses



Photo 2: Mature front garden vegetation



Photo 3: Infill development in backland plots



Photo 4: Avenue of trees on Woodland Road



Photo 5: Views to John Radcliffe hospital



Photo 6: Naturalised, informal green space at Rock Edge nature reserve



Photo 7: Dispersed public open space providing equipped play and grass fields



Photo 8: London Road is a busy high street with variety of retail units



Photo 9: A range of architectural styles and alterations to properties



Photo 10: A range of architectural styles contribute to a diverse residential streets in places

5E NEW HEADINGTON

Description

The New Headington character area lies on the calcareous sandstone plateau of the Settled Plateaux landscape type. It comprises an extensive area of inter war and post war housing surrounding the planned Victorian village of New Headington and spanning London Road. The population growth of Headington between 1921 and 1931 resulted in the formation of a suburb, linking the three villages of Headington, New Headington and Headington Quarry. The new suburb was, and still is, focused around the busy London Road, a major arterial route into Oxford from the east, and a busy shopping street.

This is a diverse area with a variety of residential and commercial built form including detached, semi-detached and short terraced houses as well as small blocks of low rise flats in a range of architectural styles. There has been substantial modern infill, increasing the diversity of the area and occasionally removing green space. This includes blocks of student accommodation and new commercial units on London Road, and small cul-de-sacs of higher density semi-detached houses and flats.

There are a number of interesting historic elements to the area, for example, the 13th century windmill of Windmill Road was destroyed and replaced many times, but still survives as a road name. The Rock Edge Nature Reserve (formerly Crossroads Quarry pit) on the corner of Windmill Road and Old Road, is a surviving reminder of Headington's importance as a quarrying village. The last remaining pillar of the Headington Union workhouse on London Road alludes to a different past and the avenue along Woodland Road has survived as an important local feature.

This is an area of high density development with green space limited to pockets along roadsides and to the rear of housing areas, the most notable being Valentia Road Park, Rock Edge Nature Reserve and Margaret Road Recreation Ground. There are some substantial private gardens, particularly in the northwest of the area, and substantial mature trees link along Woodlands Road and Cuckoo Lane along the north boundary with Old Headington Core (area 3B).

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled Plateaux landscape type- flat landscape at the top of Headington Hill.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An area of swift growth as a residential suburb in the early inter-war period.The area was formally a part of Headington fields (shown as arable on 1803 map).Substantial modern infill and redevelopment.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Early Saxon burialsPlace name evidence of former land uses, including Windmill Lane and former quarries.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wide, straight streets on a loose gride with semi-detached housing set in moderate gardens with generous spaces in between.Street and block pattern breaks down at the edges where cul-de-sacs and closes have been more recently developed.Large scale buildings such as schools and offices sit within open grounds, enhancing the sense of space
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Generally a clear pattern of public and private spaces, with some overlooking of public spaces by house fronts.

Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairly uniform pattern of streets of semi-detached houses, in a low to medium density layout. Street widths vary but with quite open proportions. Influence of larger scale built form, such as flats, hospital and a school. These buildings are fairly well integrated into the area.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached and detached inter-war house with brick, render or peddle dash finishes. Some buildings include half timbered detailing and reconstituted stone on front elevations. Clay tile roofs are prominent. Incremental infill development introduces modern built form and materials, which contrasts with the inter-war housing and contributes to the diversity of this area, in contrast with other inter/post-war suburbs.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street type varies throughout the area, from quiet residential streets to the busy largely commercial London Road. Residential streets include a diverse selection of front garden boundaries, including brick, reconstituted stone, fences and hedges. Some brick walls have distinctive black pier caps. There is a lack of mature vegetation in front gardens. The busier roads, such as London Road, include urban road markings, signage and traffic lights as well as defined cycle lanes.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few pockets of public space dispersed across through this character area, including bowls green, equipped play areas, small communal lawns, allotments and nature reserve. Rock Edge Nature Reserve is on the site of a former quarry on the corner of Windmill Road / Old Road, and provides open space with grass, trees and footpaths. There are notable mature trees along Woodlands Road and Cuckoo Lane, around the boundary to John Radcliffe Hospital and Old Headington.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: deciduous woodland in Rock Edge nature reserve Rock Edge nature reserve is designated SSSI and LNR The quarry supports small areas of biological interest in the scrub and woodland. Small recreation grounds provide little in the way of semi-natural habitat, with private gardens making the most significant contribution to ecology.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential with commercial/ retail along London Road. Busy scene along London Road, quiet residential suburb behind.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> London Road is a major arterial route into the city centre. Local cycle routes extend to the wider countryside to the east and the surrounding suburbs, including South Park to the west.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are long views along some streets, including that from Woodlands Road towards the city centre and in areas adjacent to the recreation grounds. There are some longer views to Headington and beyond from the Barton Road area.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few listed buildings within the area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Britannia Public House (Grade II) ➤ Stone on London Road (Grade II) ➤ The Farm (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The overall quality of the urban environment varies but it is a popular and well cared for residential area. There are a number of historic associations, such as street names, with connection and views to adjacent areas.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Diversity of housing type and styles reduces the coherency of the townscape. Private boundary walls are in variable states of repair and there is a lack of street trees. Incremental has reduced the amount of green space in this area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Low – small remnant area of former quarries
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Low – limited hierarchy of open spaces

Sensitivity to change

This area is not particularly sensitive to change. The London Road is most sensitive to visual change as it is a main arterial route in and out of Oxford and forms an impression on motorists entering Oxford from the east.

The main change to the area has been through infill development on backland plots, and through incremental changes to architectural elevations and front garden boundaries.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces that further reduces open space in this high density area
- New tall development that is highly visible in the context of existing urban form and considering the approach to the historic city core
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development has generally had respect for the historic street and block pattern, although is not always well integrated in terms of style and materials used. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Mixed building types and styles results in lack of coherence and identity within the area. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Not a very compact neighbourhood, making walkability challenging. Street pattern is varied across the area, with a more distinct pattern in the northwest. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles are prioritised. Cyclists and pedestrians are accounted for along main roads with designated routes. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	An isolated nature reserve and designated SSSI. Elsewhere, isolated areas of open space, including gardens and recreational areas, provide some habitat opportunities, but nature is not enhanced or prioritised Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Pockets of public open space including small equipped play parks and recreation grounds. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	A dense residential area with retail, educational and healthcare facilities. Consists of a range of dwelling types. Significant
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is generally good quality of built form and public realm through this area. Streets are generally wide and fit for purpose. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient. They have been redeveloped, adapted and altered in places, to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the New Headington character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: Ramsay Road Allotments</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Scattered pockets including Valentia Road Park, Barton Road and John Snow Place</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Sandfield Road Park, Margaret Road Recreation Ground and Barton Road Recreation Ground, plus access to Bury Knowle Park in adjoining area</p> <p>Play Space: Scattered small areas including Barton Road, Margaret Recreation Ground and Valentia Road Park</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: Rock Edge Nature Reserve</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: Corpus Christi RC Church</p> <p>Private Open Space: Headington Preparatory School and St Andrew C of E Primary School</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Windmill Primary School and Headington Bowls Club</p>
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	<p>SSSI: Rock Edge</p> <p>Local Nature Reserve: Rock Edge</p>
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small area at Rock Edge
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Headington character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5F NEW MARSTON



Photo 1: Oxford Brookes University Faculty of Health and Life Sciences building, overlooking Milham Ford Nature Park is a local landmark



Photo 2: Marston Road is a major thoroughfare



Photo 3: Wide streets with short terraces



Photo 4: Prominent tower block of flats imposes on the area



Photo 5: Modern development contrasts with the coherent character of the inter/post-war streets



Photo 6: Grass verges on road corners provide a buffer between housing and traffic



Photo 7: Distinctive closes with houses laid out around a turning head



Photo 8: Substantial green space accessed via wide walkways the end of the residential streets



Photo 9: Green space includes equipped play areas and naturalised spaces alongside amenity grass

5F NEW MARSTON

Description

The New Marston character area lies on the edge of the Headington Settled Plateaux landscape character area, wrapping around the footslopes of Headington Hill and extending out onto the river terrace and floodplain landscapes. It is an extensive area of inter-war and post-war residential housing between the historic villages of Headington and Old Marston. Much of this suburb is built on the flat open arable fields of the river terraces and floodplain pastures. The housing on the hillside that rises to the south of Peasmoor Piece is built on an area of former woodland known as Plowman's Copse.

The street and block pattern is largely typical of a planned inter-war and post-war suburb with wide streets defining blocks of housing including short terraces, semi-detached houses and small blocks of flats. Particularly distinctive in this suburb of Oxford, are the closes with houses laid out around a turning head, and small crescents of terraced and semi-detached houses around communal parking bays or lawns with mature trees such as at Haynes Road in the west and Westlands Drive/John Buchan Road in the east of the area. The tower block of flats on Westlands Drive is a prominent building that is visible across much of this area.

The area is traversed by the major through-routes of Marston Road and Headley Way/Cherwell Drive that are particularly busy during rush hour. Grass verges are planted with municipal street trees and provide a buffer between housing and traffic on the busy through roads. Trees are also a feature of communal lawns and the edges of public open spaces in this area.

There is a strong hierarchy of public open space in this area, provided by recreation grounds, nature parks, equipped play areas and communal lawns and roadside verges. There are also good links to surrounding countryside and open space in adjoining character areas, such as Old Marston Core (area 3A) to the north. Milham Ford and Peasmoor Piece Nature Parks are two sites of ecological importance within the area, containing significant areas of meadow planting, which provides important habitats for pollinators. These are good examples of multifunctional green space.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms part of the Settled Plateaux and River Terrace landscape types but also expands into the Pastoral Floodplain landscape type- a flat, low-lying landscape at the bottom, and partially extending up the northern side of Headington Hill
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-war and post-war development on Cow Pasture (formerly pasture) and Marston Field (formerly arable).
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roman kiln at Headley Way
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned inter-war and post-war suburbs with wide streets defining distinct blocks of housing. Distinct closes and crescents of standard semi-detached houses and short terraces
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally a clear distinction between the public and private realm, but it is less clear around blocks of flats and in new development such as on Dora Carr Close

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public parks/recreation grounds between housing areas, with linking pedestrian footpaths
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short terraces, semi-detached houses with and small blocks of flats with moderate gaps between. Tower block of flats is a dominant feature in this area. Medium density suburb with some sense of enclosure within streets.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A combination of terraced, semi-detached and detached housing often finished in pebble dash or render with short driveways within front gardens. Some groupings of low-level flats to the north, northwest and east of the area. 21st century rendering on the tower block on Westlands Drive, provides contrast to the muted materials in the surrounding area. Infill new development of different styles and materials.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grass verges along the main routes are planted with municipal street trees and provide a buffer between housing and traffic. Low red brick walls with neatly trimmed hedges often bound front gardens. Deterioration/removal of red brick walls gives rise to a variety of boundary features. Front gardens and short driveways - cars are often parked off-road on short driveways, in front of the houses. Communal lawns between the roadside and blocks of flats
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a good hierarchy of public open space, including communal lawns with trees, equipped play areas, recreational fields, a small area of allotments and two nature parks. Milham Ford Nature Park contains playing fields, a play park, ponds, streams and wild flower meadows. The Oxford Brookes Faculty of Health and Life Sciences building provides an important backdrop for the park. Peasmoor Piece Nature Park contains deciduous woodland with small areas of grassland and a pond. Woodland walks connect Copse Lane with Marsh Lane. Recreational grounds are open, flat, closely mown, grassed spaces with ornamental tree planting around the edges. They are valuable open greenspace, with playgrounds and outdoor sports facilities, but provide little contribution to character or sense of place.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Habitats: pockets of deciduous woodland provide important urban wildlife habitats Milham Ford Field and Quad Local Wildlife Site provides areas of enhanced ecological value alongside recreational space. Large portions of the park are planted with food for pollinators. Volunteering activities in the park maintain its biodiversity value. Peasmoor Piece OCWS provides an important wet woodland habitat, making it home to a number of invertebrates Private gardens, roadside grass verges and trees and woodland edges contribute to local habitats with connectivity to the adjoining countryside and green spaces in adjoining character areas.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large, busy residential suburb of Oxford with small precincts of shops/services on main routes providing small community hubs. A number of educational facilities are located within the area, including the Oxford Brookes Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marston Road provides the main route to St Clements and the city centre. Cherwell Drive/ Headley Way form an extension to the Marston Ferry Road, a major route that links north Oxford with Headington, one of the few crossing points of the Cherwell floodplain.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marsh Lane is a busy route at rush hour that provides access to the northern bypass. Designated cycle lanes and pedestrian walkways along the busier roads, such as Marston Road and Marsh Lane, separated from traffic by grass verges encourages active travel into the city centre and surrounding suburbs.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views across the Cherwell floodplain from the western edge of the area. The Oxford Brookes Faculty of Health and Life Sciences and its row of Lombardy Poplars is a prominent landmark. The character area forms part of the landscape in the views from Elsfield and Doris Field Memorial Park, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The suburbs of Northway and New Marston are low-level in the view from Elsfield and do not detract from the focus of the view. The roofs of New Marston are described as breaking the greenery in the view from Doris Field
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

There are some locally distinctive features, such as the Oxford Brookes Faculty of Health and Life Sciences buildings with its Lombardy Poplars and associated Milham Ford Field and Quad Local Wildlife Site, as well as the urban woodland area of Peasmoor Piece.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The suburb is typical of an inter/post-war suburb, with few distinctive features. Some signs of neglect or mis-management of communal areas.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate – two Nature Parks designated as LWS and OCWS
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – some hierarchy of spaces

Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and the absence of distinctive historic or built features means this area is not particularly sensitive to change. However, the presence of sites of local ecological importance and the visibility of housing on the edge of the Cherwell Floodplain means these areas are more sensitive to change. It also lies within the Elsfield and Doris Field Memorial Park view cones, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones', and this heightens its sensitivity to built elements.

Since the inter-war period this area has seen progressive built development as well as conversion of former agricultural land to close mown amenity playing fields and school grounds. More recently changes in landscape management have enhanced the nature conversation interest of the area.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces that reduces the amount of public open space or ecological connectivity through the area
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge, in the context of existing urban form and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the character area that intrudes into the rural setting and floodplain of the River Cherwell
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation including street trees, in the public and private realm
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development generally has respect for the street and block pattern. And introduces contrasting materials and styles to the area. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Mixed building types and styles and incremental changes in the streetscape results in a lack of coherence and identity within the area. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A large, dispersed neighbourhood, limiting placemaking and walkability. Small neighbourhood hubs/destinations around community centres and retail precincts. Moderate

Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Designated cycle and pedestrian routes, as well as urban street trees along main roads, promotes active travel. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Important areas of locally designated, accessible nature sites that prioritise and enhance biodiversity. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A number of easily accessible, inclusive recreational areas. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	A range of housing types and tenures within a medium density suburb with educational provision. Small precincts of shops/eateries support local life. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in the quality of public and private built form in this area. Streets are wide and generally fit for purpose. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally the built form was built to last, with a range in the levels of maintenance and management of the private realm. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the New Marston character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Cotswold Crescent and Elizabeth Green</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Croft Road Rec and Northway Recreation Ground</p> <p>Play Space: Marston Recreation Ground, Northway Playing Field and Milham Ford Nature Park</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: Milham Ford nature reserve and Peasmoor Piece</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: Few small areas including Northway Church and St Mary's Indian Orthodox Church</p> <p>Private Open Space: New Marston Primary School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: None</p>
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory	<p>Local Wildlife Site: Milhamford Field and Quad</p> <p>Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Peasmoor Piece</p>

designated wildlife sites	Ancient Woodland: Plowman's Copse
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: at Peasmoor Piece
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Marston character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5G CUTTESLOWE / SUNNYMEAD



Photo 1: Inter-war housing south of the ring road



Photo 2: Post-war housing north of the ring road



Photo 3: The northern ring road divides the area in two



Photo 4: Recreation ground on Wren Road forms the east edge of Sunnymead on the edge of the Cherwell Valley



Photo 5: Variation in housing style across the suburb



Photo 6: Victorian terraces to the south of Sunnymead



Photo 7: Small front gardens with low wall boundaries, overlooking a grass verge



Photo 8: Low-rise blocks of flats on the edge of the housing area, on the east of Sunnymead

5G CUTTESLOWE / SUNNYMEAD

Description

The Cutteslowe / Sunnymead character area lies to the north of Summertown, on the edge of the Cherwell Floodplain. It is an area of gently curved parallel streets carved in two by the A40 ring road.

To the north of the A40 bordering the ring road, is a post 1960s estate built around Templar Road and comprising predominantly terraced maisonettes and small blocks of low-rise flats with some semi-detached houses and a small precinct of shops with flats over on Kendall Crescent. Small blocks of inter and post-war flats form the southern boundary of the A40. South of that are two distinct housing areas – to the east 1930s red brick, short terraces of housing with small front gardens and to the west more substantial plots of predominantly semi-detached red brick or rendered houses with bay frontages. The Cutteslowe Walls were built in 1934 to divide these two areas and there is a blue plaque on Wentworth Road to mark the location. There is small area of Victorian terraces and semi-detached properties along Islip Road and Harpes Road, which has been absorbed into the surrounding inter/post-war housing. There has been various small-scale infill and redevelopment across this area, which is generally well integrated and does not alter the coherency of the discrete housing areas.

The streetscape is largely characterised by small front gardens with a variety of boundaries and some converted to driveways. In the south, low red brick walls with neatly trimmed hedges bounding the front gardens are important features of the streetscape, defining the boundary between the public and private realms. However, incremental changes have led to a variety of front garden boundary features. The area to the north contains blocks of flats and maisonettes set in semi-private grounds where the distinction between the public and private realm is less clear. Grass verges planted with municipal street trees provide a buffer between housing and traffic along Aldrich Road and form part of the public open space in the east of the area, on the edge of the floodplain.

The A40 fragments the area in two, creating a barrier to movement. A pedestrian/cycle bridge in the east and an underpass near Jackson Road provide pedestrian connections across the ring road to link the estates together. There are good views of the hills surrounding Oxford and views to the Radcliffe Hospital from the bridge.

The position of this character area on the edge of the floodplain means the townscape is bordered by open space. Part of the Sunnymead Recreation Ground lies on the Cherwell floodplain and this differs in character from the upper part of the recreation ground which lies on the river terrace. This open space affords rural views across to the Cherwell floodplain where large willow pollards along the banks of the Cherwell form a distinctive skyline.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled River Terrace - gently domed finger of land between Thames and Cherwell Floodplains.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inter-war and post-war development on former open fields (mixed arable and pasture) of Cutteslowe, Water Eaton and St Giles.Some more recent infill and redevelopment of low-rise flats and some backland development behind street fronting properties.

Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A blue plaque locates the former Cutteslowe Wall on Wentworth Road
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned inter-war and post-war suburbs of gently curved parallel streets carved in two by the A40 ring road – with larger block size to the south and higher density development to the north
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, a clear distinction between the public and private realm, but it is less clear around blocks of flats e.g. on the Templar Estate.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short terraces and semi-detached houses with moderate gaps between. Medium density suburb with some sense of enclosure within streets. • Higher density flats and maisonettes in the north. • Larger scale, low-rise blocks of flats along the south of the A40.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-war Cutteslowe Estate: short terraces of red brick or white washed, pitched clay tile roof, central chimneys. • Post-war Templar Estate: short terraces of one- and two-storey dwellings, buff brick with pitched concrete tile roofs and central chimneys. • Short runs of Victorian properties in the south – largely buff brick with slate roofs • Larger scale blocks of flats, generally 3 or 4 story, either side of the A40 which vary in materials and age. • Variety in materials across the area, which are age-dependent rather than location specific.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small front gardens with variety of boundary treatments – low red brick walls are characteristic in the south but often replaced/removed • Driveways and cars parked on the street are common place • Grass verges are planted with municipal street trees and provide a buffer between housing and traffic on Aldrich Road
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space includes communal lawns, school grounds, grass verges and a substantial recreation ground in the east. • The recreation ground on Wren Road is a large open green space in proximity to Cutteslowe Community Centre. It provides access to a wide open grass area and accessible routes to the River Cherwell as well as equipped play areas, sports pitches and a skatepark. • Private school grounds – grass area with footpaths and allotment garden encompassed by mature trees • Grass verges and communal lawns - grass with municipal trees.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none • No designated nature sites • The compact development contains little in the way of open space, with opportunities for wildlife largely restricted to private gardens. The substantial recreation ground on the western banks of the Cherwell provides important habitat/connectivity for wildlife.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb away from the noisy A40 that runs through the middle.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A40 forms a barrier to movement, although a new pedestrian/ cycle bridge and underpass link the Cutteslowe and Templar estates across the A40 at two points. • Footpath links through the recreation ground to one of the few places where the Cherwell is publicly accessible. • The Sustrans route 51 provides accessible cycle routes from the area to the city centre and the wider countryside to the north of Oxford, towards Bicester.

Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open views across the Cherwell Floodplain from the recreation ground. Large willow pollards along the banks of the Cherwell form the skyline. • Good views of surrounding hills from the bridge over the ring road.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

A generally coherent character of development across this area. The recreation ground is a distinctive open green space on the edge of the Cherwell floodplain, with views and physical links to the river.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The area is not particularly distinctive. There are localised signs of neglect of the townscape.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate – particularly around the recreation ground
Biodiversity	Low – local, unrecorded interest only
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Low – limited hierarchy although good connectivity through the recreation ground

Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and the absence of unique or distinctive historic or built features means this area is not particularly sensitive to change. Sensitivity is enhanced by its position on the edge of the Cherwell Valley. Overall sensitivity may be described as moderate with the most sensitive areas along the eastern edge where they abut the Cherwell floodplain.

Since the inter-war period this area has seen progressive built development. More recently there have been positive changes including the footbridge over the ring road that has improved access and connectivity between the north and south and the sensitive management of the recreation ground for nature conservation.

Threats to local character include:

- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics or existing scale of the townscape
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge, in the context of existing urban form

- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the character area that results in loss of connectivity with the surrounding rural floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Deterioration/removal of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development generally has respect for the street pattern and scale of built form. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The area contains several discrete housing areas, with a range of styles and materials and overall lack of identity. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A compact form of development. Few recognisable distinctive buildings or streets. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Cycle and walking routes promote sustainable, active travel. The A40 acts as a barrier to movement between the north and south Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature provision within the urban fabric is limited to grass verges/road corners and occasional trees. Potential for wildlife habitats within the recreation ground and connectivity with the Cherwell floodplain. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Some communal lawns. Substantial recreation ground next to the community centre provides a strong neighbourhood hub. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with some variation of housing types and some local services Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in the quality of public and private built form and interfaces in this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan –	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained.

made to last	Moderate
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Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Cutteslowe / Sunnymead character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Hawkesmoor Road and Kendall Crescent Parks and Recreation Grounds: Part of Sunnymead Park Play Space: Sunnymead Park skatepark and play area Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: Cutteslowe Primary School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	East of the area, includes Sunnymead Park
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Cutteslowe / Sunnymead character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5H NORTH OXFORD FRINGES



Photo 1: Wide streets, large houses and mature trees



Photo 2: Variety in style, age and materials of houses and shrubs



Photo 3: Ornamental trees planting in Wolvercote Cemetery



Photo 4: Open character of recreation areas



Photo 5: Detached houses in large plots



Photo 6: Modernisation of properties and variety of housing styles creates a diverse character area



Photo 7: Glimpses of the lake behind properties on Linkside Avenue



Photo 8: A medium density, leafy suburb

5H NORTH OXFORD FRINGES

Description

The North Oxford Fringes character area forms the northern extent of Oxford City and lies on the North Oxford River Terrace between the Thames and Cherwell floodplains. It was built on the open farmland of Wolvercote, Cutteslowe and Water Eaton Fields.

This is a large residential area that is bisected by a number of major arterial routes, including the A40 and Banbury and Woodstock Road, which lead into the city centre. Connecting between these major routes there are broad streets with mainly detached and some semi-detached properties set within large plots.

The area begins to merge with the Victorian residential areas of North Oxford, particularly along the main arterial routes and having some associations with academic life. There is a lot of variation in the material and style of the built form across the area, as a result of staged development, by different developers/architects from the early 20th century. The area developed most rapidly in the post-war period. There has been much modern, small-scale infill and alterations to properties throughout this area, including some substantial extensions, conversions and modernisation of style of existing properties.

The overriding character is that of a medium density, leafy suburb of wide streets. There is a large proportion of open space on the northern fringe, including the unique landscape of Wolvercote Cemetery. There is a lake on the northwest edge of the area, hidden and encapsulated by back gardens, which is one of the largest water bodies in the city.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled River Terrace - gently domed finger of land between Thames and Cherwell floodplains
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development on the open arable land of Wolvercote Field and mixed farmland of Cutteslowe and Water Eaton Fields. The area developed more slowly than other inter/post-war suburbs, from the Edwardian period onwards, up to the late 20th century. 21st century renovation of single plots is evident, which adds to the diversity of housing styles across of the area.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wolvercote cemetery and lodge - A Victorian cemetery opened in 1894. Wolvercote brick pit is the site of an important Palaeolithic paleo-channel that has produced large quantities of flint artefacts
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An irregular grid between arterial roads, with wide drives and avenues, with some cul-de-sacs and crescents.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of public and private realms, with dwellings set back from the street and generally well maintained public- private realm interfaces.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largely comprises of wide streets with large, detached and some semi-detached houses set within substantial plots. Mature trees and garden shrubs create partially enclosed quality, particularly in the summer months. Some clusters of low-level flats within the area, generally surrounded by areas of communal land.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, two storey detached and semi-detached houses, with much diversity in materials and architectural style. Bays and porches are common features. Extension, conversion and modernisation of properties is common through the area.

Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide streets include many trees in both the public and private areas. There is variety in front garden boundary features, including the original Coral rag stone walls, brick walls, large shrubs and wooden fences. • Streetscape features on the arterial roads, such as Woodstock Road and Banbury Road, include bus lanes and stops, cycle lanes, large street signs and traffic lights, giving rise to an urban character.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space is largely concentrated in the northern fringe of the area, linking to adjacent rural areas. Sports pitches, including cricket fields, hockey pitches and tennis courts make up a large part of the northern fringe. • Playing fields and sports grounds are typified by open grass areas with some ornamental planting around the edges. Remnant hedgerows, surviving from agricultural landscape, are variable around some of the grounds. • Wolvercote Cemetery is a well maintained open space, with open grass, ornamental trees and memorial garden. • Public open space through the rest of the area is limited to pockets of communal lawns around flats and occasional grass verges.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Small pockets of deciduous woodland within private gardens. • Linkside Lake, behind properties on Linkside Avenue, is a designated OCWS. • Wolvercote Cemetery and adjacent playing fields provide limited wildlife habitats in the form of mature trees and close mown grassland. Significant urban ecosystems are likely sustained within the substantial private front and back gardens. The railway embankment provides an important green corridor link to the open countryside north of Oxford.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb, an extension to the academic suburbs of North Oxford.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet streets adjacent to major arterial roads. • Woodstock Road and Banbury Road provide easy access into the city centre. The arterial roads and the railway line divide the suburb and interrupt the local tranquillity in places. • A number of PROW extend to the north from the area, providing access to the north Oxford countryside.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich and diverse streetscape creates continuously changing visual.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered listed buildings within the area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Summertown House (Grade II) ➢ Roman Catholic Church of St Gregory and St Augustine (Grade II) ➢ Field House (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: No. 333 Banbury Road (Summerhill House)

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

This area relates closely to the Victorian suburb of North Oxford. Its spacious and mature character creates a residential area of high quality.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The diversity of building styles and materials, which includes a number of later 20th and 21st century development and alterations to properties presents a less unified townscape quality to that of North Oxford.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – isolated and unrecorded local sites
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate

Sensitivity to change

The North Oxford Fringes character area is not highly sensitive to change as a result of its low historic integrity, biodiversity and intervisibility. However, its gateway location means that it forms an impression of Oxford for many travellers entering the city from the north and this increases its sensitivity to change.

Change over the years has included infill development, addition and extensions to properties that have contributed to the varied character of the streetscape. Such changes may continue to affect the character of the townscape and may be negative if they result in loss of trees or garden vegetation, or changes to front garden boundaries.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings and alters the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape and changes the perception of a low density suburb
- New tall development that is highly visible, in the context of existing urban form
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the character area that intrudes into the rural setting in the context of Shotover Hill
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the roads that would reduce tranquillity and alter pedestrian movement
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development and alterations to properties generally has respect for the street pattern and scale of built form. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The combination of ages and materials of built form means the area lacks identity and coherence Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	An irregular street pattern with few destinations making legibility more challenging. Incremental infill has resulted in a jumble of housing types and little open space. Limited
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Active transport and bus routes are prioritised along arterial routes to the city centre. Access to the wider countryside promoted and street trees incorporated into streetscape. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Within the area there is little space that prioritises biodiversity. Mainly reliant upon urban wildlife within private spaces. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited public open space within the area but some access to adjoining countryside Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with a number of local schools and few community or commercial services Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is generally good quality of built form and public realm through this area. Streets are wide and generally fit for purpose. Significant
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the North Oxford Fringes character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Few small areas including Woodstock Close and Jordan Hill</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground and part of Cutteslowe Park</p> <p>Play Space: Five Mile Recreation Ground play space and MUGA</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: None</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: Wolvercote Cemetery</p> <p>Private Open Space: Linkside Lake</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Oxford University Press Sports Ground and Banbury Road North Sports Ground</p>
Strategic blue GI	Linkside Lake is a small isolate water body
Green belt land	East of the area, includes sports ground and Cutteslowe Park
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Linkside Lake
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: single, isolated pocket
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the North Oxford Fringes character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

51 NEW HINKSEY



Photo 1: Variety of architectural styles including 1930's square bay fronted and semi-detached



Photo 2: Boundaries are constructed in a variety of materials



Photo 3: Trees within private gardens are important features of the streetscape



Photo 4: Abingdon Road is a major arterial route in and out of Oxford



Photo 5: Flat fronted, pebble dash properties in the east, with some exposed stone



Photo 6: Two-storey, bays with gables are more common in the west of the area



Photo 7: Small grass area with mature willow tree in front of houses on Fox Crescent

51 NEW HINKSEY

Description

The New Hinksey character area is an area of inter-war housing on the narrow belt of raised river terraces on the floodplain of the Thames. The main Abingdon Road forms a strong axis which cuts through the area, with quiet residential streets forming side roads to the east and west.

Residential properties are typically two storey 1930's redbrick houses with square bay fronts, either semi-detached separated by short driveways or in short terraces of four or five houses. Pebble dash rendered, flat-fronted properties are more common place in the east of the area. Larger premises including commercial development line the Abingdon Road.

This is an important gateway to Oxford, marking the transition from the floodplain to the urban area. Grass verges and mature trees on the corner of Old Abingdon Road/Abingdon Road and on the opposite side around a new development of four-storey flats, mark the entrance to the suburb. Occasional mature lime trees along the Abingdon Road are landmark trees; elsewhere there are few street trees, with greenery confined to ornamental species within front and rear gardens. Gardens are frequently bound by low brick walls, occasionally with privet hedges, although boundaries have frequently been replaced by close board fencing or ornamental walls resulting in a fragmented street frontage.

The area has some pedestrian/cycle connectivity to the surrounding floodplain, with occasional views out to the west and east of poplars, willows and large pylons. There is limited public greenspace within the area, comprising South Oxford Bowls Club and Bertie Park; a recreation ground with mown grass, equipped play area and sports court encompassed by trees to the rear of properties on Wytham Street/Abingdon Road.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms part of the Settled River Terrace - narrow extension of the terrace on the Thames Floodplain.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly 1930's housing on former meadowlands of St. Aldate's and South Hinksey meadows. Redevelopment of a former rehabilitation centre site to provide several blocks of three/four-storey flats on the edge of the floodplain. Many front gardens replaced by driveways to move cars off the roadside.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line of Norman approach to Oxford along Old Abingdon Road/Abingdon Road
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned street layout of linear streets and crescents off the wide Abingdon Road. Blocks of short terraces or semi-detached houses.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly clear relationship.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached/terraced houses along streets with occasional parking places. Generally enclosed street pattern, with views along streets ending with mature trees in the floodplain.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two storey, short terraces / semi-detached. The residential suburb divides into two distinct areas: To the east of Abingdon Road is an area of flat fronted two-storey terraces with pebble dash/render, and red tiled roofs set along wide

	<p>streets, with red brick walls and privet hedges forming the boundaries to front gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical 1930s residential development to the west of the Abingdon Road of red brick, often finished in pebbledash, with square bay windows. Many houses have front driveways and side garages reducing the need for street parking.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close board fences or ornamental walls frequently replace garden walls and hedges. The various styles and heights of boundary create a mixed, street frontage, with little softening greenery. • Within the residential area there is virtually no street planting, with greenery limited to ornamental cherries, cypress, willow and occasional privet hedges in gardens. • Abingdon Road is influenced by streetscape features such as cycle lanes, traffic lights and street markings. There is a discontinuous avenue of mature lime trees along the Abingdon Road.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dense residential area with limited open space. • Bertie Park is a small rectangular recreation ground at the southern end of the area, with an equipped play area, sports court and surrounding grass and mature trees. • South Oxford Bowls Club on the edge of the lakes to the north of the area. • Some views to the green spaces of the adjacent Open River Terraces and Floodplain are important and include the trees on rough ground to the east of the railway and the allotments fronting onto the east side of the Abingdon Road.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private gardens and a small mown recreation ground provide limited habitats. Ecological potential may be enhanced by proximity to the extensive open land and trees of the floodplain.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential suburb. Abingdon Road is a busy approach to the historic city core, with some commercial premises along it.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abingdon Road is a major arterial route in and out of Oxford, with several bus stops along its course. • Side streets are quieter. • Sustrans route 5 links through the area, connecting to the city centre and the wider countryside to the south. PROW extending west and east provide easily accessible routes to the open countryside of the floodplain.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating pattern of streets with semi-detached houses with gables and chimneys. • Long views down Abingdon Road, framed by street trees. • The north of the area forms part of the landscape within view from Hinksey Hill/A34 Interchange, identified in the '<i>Assessment of Oxford View Cones</i>'. The low roofline of this area is obscured by vegetation in the view.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Hinksey Vicarage Grade II listed building
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

New Hinksey is an important southern entrance into the City of Oxford. Grass verges and mature trees on the corner of Old Abingdon Road/Abingdon Road and on the opposite side of Abingdon Road softens the transition to the urban area. The street trees along Abingdon Road are critical to the character of the gateway into the city.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The character area as a whole has a weak sense of place as a result of mass-produced materials and styles typical of the inter-war period and as such forms a weak 'gateway' into Oxford. Whilst the condition of housing is generally good, boundary walls are in variable states of repair and overall landscape quality may be described as moderate.

Indicators of landscape value

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

Sensitivity to change

The gateway location of this suburb means it is sensitive to change, particularly to changes along the main Abingdon Road. Changes to architectural elements and the condition and style of front garden boundaries has in the past detracted from the townscape quality.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed or do not respect the street character
- New built development on the outskirts that encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity / alter pedestrian movement
- Provision of driveways that results in the removal of front gardens, vegetation or boundary walls
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the streetscape

- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space and private gardens could threaten the character of the suburb on the rural edge of the city
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Later development introduces new styles and materials but is generally well integrated in the settlement pattern. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Generally a unified style of built form, however incremental changes result in reduced coherence and identity within the area Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A compact form of development. Some recognisable buildings providing destinations in the area. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Active transport and bus routes are prioritised along arterial routes to the city centre and to the wider countryside. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Limited nature provision within the urban fabric, with occasional street and boundary trees. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Public open space limited to small recreational area and limited grass verges. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	A mix of semi-detached, terraced houses and flats in the area, with a small area of retail facilities on Abingdon Road Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. Streets are wide and generally fit for purpose. Significant
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the New Hinksey character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: New Hinksey Allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Bertie Park Play Space: Bertie Park play area and MUGA and Fox Crescent play area and football Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Oxford Salvation Army and St Luke's Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: South Oxford Bowls Club
Strategic blue GI	Weirs Mill Stream around southeast boundary
Green belt land	Tiny area in the south
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: Strip around the west boundary
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Hinksey character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5J BOTLEY ROAD



Photo 1: Botley Road is a major arterial street with a majestic avenue of limes



Photo 2: Blocks of flats and semi-detached houses are set back from the road along Botley Road



Photo 3: Early Victorian streets relate to the first river terrace deposits



Photo 4: Short, tight streets end in deadends at the floodplain - views are often blocked by new development at the end of the street



Photo 5: Low red brick walls, fenestration and doorways unite the streetscape



Photo 6: More recent development relates to the floodplain



Photo 7: A mix of residential types, including low-rise flats along Botley Road

5J BOTLEY ROAD

Description

The Botley Road character area located largely on the floodplain of the River Thames extending to the west of the historic core of Oxford along the Botley Road. It is an area of mixed residential types and ages. Older Victorian terraces are located on islands of the first river terraces, forming an extension to Osney. Later, inter-war development corresponding to the floodplain between the Victorian streets and extending west along Botley Road, demonstrates the evolution of the built form in response to its surroundings.

Botley Road is the main, arterial street with large blocks of flats and semi-detached inter-war houses set back from the road behind some grass verges and a majestic avenue of limes that provide a unifying feature along a very varied streetscape. Many short, tight side streets project at right angles from the main road, ending in dead ends at the floodplain. Each street and block has its own unique character with architectural styles and materials relating to the age of development. The details such as sash windows, framed wooden doors of properties and low boundary walls in the side streets are important aspects of the architectural integrity of the area.

Framed views along side streets to the floodplain beyond provides a green setting for streets and is a feature of this area. More recent development at the end of some of these streets has eroded these views in places, for example Earl Street. The main road is the only connection between the streets and as such the area does not appear to have a discrete, recognisable character being made up of a series of unconnected residential roads of varying ages and types of development. Change in this area is limited to small scale redevelopment of the Waitrose supermarket and alterations to properties, retaining the overall diversity of built form in this character area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lies on the low lying, flat landscape that forms part of the Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains landscape type, containing the course of the Botley Stream.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development on former floodplain meadows. Older Victorian terraces are located on islands of first river terraces. Later development corresponds to the floodplain.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-medieval causeway Early Victorian terraces located on gravel river terrace 'islands'.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Botley Road is the main arterial street with large blocks of flats, semi-detached and terraced inter-war houses set within generous open space along the north side of it. Many short, tight side-streets project at right angles from the main road, ending in dead ends at the floodplain. Each street and block has its own unique character. On Botley Road, a supermarket and car park and a storage unit opposite breaks up the blocks of smaller scale housing.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public/ private realm is clearly identified in the side streets off Botley Road, with houses fronting the road and generally low, brick wall boundary features. The flats on the Botley Road are surrounded by semi-private open space, where the public/private interfaces are less clearly identified.

Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botley Road is a wide street with large block sizes and street trees. • The side streets are tight, narrow streets lined with terraces that provide enclosure.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed blocks of housing - variety of age, scale and design, including terraces of Victorian artisan houses, inter-war semi-detached and modern infill. • Materials vary depending on the age of the properties, as do streetscape details. The details such as sash windows and framed wooden doors of properties in the side streets are important aspects of the architectural integrity of the area. • A series of small hump-backed bridges along Botley Road indicate the presence of watercourses and provide glimpses along green corridors of the streams.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass verges along Botley Road at the western edge of the area, set the buildings back from the main road. The avenue of mature limes along Botley Road provide a unifying feature along a varied street. It is a busy road, with bus lanes, bus stops, pedestrian crossings, urban street markings and traffic lights. • The regularity of fenestration and doorways along the older streets is an important feature. • Low boundary walls provide integrity of the streetscape. • Narrow side streets with on road parking. Within the side streets there is limited street or private planting.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited open space within the character area, but enveloped by open floodplain land to the north and south, including Botley Park to the north and Oatlands Road Recreation Ground to the south. The formal recreation areas are set within a framework of poplars and willows and provide access to the wider countryside of the Thames floodplain. There is good pedestrian/cycle access to the adjoining green spaces from most of the residential streets.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none • Bullstake Stream OCWS runs along the northeast boundary to the area • Botley is dissected and bounded by backwaters of the Thames which support a good range of aquatic and marginal wetland habitats. The waterways are essential, if narrow, links between the open meadows to the north and green spaces to the south.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botley road is a busy, often congested approach road to the city centre, from the west. Along Botley Road are a number of independent businesses, a large supermarket and storage unit, as well as residential buildings. • Side streets are generally quiet, residential areas.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botley Road is a major access route to the west, linking to the A34. Botley Road encourages sustainable transport into the city centre, with cycle lanes, wide footpaths and bus routes extending into the city. • Side streets provide easy pedestrian/cycle access to the expansive, open floodplain landscape to the north and south of the area.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views east along Botley Road, framed by the magnificent avenue of limes towards the landmark of Seacourt Tower. • Framed views along side streets to the floodplain beyond provides a green framework for many streets. Development at the end of some of the side streets, for example Earl Street, is starting to erode these views.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The special character of this area comes from the close relationship between the built environment and the surrounding floodplain and the evidence of evolution of the built form in response to its surrounding environment. The view of the floodplain at the end of most streets and views along the waterways from Botley Road contributes to the quality of life in this area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The variety of architectural styles and materials within the area do not present an integrated built form and this, combined with the moderate state of repair of the landscape elements, as well as the influence of urban style streetscape features, results in a perception of moderate landscape quality.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Moderate – survival of Victorian terraces
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Low – although good links to surrounding green spaces

Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and the absence of unique or distinctive built features means this area is not particularly sensitive to change. However, sensitivity is enhanced by its position within and connectivity to the Thames floodplain. Overall sensitivity may be described as moderate with the most sensitive areas abutting the floodplain.

The area has seen progressive built development from the early Victorian up to the present day. The avenue of limes on Botley Road have matured to impressive stature while there have been incremental changes in elevational details of the houses. More recent development such as houses with garages fronting the street in Harley Road has broken the regularity of fenestration and doorways along the side streets.

Threats to local character include:

- Inappropriate shop frontages that obscure the historic built fabric at the pedestrian level
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge

- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access to the surrounding floodplain
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the character area that encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the narrow streets that would reduce tranquillity of the side streets and alter pedestrian and traffic movement
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development follows the historic block pattern, but lacks coherence with the material and detailing of the surrounding built form. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Diversity in the age and use of materials in the built form, with incremental changes, resulting in a lack of coherence and identity in the area Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A compact form for development, with navigable street pattern. Limited number of distinctive buildings or features but focus on Botley Road as a neighbourhood destination Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Arterial road prioritises active transport and bus routes to the city centre. Floodplains are easily accessible by foot/bike. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Localised aquatic environments support rich ecosystems, enhanced through association with adjacent floodplains. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited open space within the area. However, close proximity and good access to adjoining green spaces in the floodplain to the north and south. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a mixed residential suburb, with variation of housing type and tenure. The main road provides a variety of local services and facilities Significant
Homes and buildings –	There is a range in the quality of public and private built form and interfaces in this area. Moderate

functional, healthy and sustainable	
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Botley Road character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: edge of Oatlands Recreation Ground Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Botley Stream flows through the area Bulstake Stream flows around the east boundary
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Botley Road character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5K BARTON



Photo 1: Housing overlooks Bayswater Brook Valley, providing connectivity with the surrounding countryside



Photo 2: Steel-clad houses are a feature of this area



Photo 3: Barton Manor is a surviving remnant of Barton Village whose frontage is directly onto the street



Photo 4: Semi-detached houses are typical of the inter-war period



Photo 5: Public open space along the Bayswater Brook provides opportunities for recreation



Photo 6: Post-war development is set back from the street behind walls and gardens



Photo 7: Tree-lined Bayswater Road becomes a rural road, linking through the suburb from the city to the surrounding countryside



Photo 8: Green space and public art outside the precinct of shops at the heart of the neighbourhood



Photo 9: Strong hierarchy of public green space, including small areas between flats



Photo 10: Strong hierarchy of public green space, including the sloping field and equipped play area at Joy Meadows

5K BARTON

Description

Barton character area comprises a suburban settlement, located on the steep hillside of Headington Hill, overlooking the Bayswater Brook Valley. It is a predominantly post-war redevelopment of the hamlet of Barton.

The original hamlet of Barton was closely related to Old Headington and is probably similar in age. In 1246 it was already known as Old Barton. Barton was severed from Headington by Oxford's first section of ring-road, built from Headington roundabout to the Banbury Road roundabout in the mid-1930s. Barton Manor (17th century) and the Barton Village Road sign are the surviving features of the former, stone built village of Barton.

There is a variety of housing types and styles across this area, which is reflective of the suburb growing in blocks along east-west streets that follow the contours of the hill. Housing is largely two-storey semi-detached or short terraces with low-pitched roofs that are a mix of corrugated steel and clay tiles. More recent development on North Way has greater diversity, including blocks of three/four-storey flats and townhouses that are locally prominent on the upper slopes of the hillside.

Properties have a mix of finishes including exposed red-brick, painted render, cladding and pebble dashed. Some of the properties retain the original materials, including steel cladding and corrugated steel roofs. There have been extensive alterations/updates to properties across the area, including extensions, addition/removal of porches, new windows, renewal of render/cladding, replacement roofs and removal of front gardens and replacement by paved driveways.

There is a strong sense of community, with particular focus on the original heart of the development on Underhill Circus, comprising a small precinct of shops with flats over, with an area of paved and grassed public open space with trees and public art. Residential properties of varying types including low-rise flats surround the community area, with more recent community buildings to the northwest including Neighbourhood Centre and Community Church. There are footpath links through from this centre into the linear public green space along the south of Bayswater Brook. There is a strong hierarchy of public spaces through this area, ranging from pockets of community lawns and seating to recreational fields and equipped play parks. The nature park and allotments provide large, important edge of settlement green spaces.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">On the slopes of the Settled Plateaux landscape type, on a steep valley side overlooking the Bayswater Brook Valley
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Suburban inter-war/post-war planned development on the former arable fields of Barton Field and Sandhills Field and on part of Barton Common at the top of the hillEvidence of the former hamlet of Barton in the street layout and remnant Coral rag stone wall and Barton Manor in the west of the areaMore recent development of low-level blocks of flats and town houses along North Way on the upper slopes
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Remnants of the historic hamlet of Barton, and severed links with HeadingtonIron Age settlementsDorchester-Alchester Roman Road and roadside settlement

Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curvilinear streets with crescents that respond to the landform • Some more recent cul-de-sacs • Pedestrian alleys that link between development blocks and green spaces • Short terraces, semi-detached houses and small, low-rise blocks of flats
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally clear public/private realm although this breaks down around parking courts and some paths around maisonettes
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to high density layout • Pockets of greenspace and location on a hillside give a sense of openness
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barton Manor is a distinctive Coral rag stone building with clay tile roof and dormer windows • Range of two-storey semi-detached red brick, rendered, clad or pebble dash houses built along the contours of the hillside • Clusters of low-rise flats on the lower and upper slopes
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses are largely set back from the street behind front gardens, many of which have been changed to paved driveways • Municipal street trees include maple and cherry
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There area has a relatively large amount of green space within it, as well as links to adjoining areas • Joy Meadows is a recreational field with mature trees, equipped play area and linking footpaths between housing areas • Linear green space behind properties, along Bayswater Brook with open grassland, equipped play area, riparian vegetation along the brook and linking footpaths • Pockets of community lawns and grass verges along roads, with street trees and small play parks • Tree lined roads such as Bayswater Road, North Way and the A40 • Barton Community Pavilion recreational field • Community allotments and Barton Village nature park in the west
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: small areas of deciduous woodland and traditional orchard within the allotments • No designated nature sites • Bayswater Brook OCWS along the north boundary
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb • Rural influence from arable fields beyond the brook to the north
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated from the Headington by the city by the A40 Northern By-pass • Bayswater Road is a rural road linking through the suburb, from the city to the surrounding countryside • Curved streets link off Bayswater Road to the west, along the contours of the hill
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from the hillside over the suburb and Bayswater Brook valley help with orientation • Exposed backs of properties on the hillside create unstructured visual patterns due to the openness • Repetitive views along streets • Roofs are very visible from viewpoints on the top of the hill • No views towards the city, rather away from the city to the surrounding countryside
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barton Manor and garden wall Grade II listed building

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Distinctive topography and layout of residential streets that follow the contours, providing for views out towards the surrounding countryside. Public open spaces and the green space that provide a hierarchy of destinations within the urban fabric.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Perception of townscape quality varies greatly across the area, with some signs of neglect.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate – some connectivity of street trees, grass verges, garden vegetation, allotments and fragments of former hedgerow boundaries
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – some hierarchy of spaces

Sensitivity to change

The area is not particularly sensitive to change. The main change to the area over time has been through infill development of backland plots, small scale changes to architectural elevations and front garden boundaries, and small-scale redevelopment of former residential and school sites.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on public green spaces such as the allotments and recreation ground
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New housing infill that results in further fragmentation of the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape

- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the fragments of former hedgerow boundaries and mature trees in community spaces
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Incremental development that has not always been well-designed. New development does not respond to existing characteristics Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	No strong identity across the area, but pockets that are identifiable. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Variation in building density and a mix of building types, form and style. Some lack of clarity of street pattern. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	General reliance on motor vehicles. Various pedestrian routes between blocks of development. Good public transport provision. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Some nature provision within the urban fabric through grass verges/road corners and street trees. Vegetation within private gardens provides some connectivity. Allotments and vegetation along the railway and by-pass embankments also contribute to the nature within this area. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Public open space at the edge of the area including allotments and recreation ground. Limited links into other character areas Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with some variation of housing types and some local services Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Variation in quality of built form and public realm, with some areas of neglect. Building services spill out onto the street in places Limited
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in varying condition. Some mis-managed communal spaces Limited

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Barton character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Barton Fields Allotments Amenity Green Space: Bernwood Park Parks and Recreation Grounds: Fettiplace Recreation Ground Play Space: Bernwood Park play area and Fettiplace Recreation Ground play area and MUGA Accessible Natural Green Space: Barton Village Nature Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Mary C of E Church Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Bayswater Brook flows along the north boundary
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Bayswater Brook
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small area in the nature park Traditional orchards: within the allotments
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Barton character area make a weak **contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5L LITTLEMORE



Photo 1: The spacious layout allows for a number of public trees



Photo 2: More recent residential developments have no boundaries demarcating public and private space



Photo 3: Lines of mature trees mark former hedgerow boundaries around the recreation area



Photo 4: Chain link fencing is a common boundary feature of the older housing



Photo 5: Mature trees within the historic core of Littlemore form a backdrop to views



Photo 6: Streetscape detailing includes paving patterns



Photo 7: More recent cul-de-sac development of flats where the public realm comprises parking courts



Photo 8: More recent development is higher density and less spacious

5L LITTLEMORE

Description

Littlemore is a discrete residential suburb of inter-war and post-war housing on the southern edge of Oxford. It is an expansion around the east, north and west of Littlemore Village (area 3F) and lies on the raised area of the Settled Plateau landscape type. The suburb is disconnected from the main part of the city by the ring road and has a distinct sense of separation from Oxford.

The area has been developed incrementally, extending from the historic core and comprises mixed development types that are representative of building styles of the mid- to late 20th century. The area does not have a single distinct character but consists of a series of separate enclaves with few connections or similarities between them.

The planned street layout of gently curving crescents supports a mix of short terraces, semi-detached properties and small blocks of flats. Built form is predominantly two-storeys with some three-storey blocks of flats. Cul-de-sacs have been more recently developed and have variable orientation, especially near the eastern by-pass. More recent residential developments have no boundaries demarking the space to the front of properties, with lawns, shrubs and trees spilling out onto the street, forming part of the public realm and creating a more informal streetscape.

There are various areas of open space within this character area, ranging from communal lawns and wide verges around the 1950s and 1960s development, extensive allotment gardens, school grounds and a recreation ground in the west. The more substantial open space is found to the edges of the area, contained by the railway in the south and Eastern By-pass in the north. The spacious layout of built form allows for some public trees including groups of birch and lines/clusters of ornamental trees, typically maple, cherry, birch and rowan. More recent development is higher density and there is less open space within them, often with narrow roads with no pedestrian walkways and limited garden space.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux landscape type – flat landscape
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An area of swift growth as a residential suburb in the post-war period Includes some 1950s public housing, 1960s estates and more recent infill of cul-de-sac developments The area surrounds Littlemore Village (3F) and includes some Victorian cottages on Chapel Lane Some small scale infill and replacement of a school with residential development on St Nicholas Road
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Saxon settlement Hedge lines have been retained within the urban fabric, such as forming boundaries to allotment gardens
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned street layout of gently curving crescents with long and short blocks. More recent cul-de-sacs with variable orientation to the edges of the suburb – constrained by the Eastern By-pass Modern development on Barberi Close and Medhurst Way is higher density, with narrow roads and shared public realm

Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally clear pattern of public and private spaces, although this breaks down in more modern developments where there are no boundaries demarking space to the front of properties and vegetation spills out onto the street • Recreational public open spaces are hidden behind built form and contained by the railway/Eastern By-pass
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally uniform pattern of streets with short terraces, semi-detached properties and low-level, small blocks of flats. • Streets are generally quite open • More recent development is higher density and streets are tighter
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed age, scale and design of residential development due to incremental development – including 1950s public housing, 1960s estates and flats, plus more recent infill of 1980s development of housing within cul-de-sacs and some high density 21st century redevelopment of school sites • Huge variation in materials, depending on age of development, including concrete/pebble dash, red and buff brick and painted render. The more modern developments are a mix of brick with wood facing and large ‘picture’ window and some three-storey townhouses • There is a small precinct of shops on St Nicolas Way, with distinctive patterned brick paving forming the public realm in front of them
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal lawns within housing estates and wide roads often with grass verges • Older 1950s housing areas often have chain link fencing forming the boundary to the street • Most development includes driveways/garages/parking courts with little requirement for on street parking • The generally spacious layout of development allows for public trees such as groupings of birch within the shopping precinct and lines and clusters of ornamental trees (typically maple, cherry, birch, rowan). Small-medium trees are a feature of the gardens within more recent development.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are various open spaces within the character area, ranging from communal lawns and verges to large areas of allotments, school grounds and a recreation ground to the rear of properties on Oxford Road/Dudgeon Drive/Kempson Crescent • The recreation ground comprises close mown grass, basketball court and an equipped play area as well as a well-used footpath route between Oxford Road and Kempson Crescent. There is a remnant hedgerow of elder, h and hawthorn along the boundary to the allotments to the north • Clusters of development are set within shared greenspace with well maintained lawns and shrubs that make an important contribution to the streetscape • School playing fields are extensive areas of mown grass with lines of mature trees that mark former field hedgerow boundaries • Extensive allotments behind properties and bound by the railway in the south and Eastern By-pass in the north
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: none • No designated nature sites • Allotments and vegetation along the railway embankment and Eastern By-pass provide local habitats in this area. Private gardens and the churchyard of St Mary and St Nicholas (within the adjacent Littlemore Village) provide additional habitats with mature trees

Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential suburb, surrounded by schools, recreation grounds and allotments. Has a local centre with small precinct of shops/services and a community centre.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separated from the rest of the city by the Eastern By-pass There area is accessed from the main village street of the historic Littlemore Village, providing an attractive gateway
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently curving streets restrict long views out Mature trees within the historic village and around the allotments, by-pass and railway form a backdrop to views
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some overlap of Littlemore conservation area into the character area
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Open spatial qualities of post-war development with communal lawns and public trees that provide some connectivity to the public allotments, recreation ground and beyond along the railway embankment.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Variation in condition of the built form and public realm. Limited sense of place due to incremental development and mis-match of styles.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate – some connectivity of street trees, grass verges, garden vegetation, allotments and fragments of former hedgerow boundaries
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – some hierarchy of spaces

Sensitivity to change

The Littlemore character area is not particularly sensitive to change. The main change to the area over time has been through infill development of backland plots, small scale changes to architectural elevations and front garden boundaries, and small-scale redevelopment of former residential and school sites.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on public green spaces such as the allotments and recreation ground
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas

- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New housing infill that results in further fragmentation of the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the fragments of former hedgerow boundaries and mature trees in community spaces
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Incremental development that has not always been well-designed. New development does not respond to existing characteristics Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	No strong identity across the area, but pockets that are identifiable. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Variation in building density and a mix of building types, form and style. Some lack of clarity of street pattern. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	General reliance on motor vehicles. Various pedestrian routes between blocks of development. Good public transport provision. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Some nature provision within the urban fabric through grass verges/road corners and street trees. Vegetation within private gardens provides some connectivity. Allotments and vegetation along the railway and by-pass embankments also contribute to the nature within this area. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Public open space at the edge of the area including allotments and recreation ground. Limited links into other character areas Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with some variation of housing types and some local services Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Variation in quality of built form and public realm, with some areas of neglect. Building services spill out onto the street in places Limited
Resources –	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology.

efficient and resilient	Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in varying condition. Some mis-managed communal spaces Limited

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Littlemore character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Thomson Terrace allotments and Minchery Farm allotments (west) Amenity Green Space: small, scattered locations including Newman Park, St Nicholas Road and Redmore Close Parks and Recreation Grounds: Oxford Road Park Play Space: Littlemore play space, basketball and MUGA and Redmore play space Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: John Henry Newman Academy
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Littlemore character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

5M SANDHILLS AND RISINGHURST



Photo 1: Low Coral Rag boundary walls are distinctive features of the streetscape



Photo 2: Cul-de-sacs predominate on the edge of the area



Photo 3: Mature vegetation is an important feature of the streetscape



Photo 4: Vernacular buildings along Kiln Lane



Photo 5: Allotments contribute to the green open space in the south of the area



Photo 6: Shotover provides a wooded backdrop to the area



Photo 7: More recent cul-de-sac development is well-integrated by mature vegetation in the north of the area



Photo 8: Views north over the valley of Bayswater Brook provide the rural context to Sandhills

5M SANDHILLS AND RISINGHURST

Description

The Sandhills and Risinghurst character area occurs mainly on the flat plateau of the Settled Plateaux landscape type but extends onto the slopes of the Enclosing Limestone Hills at Shotover. It is an area of swift growth during the inter-war period, on the former Quarry Green Common, Quarry Coppice woodland and Forest Hill fields, within the bounds of the former Shotover Royal Forest.

It developed as two separate suburbs, divided by London Road during the period of rapid expansion between the 1930s and 1960s. Later development filled the gap between the two areas, although the A40 still forms a barrier between them. The suburb is set out on a grid of wide, straight streets with semi-detached housing set in gardens with generous spaces in between. Street and block pattern breaks down at the edges where more recent cul-de-sacs and closes predominate, and public/private realm is less clear.

Streets are generally wide with open proportions, with semi-detached bay-fronted houses, finished in pebble dash or painted render, set back behind front gardens and bounded by distinctive low Coral rag stone walls, although these have often been removed to allow for driveways. Red-brick properties and walls are more typical in the north of the area. Grass verges provide a separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic and are a visual setting to the street. Lime, Horse Chestnut and Scots Pine are present on some streets, where they provide colour and textural interest as well as a sense of landscape maturity.

The area is carved in half by the A40 dual carriageway, an important eastern approach to Oxford, and there is little connectivity between the discrete areas. Green spaces within the character area tend to be school grounds and recreation grounds typical of the same period and often bear no relation to underlying landscape character. The lower density housing has allowed pockets of more recent infill, which have increased the density of the townscape in places.

The continuity of housing style, along with some distinctive landscape details including stone kerbs, low boundary wall and vernacular buildings establish the local sense of place within this character area. The wooded ridge of Shotover Hill to the south and valley of Bayswater Brook to the north provide the rural context to this suburb, forming the eastern extent of the city of Oxford.

The suburb is encompassed by undulating, low hills including the wooded hillside of Shotover to the south. Pockets of green space and mature trees filter into the suburb from the surrounding countryside, in the public and private realm. Allotments, substantial private gardens and a public park contribute to a more organic layout and less dense housing area in the south of the character area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the flat plateau of the Settled Plateaux landscape type, extending onto the lower slopes of the Enclosing Limestone Hills at Shotover
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An area of swift growth as a residential suburb in the inter-war period on the former Quarry Green common, Quarry Coppice woodland and Forest Hill fields. • More modern infill around the edges • Kiln Lane is a historic lane that links to Shotover Hill (once linking to a brick works and local farms) with some historic buildings along it

Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorchester-Alchester Roman Road and roadside settlement • Within the bounds of the former Shotover Royal Forest • Coral rag stone boundary walls remain in places
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide, straight streets on a loose gride with semi-detached housing set in moderate gardens with generous spaces in between. • Street and block pattern breaks down at the edges where cul-de-sacs and closes have been more recently developed. • Large scale buildings such as schools and offices sit within open grounds, enhancing the sense of space
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally clear pattern of public and private spaces, with low wall boundaries to the front of properties – less distinct within the cul-de-sacs
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide streets with open proportions • Medium/low density housing, although infill has altered this in places
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard inter-war, semi-detached housing with front bays, finished in pebble-dash or render, set back from the roads with private front gardens and driveways. • Clay tile roofs are predominant
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses are set back behind front gardens that are often bound by low Coral rag stone or brick walls • Coral rag stone walls and stone kerb edging are distinctive features of the streetscape • Grass verges provide separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic and are a visual setting to the street. • Lime, Horse Chestnut and Scots Pine trees are present on some trees where they provide colour and textural interest as well as a sense of maturity of the landscape
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are pockets of open space through this character area, including a small equipped park and grassy road corners in the north of the area, and allotments, sports court, substantial grass road corners with trees, a recreational field and equipped play park as well as the edge of C S Lewis Nature Reserve in the south of the area. • Footpaths connect south to Shotover
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: small areas of traditional orchard and deciduous woodland around the southern boundary • No designated nature sites • Substantial private gardens, roadside grass verges and trees and woodland edges contribute to local habitats with connectivity to the adjoining countryside and wooded hills
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb bisected by the busy A40 dual carriageway. • Away from the A40 the character is rural in places and occasionally tranquil
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The A40 dual carriageway acts as an arterial route through the area, and provides an important eastern gateway to Oxford • Access to Shotover and the surrounding countryside along Kiln Lane and various footpaths south out of the suburb • Oxford Greenbelt Way long distance route links through the east of the character area and connects to the surrounding countryside
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views out of the area, south towards the hills of Shotover and north towards the valley of Bayswater Brook, contribute to the rural setting of the suburb
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

A distinctive, semi-rural suburb within the bounds of the former Shotover Royal Forest. The wooded hill of Shotover provides a wooded, historic backdrop to the area. Use of local Coral rag stone in the garden boundary walls is a distinctive feature where they remain. Rough stone kerbs and grass road verges and corners also contribute to the sense of place. Good streetscape condition and high landscape quality.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Characteristic low boundary walls and front gardens have been removed in places, to provide off road parking spaces. The busy A40 separates the two areas, with little connectivity across it.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate – some connectivity of street trees, grass verges, garden vegetation and woodland edges
Historic Integrity	Moderate – distinctive inter-war housing
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – some hierarchy of spaces

Sensitivity to change

Sandhills and Risinghurst character area has an important rural context and location at the eastern gateway to Oxford and as a result is sensitive to change. Its position on the foot slopes of Shotover Hill further enhances its sensitivity. Key sensitivities are the remaining distinctive boundary walls, mature trees through the public and private realm, grass verges and historic connections to Shotover.

The main change to this area was the rapid development of the rural fields during the inter-war period. Since then, the area has seen incremental and infill development of backland plots, changes to architectural elevations and front garden boundaries. Signs of alterations to housing suggest a period of character transition through social change.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and do not respect the street character

- New built development on the edges of the character area that intrudes into the rural setting in the context of Shotover Hill
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including street furniture, paving, boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Later development introduces new styles and materials but is generally well integrated in the settlement pattern. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a generally strong, local identity, associated with the repetition of housing styles. Newer development is less coherent or distinctive. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A coherent street pattern with clear destinations such as local schools and community facilities, although these are not easily accessible by walking/cycling. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	There is a good network of wide pedestrian walkways, linking paths and provision for cyclists along separate paths parallel to the A40, and good public transport links into the city centre. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Some nature provision within the urban fabric through grass verges/road corners and street trees. Vegetation within private gardens provides some connectivity. Allotments and woodland edges also contribute to the nature within this area. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Pockets of public open space including small, equipped play parks and allotments. Good footpath links into the surrounding countryside. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	This is a residential suburb, with some variation of housing types and some local services Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is generally good quality of built form and public realm through this area. Streets are wide and generally fit for purpose. Significant
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained. Moderate

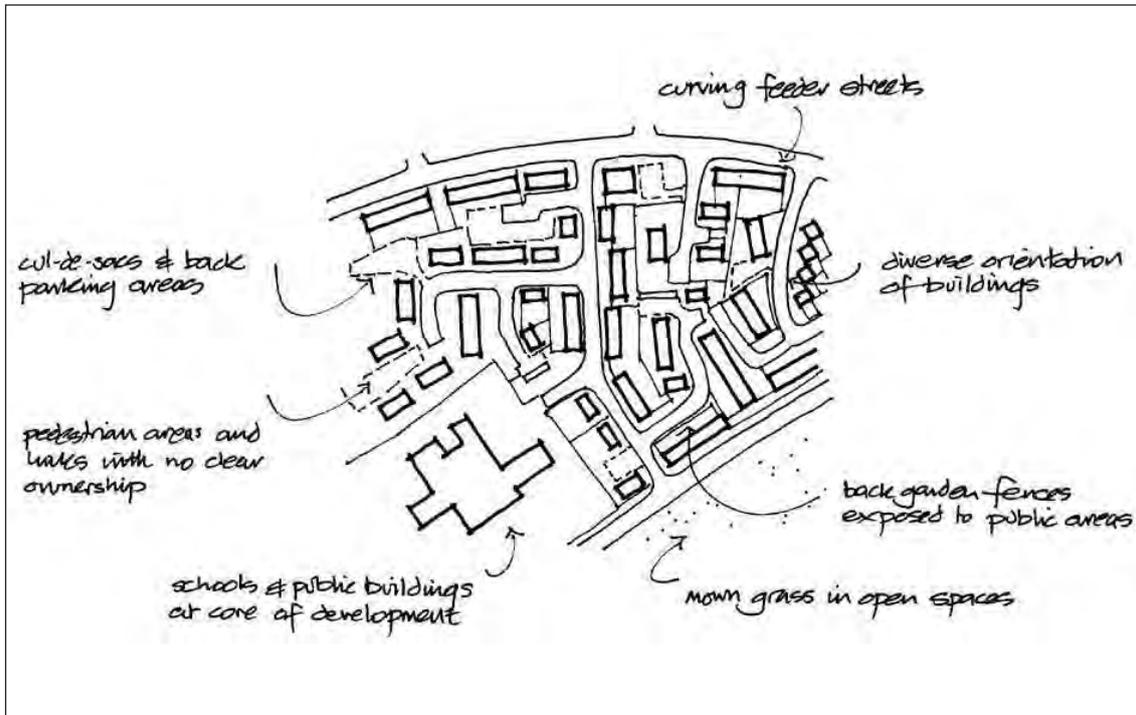
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Sandhills and Risinghurst character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: Kiln Lane allotments</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Ridgeway Road Recreation Ground and Richards Way</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Kiln Lane (extends out of area)</p> <p>Play Space: includes Downside Dip Play Area, Sandhills Play Area and Risinghurst Recreation Ground Play Area</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: Green Ridges and edge of C S Lewis nature reserve</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: Collingwood Road URC Church</p> <p>Private Open Space: Endeavour Academy</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Centre for Music</p>
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	<p>Traditional orchard: small areas in the south</p> <p>Deciduous woodland: around the southern boundary, on the edge of Shotover</p>
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Sandhills and Risinghurst character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

6 POST 1960s SUBURBS



Example: 6A Blackbird Leys

6 POST 1960S SUBURBS

Generic Description

There are three principal areas of post 1960's development throughout Oxford. One of these, Blackbird Leys, is a large residential estate on the outskirts of the city, with associated retail and service centres. Other areas include smaller pockets of housing from the 1960's to the 1990's which are closely linked to other city suburbs. The landscape and townscape quality of these areas is variable, with some of the larger estates suffering from inherent design weaknesses, whilst some of the pockets of more recent development have been well planned and detailed. Where development has been piecemeal, there are often issues of a lack of a clear townscape identity to the area as a whole.

Much of the 1960's development, and especially that at Blackbird Leys, is laid out in such a way that there is, in places, a lack of clarity about which areas are private and which public. In areas where this is the case, such as parking courts and pedestrian areas, there is a sense of neglect and issues of personal safety. Where architectural quality is low, this creates areas with a weak sense of place and lower townscape quality. Open spaces associated with such areas tend to be bland spaces of mown grass which do not respond to the underlying landscape character.

Later pockets of housing development tend to be more self-contained and inward focused, often on short cul-de-sacs with small areas of shared greenspace. Pedestrian and cycle access through the larger of these areas, such as the south of Blackbird Leys, is often good, whereas vehicular access is maze-like with difficulty in orientation.

Key characteristics

- Discrete residential estates on the eastern suburban belt of the city
- Lower townscape and landscape quality in areas of 1960s development, as a result of layout and architectural detail
- Smaller pockets of late 20th century development are often inward looking and self-contained
- Open spaces of closely mown grass which have limited ecological value and which do not respond to the underlying landscape character

Character Areas

- 6A Blackbird Leys
- 6B Wood Farm
- 6C Horspath Road Area

6A BLACKBIRD LEYS



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: Distinct 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



Photo 9: Hanging tiles to fronts of houses



Photo 10: Substantial areas of green space with play equipment



Photo 11: Variation in road treatments through the south of the area

6A BLACKBIRD LEYS

Description

The Blackbird Leys character area is the largest post 1960s suburb of Oxford. It is divided into two parts: a large 1960s development in the north of Northfield Brook, and to the south a more recent residential area.

The northern, 1960s area is typified by curvilinear road layouts with cul-de-sacs, centred on a large open area, shops and larger scale public facilities. It largely comprises continuous runs of houses and flats which are mostly two or three storeys as well as two tower blocks which are landmark features of the area. There is limited variety in the built form of the area, with red brick predominating and a mixture of semi-detached and short terraces of properties. Hanging tiles on frontages are a characteristic feature through this area. The central open space provides a large recreation area with occasional groups of mature trees. There is a variety of facilities, including newly built health centre, library, recently extended leisure centre, a row of shops and schools at the centre of the estate.

Northfield Brook flows through the character area east-west, identifiable by a distinctive belt of trees between the two housing areas. Areas of connected public open space either side of the brook include areas for recreation and of nature conservation interest such as Spindleberry Nature Park.

The southern residential area is relatively more recent and is typified by a maze of short cul-de-sacs with interconnecting pedestrian routes. This area is mainly accessible from Grenoble Road to the south, although one connecting street, Windale Avenue links this area across the Northfield Brook to the north of the character area.

An avenue of trees including mature Horse Chestnuts along Windale Avenue defines the historic route between two farms either side of the brook, and now provides a well-defined route between the north and south of the suburb. Remnants of the southern farm are present, with some retained boundary walls and converted barns characteristic of rural Oxfordshire, incorporated within the surrounding late 20th century development. Built form through the southern area are largely built in orange and yellow brick with block paving as the dominant highway and footway material. There is more variation in house style, layout and rooflines in the southern area of the suburb. The area is characterised by pockets of public green space including equipped play areas, nestled within the residential estates.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Settled Plateaux and Clay Vale. A flat area on the edge of the clay vale.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City estate on former open arable fields of Littlemore and Sandford Fields.Some historic vernacular farm buildings retained within the development and single historic link road over the brook is retained.Post-1960s housing and service centre.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Route of a former Roman Road cuts through the east of the area (well-defined bridleway)Extensive Roman potter manufacturing areaNucleus of vernacular farm buildings including large 'Cotswold' barn and dovecote on Nightingale Road

Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The northern area contains a number of curvilinear feeder roads off which there are numerous short cul-de-sacs and parking courts. The housing is arranged in short blocks with pedestrian access through some development backs. Southern area is fed from distributor roads and comprises short, tight, curved streets and cul-de-sacs, with few through streets.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a number of places in the northern area there is confusion between fronts and backs of properties, with resulting spaces where ownership is not clear. Orientation within the housing areas is sometimes confusing.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing is high density with buildings from two- to four-storeys and two tower blocks. Around the edges of the open space the spatial character is open and windswept. Larger scale, built form on the western edge of Blackbird Leys Park contrasts with the smaller scale residential development.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two storey short brick terraces and semi-detached houses, small blocks of flats and two tower blocks. Materials are predominantly red brick and cladding in 1960s areas, and mixed red, yellow and blue brick detailing in later development. 21st century rendering of tower blocks introduces more variation in building material.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the northern area, macadam surfacing is ubiquitous, with some variation in lighting columns. In the later area, block paving on roads is common. Street tree planting and small grass verges soften the streetscape. Various pockets of green space/planting that lines roads, demarks parking bays and links through development areas
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central open space in the north area comprises an expanse of close mown grass, with occasional clusters of mature trees. In other areas along feeder roads there are wide grass verges and local areas of communal grassland associated with individual streets or blocks of flats and allotments. Northfield Brook, Spindleberry Nature Park, Fry's Hill Park and Gillians Park, form a distinctive central belt of open space with a natural character, providing a wildlife corridor as well as recreational space. These spaces are easily accessible from the residential areas to the north and south. The area is characterised by pockets of grass of variable sizes within the residential neighbourhoods, occasionally with play parks and few trees.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority Habitats: pockets of deciduous woodland in Spindleberry Nature Park OCWS: Spindleberry Park, an important local wildlife resource with woodland, scrub, rough grassland and freshwater habitats linking into surrounding open countryside. Close proximity to Sandford Brake LWS - an area of mixed birch, oak and ash woodland and the wider south Oxford countryside.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet residential suburb with variety of services including a central area with shopping facilities, health centre, large leisure centre and the City of Oxford College campus.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeder roads and external distributor roads contain the majority of the traffic, with quieter cul-de-sacs and connecting pedestrian alleys. Distributor routes provide bus routes to surrounding suburbs and the city. PROW connect around the outskirts of the area to the wider countryside to the south of Oxford, including the distinctive linear, green corridor of the former Roman Road and links to Shakespeare's Way long distance path.

Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long views from distributor roads including some open views to the south and east. • Short views within residential courts and cul-de-sacs
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade II listed Church of the Holy Family
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Hockmore Cottages in the far north of the character area

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Large areas of green space that are well-connected through this suburb. The area to the south of Northfield Brook is built with more attention to architectural detailing and better finishes to the public realm. The presence of vernacular buildings of local stone, the historic avenue of horse chestnuts along Windale Avenue, the Northfield Brook corridor and the presence of grass verges and street trees through the area, contribute to the landscape quality.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

There are some signs of neglect and mis-management. The north of the area comprises a residential area which lacks quality in architectural detailing and suffers from a layout which has problems in respect of clarity of ownership of common spaces.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate – local designation and good connectivity between green spaces
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low
Open Space	High - hierarchy, variety and good connectivity of open space

Sensitivity to change

The Blackbird Leys character area has limited sensitivity to change, due to the limited historic integrity and characteristic townscape features. Greater sensitivity is associated with the distinctive areas of green open space, particularly along the corridor of Northfield Brook. More recent development has been positive, with attention to local architectural styles and clarity of ownership.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development results in the erosion of quality landscape between the buildings
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape

- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge
- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and out of context
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric through misuse, air pollution, vibration from passing traffic and pedestrian traffic
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development, neglect or mis-management
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space and private gardens that would alter the character of the area
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the brook flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Later development introduces new styles and materials but is generally well integrated in the settlement pattern and enhances the older development. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	A varied development, with diversity in built form, a result of incremental development. Consistency of style and materials in built form, and strong neighbourhood centre contribute to local identity. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A central hub, with large open spaces and distinctive buildings improves legibility. Smaller service centres contribute to walkability of the neighbourhood. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Pedestrian routes between buildings and a number of access points into the large open spaces prioritise people on foot and bike. Access to the wider countryside to the south. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Local Wildlife Site prioritises biodiversity and urban ecosystems. Publicly accessible from surrounding residential areas. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A hierarchy of accessible green space, including grass verges, small play areas, larger recreation grounds and nature parks. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	Housing is predominantly made up of semi-detached and terraced. A number of services and facilities, particularly focussed in the centre of the area, with good connectivity. Significant

Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in quality of built form and public realm through this area. In places, the interface between houses and the public realm is weak. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private realm is in generally good condition and well maintained, more so in the south of the area. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Blackbird Leys character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: including Watlington Road allotments, Bartholomew Road and Van Diemens Lane allotments and Kestral Crescent allotments Amenity Green Space: Numerous, scattered locations including Bartholomew Road, Balfour Park, Overmead Green and Mistletoe Green Parks and Recreation Grounds: Blackbird Leys Park, Gillians Park, Orchard Way Recreation Ground, Sand Lane Sports Ground and Fry's Hill Park Play Space: several, scattered locations including Mistletoe Green, Kingfisher play space, Balfour play space and Orchard Way play space Accessible Natural Green Space: Spindleberry Nature Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: Church of the Holy Family Private Open Space: several schools including Mabel Pritchard School, Pegasus Primary School, and Church Cowley St James Primary School Outdoor Sport: Blackbird Leys Bowls and City of Oxford Tennis
Strategic blue GI	Northfield Brook flows through the centre of the area
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Spindleberry Park
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: in Spindleberry Park
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Blackbird Leys character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

6B WOOD FARM



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: Contrast of housing styles with modern blocks of student accommodation



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



Photo 6: Strong woodland edge adjacent to the housing and wooded backdrop above the roofline

6B WOOD FARM

Description

The Wood Farm character is a residential suburb on the eastern edge of Oxford City. It has grown up around the ancient woodland of Magdalen Wood, on the lower wooded clay slopes of Shotover Hill.

The housing in this area is laid out in a series of mostly short closes or crescents with surviving mature trees within the developed area. The housing is generally medium density and comprises a mix of post-war housing styles including three-storey flats, two-storey short terraces and semi-detached houses, and single storey buildings. There is a single tower block in the north of the area, as well as a small shopping precinct with flats over. Built form styles and layout is more varied to the south of Magdalen Woods, from small semi-detached bungalows to the large massing of student accommodation along Blackstock Close. The layout of the housing results in general issues associated with housing development of this era, including exposed back garden fences along roadsides and a lack of clarity with regard to the ownership of open areas.

The character area extends across the Eastern Bypass, to the southeast of the residential area. This forms part of the Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI and comprises an area of grassland encompassed by the woodland edge, Brasenose Farm allotments and a cluster of former farm buildings now converted for residential and business use.

The character area is sheltered, in the shadow of Shotover Hill which forms a rural wooded backdrop to the estate. The pattern of ancient woodland on the slopes of Shotover can be clearly seen infiltrating the residential area, with strong hedge and tree boundaries between properties and within public spaces. Many wide grass verges and green spaces support oaks of ancient wood pasture. Magdalen Wood, originally part of Royal Shotover Forest, provides a wildlife haven in this urban area. It provides a buffer against the busy ring road, which forms a boundary to the east and fragments Shotover Hill pastures and woodland from the rest of the area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower clay slopes of the Enclosing Limestone Hills - gently sloping topography at the foot of Shotover
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City estate on former Shotover fringe woodland, incorporating Magdalen Wood common.• Post 1960s with much older landscape elements.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curvilinear street layout with many cul-de-sacs and crescents.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some confusion with regard to exposed back garden fences and semi-private open space which is not clearly in the public or private realm.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium density built development with some substantial areas of open space.• Spatial characteristics are predominantly quite open, although mature trees create a soft enclosing element.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A larger scale tall tower block, school and student accommodation blocks contrast with the smaller scale residential built form through the area.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short terraces of two-storey houses, three-storey blocks of flats, single-storey buildings and single tower block, as well as some semi-detached dwellings in the south. • Free standing garages are a feature in some locations. • Common materials include red and yellow brick, light painted render and cladding, with clay tile roofs.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide streets often with open grass areas around flats, or low brick boundary walls to housing, with a variety of fences and hedges. • Varying sizes of semi-private and public greens and wide grass verges are characteristic of the streetscape.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide grass verges and public and communal open spaces break up the built form and support ancient oaks • Magdalen Wood and Brasenose Wood contain many public woodland footpaths that are easily accessible from the surrounding residential areas, with a pedestrian crossing link across the Eastern Bypass
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Deciduous woodland in Open Magdalen Wood and an area of Lowland Meadow to the east of the Eastern Bypass • Local Wildlife Site: Open Magdalen (also ancient woodland) • Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI in the southeast • The Eastern Bypass divides Open Magdalen Wood from the expansive Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill and the wider countryside to the east of Oxford.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A residential area with a small shopping street, nursery and large primary school, student accommodation and a healthcare centre.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian routes connect residential areas with woodland walks. • PROWs that extend east connect the residential areas to Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill as well as east Oxford countryside. • Local cycle routes connect to Sustrans route 57 into the city centre and into the wider Oxford countryside. • Feeder roads and external distributor roads contain the majority of the traffic, with quieter cul-de-sacs and connecting pedestrian walkways within the suburb
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shotover Hill forms a rural wooded backdrop to the residential estate. • Skyline views are diverse including roofs, chimneys, mature trees, hills and wooded beyond.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Brasenose Farm House

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area is distinctive, as a result of its close relationship of residential areas to the ancient woodland and visual and historical connections with Shotover. The natural areas contribute to the local sense of place.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The suburb is diverse, with a range in materials, as well as a somewhat confusing housing layout, that reduces the coherence and legibility of the built environment and detracts from the distinctive environment.

Indicators of landscape value

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

Sensitivity to change

The Wood Farm character 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 property boundaries is one of the most evident ways in which change has taken place to date.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development results in the erosion of quality landscape between the buildings
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the townscape
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form
- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area and loss of pedestrian access
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and out of context
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including the woodland edges
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development, neglect or mis-management
- Loss of green space including grass verges, public open space and private gardens that would alter the character of the area
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Infill development has generally had respect for the historic street and block pattern, although materials and style are not always well integrated. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Mixed building types and styles results in lack of coherence and identity within the area Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A relatively compact neighbourhood, increasing the walkability. Limited distinctive buildings with a complex street pattern makes legibility more challenging. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Motor vehicles are prioritised across much of the area. Pedestrian routes connect residential areas to woodland and wider countryside. Cyclists are accommodated on designated routes along main roads. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature as some priority, with designated sites but not optimised through built up areas Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Well located hierarchy of green spaces, from grass verges, play parks, allotments and large woodland areas. Access to countryside and woodlands to the east across the Eastern Bypass. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	A residential area, with educational, healthcare and a small retail offering. A mix of integrated dwelling types. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in the quality of public and private built form in this area. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally the built form was built to last, with a range in the levels of maintenance and management of the private realm. Limited community management. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Wood Farm character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Pauling Road, Wood Farm Road and Masons Road</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Broad Oak Nature Park and Nuffield Road Park</p> <p>Play Space: Broad Oak Nature Park play area and basketball, Palmer Road play area and Wood Farm Recreation Ground play area and MUGA</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: Magdalen Wood</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: ***</p> <p>Private Open Space: ***</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Wood Farm Primary School</p>
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	<p>SSSI: Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill</p> <p>Local Wildlife Site: Open Magdalen (also ancient woodland)</p>
Priority habitat Index	<p>Deciduous woodland: in Open Magdalen Wood</p> <p>Lowland Meadow: to the east of the Eastern Bypass</p>
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Wood Farm character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

6C HORSPATH ROAD AREA



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



Photo 6: Diversity of materials and styles in 21st century student development

6C HORSPATH ROAD AREA

Description

The Horspath Road Area character area is located on a level plateau of Wheatley Limestone (Coral rag) on the Settled Plateaux landscape type. This gives rise to a level area with views eastwards, to the Shotover Country Park and Cowley Industrial works.

It is a predominantly residential settlement with post-war housing and clusters of post-1990s housing around cul-de-sacs, combined with a number of integrated institutional and commercial buildings. The area has evidently grown incrementally, across former fields and there are discrete areas of different housing styles and layouts. This results in much diversity in this area, although built form is predominantly brick and two-storey, with some three-storey blocks of flats. 21st century development has introduced further diversity in building materials, particularly seen in the modern student village at Parade Green in the north of the area. The modern form and materials contrast with the Coral rag stone boundary walls along Hollow Way to the west and surrounding, generally smaller scale properties that surround the site.

The density of developed areas is high, with a wide diversity in streetscape character, from enclosed housing courts to wider main thoroughfares. The Eastern Bypass creates a strong boundary to the east of the area, separating it from the industrial area. There are few open spaces and there is generally limited vegetation, mainly in the form of street and boundary trees.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is situated on the Settled Plateaux.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Bullingdon Green.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student accommodation is on a former barracks, with retained Coral rag stone boundary walls and main building on Hollow Way
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street pattern is typified by curving streets and short cul-de-sacs
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally clear pattern, although there are some areas around commercial buildings where the sense of ownership is not clear.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high density urban environment, with limited open space. Generally consists of two- to three- storey flats and short terraces, with more semi-detached dwellings in the northern post 1990s development. Influence of larger scale built form of the student accommodation, that contrasts with the surrounding smaller scale residential buildings, in the north of the area.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is much diversity in architecture, with brick as the predominant building material. 21st century development introduces more diversity of style and materials, with the use of cladding and rendering.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streetscape is generally open and with occasional street trees. Encompassed by busy main roads with tall lighting columns, signage, bus stops and cycle lanes
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The older development to the south of the site exhibits more greenspace than the later development to the north, with the flats

	<p>having communal greenspaces separating the buildings from the road. Generally the post 1990 properties have small private gardens and one significant communal greenspace- the recreational ground off Hollow Way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited vegetation with occasional street trees and trees within small green spaces and particularly along the Eastern Bypass to the east.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitats: none within the area No designated nature sites Limited ecological interest associated with few groups of mature trees and pockets of amenity open space.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally a quiet residential suburb with neighbourhood retail units, educational facilities and larger scale commercial area on the Eastern Bypass. The Eastern Bypass audible in the background.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustrans route 57 bisects the area west to east, connecting between the city centre and countryside to the east. Bus routes along Horspath Road provide access to the city centre and the surrounding suburbs. The cul-de-sacs do not allow easy access or orientation through the area – there are no through roads.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The varying alignment of buildings creates some lack of orientation, with short views Some long views across the countryside from the eastern edge of the area
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: St Francis Church Hall Hollow Way

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The individual pockets of new development are generally well detailed, including the 21st century student accommodation development that uses high quality materials and introduces street planting and trees to the area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The area contains diverse development styles, which results in few distinctive or unifying features and limited sense of character. This, along with no through-routes, leads to an incoherent residential area, a result of piecemeal development.

Indicators of landscape value

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

Sensitivity to change

The Horspath Road Area character area has 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, subjected to uncoordinated infill development or redevelopment.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in further erosion of landscape between the buildings
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible in the context of existing urban form
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and out of context
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character and result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, in the public and private realm including occasional tree boundaries
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Incremental development has introduced contrasting materials and styles to the area, that are responsive to the context and local culture. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Mixed building types and styles due to incremental development, results in a lack of coherence and identity within the area. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A compact neighbourhood, but varying orientation of housing along numerous cul-de-sacs makes navigability challenging. Limited
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	No vehicular through-routes. Cycle and bus routes provide easy accessibility to the city centre, from the outer edges of the area. Good cycle and pedestrian connectivity Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not enhanced or prioritised. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Pockets of green space include isolated play spaces and grass verges Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	A residential area, with educational, healthcare and retail offering. A mix of integrated housing types and tenures. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	There is a range in the quality of public and private built form in this area. Streets are generally wide and fit for purpose. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. New development highlights need for change of use of built form in places. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The built form was generally built to last, with a range in the levels of maintenance and management of the private realm. Moderate

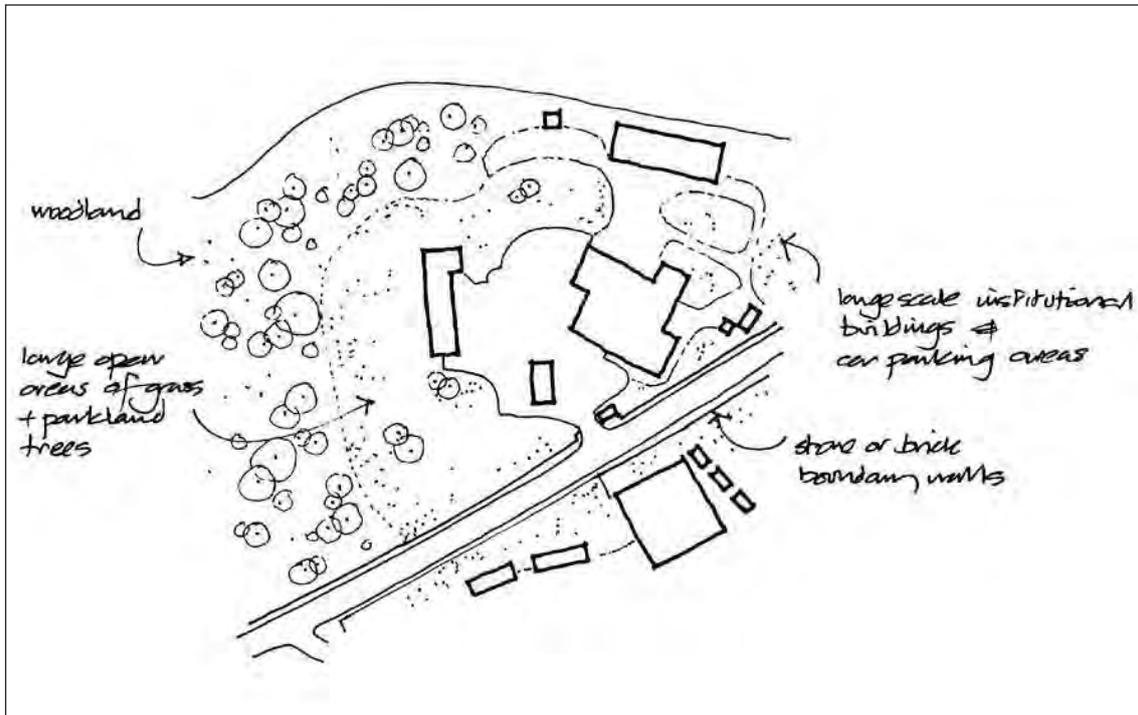
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Horspath Road Area character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Normandy Crescent Recreation Ground Parks and Recreation Grounds: Hundred Acres Park Play Space: Hundred Acres Park play area and MUGA, Hunter's Close play area and Normandy Crescent play area Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: St Francis C of E Primary School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Horspath Road Area character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

7 OPEN HILLS (WITH INSTITUTIONS)



Generic example of spatial characteristics

7 OPEN HILLS (WITH INSTITUTIONS)

Generic Description

The Open Hills landscape/townscape character type is defined by its prominent hillsides and open, undulating topography. It coincides with the Settled Plateaux landscape character type: low 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

7A HEADINGTON HILL



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



Photo 2: Oxford Brookes University campus 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 is a spacious open park with mown grass and mature trees



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



Photo 7: Student villages with the woodland edge



Photo 8: Modern architecture of Oxford Brookes campus



Photo 9: Numerous mature trees including Scots Pine in parkland through the university campus

7A HEADINGTON HILL

Description

The Headington Hill character area is located to the east of the city. Headington Hill is a landmark that rises steeply from the Cherwell Valley and forms a distinct open area within the Settled Plateaux landscape type. The earliest known land use of Headington Hill was as pasture. The surrounding lower-lying area was under arable cultivation, with evidence of medieval strip farming in South Park. The lower slopes of Headington Hill have remained as a large area of open space within the city.

The major land uses are institutional and recreational. The movement of numerous students provide a sense of vitality to the area, particularly around Oxford Brookes University. South Park is also a popular location for festivals, fairs etc and is often full of people on bank holidays.

The influence of the estate landscapes associated with Headington Hill Hall (original house built 1824 and rebuilt 1856-58) is strong in this area. The landscape is characterised by estate buildings and institutional complexes within well-treed parkland landscapes. The density of built form varies across the area, with higher density development largely focussed towards the top of the hill and comprising a mix of educational facilities and student accommodation. Buildings are typically three- to four-storeys and set within green space with generous gaps between buildings. The campus of Oxford Brookes University comprises greater massing and taller built form with less green space at the top of the hill.

There is a huge diversity of building age and architectural style across the area. Headington Hill Hall is lavish Italianate mansion, constructed from yellow brick with stone dressings and colonnades was the focal point of the area, although today is encompassed by mature parkland trees that separate it from the nearby areas of student accommodation. Late 19th century country houses including Langley Lodge (1879) and Fairfield House (1895) are now part of colleges/schools. Headington Girls School, a neo-Georgian red brick building was added in 1928. Oxford Brookes University campus now forms the focus of this area on the hill to the east of South Park. It comprises a group of large, modern buildings. There has been substantial, recent redevelopment including new buildings and incorporating new technologies and innovations including green roofs and solar panels, and enclosed open spaces. Schools, student villages and sports facilities form focussed groups of buildings through the north of the area, set within green space and generally encompassed by mature trees.

Headington Road, the main route between Oxford and London, divides the area in two with Headington Hill Park to the north and South Park to the south. 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 is an ancient footpath enclosed by vegetation, that provides a pedestrian/cycle route through this area between Oxford and Headington and further contributes to the sense of rurality. Stone boundary walls are features of the public realm, enclosing private grounds.

Open space is a major feature of this area. The high proportion of public green space is provided by South Park and Headington Hill Park. South Park is a spacious open park with mown grass and mature trees on the hillside that rises from the west to east of the area. Headington Hill Park is a designed landscape park of Headington Hill Hall, with many feature trees planted in the 19th century. The woodland, mature trees and areas of rough grassland within the two parks are a significant wildlife resource and are well connected through this character area.

Headington Hill provides a wooded, green setting to the east of the city centre, where woodland and mature parkland trees form the skyline. The spacious parks contribute a sense of rural landscape and tranquillity, in the middle of the city. There are contrasting views throughout the area, from framed views along Cuckoo Lane and short distance views within wooded parkland, to the open panoramic views from South Park towards the 'dreaming spires' of the city. Many artists, including J M W Turner have painted this famous view.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux landscape type – Headington Hill is a prominent hill, enclosing Oxford to the east of the River Cherwell
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estate landscapes associated with Headington Hill Hall and parkland of Morrell's estate area Former medieval fields on Headington Hill have remained undeveloped (although boundaries largely removed) within the parks A number of substantial late 19th century manor houses including Langley Lodge (1879) and Fairfield House (1895) have changed use to educational facilities 20th century additions including neo-Georgian Headington School for Girls on London Road and most recently redevelopment of Oxford Brookes University campus
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval strip farming in South Park Roman settlement at Headington School Civil War Parliamentary Siege Works Former house and parkland of Morrell's estate, mostly preserved open space with the house now part of Oxford Brookes University Wrought iron bridge linking Headington Hill Park and South Park over Headington Road
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual estate buildings and institutional complexes including student 'villages'
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some confusion over public and private space, particularly with respect to playing fields on the edges of public parks and the grounds of institutions Access in and around Oxford Brookes campus and the student villages is semi-private
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average density is low, although distributed unevenly across the area – built development is focussed towards the top of the hill and the parks are across the lower slopes Large scale buildings, up to five-storey height, typically set within open grounds with generous spacing between adjacent buildings. Higher density and less open space within Oxford Brookes campus Great sense of space, enhance by the hill top location, although mature trees and woodland contribute to enclosure
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lavish, Italianate Headington Hill Hall designed in 1856, constructed from yellow brick and buff stone Plater College, 1879 (now EF International Language Campus) Headington Girls School – neo-Georgian red brick building, 1928 Oxford Brookes campus – variety of building styles and materials due to various periods of development and redevelopment between 1953-present day
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural lanes such as Cheney Lane and Pullens Lane are features – typified by lack of kerbs or road markings Rural footpaths such as Cuckoo Lane enclosed by vegetation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone boundary walls are features of the public realm, enclosing private spaces – seen along Headington Road, Pullens Lane and Cheney Lane Mature trees often line roads and paths
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high proportion of green space in this character area South Park is a spacious, open park with large areas of grass with small groups of and bound by mature trees, on the rising hill slopes Headington Hill Park is a designed landscape park from the late 19th century, with grass areas defined by mature specimen trees and shrubs Rag stone walls form the boundary to open spaces
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority habitat: substantial areas of deciduous woodland OCWS: Headington Hill Viewpoint The woodland, mature trees and areas of grassland within the parks are a significant wildlife resource within the character area
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use is predominantly institutional and recreational It is a relatively rural and tranquil area within the middle of the city, with vast areas of green space South Park is a popular location for festivals/fairs and group gatherings Numerous students bring vitality to this area, particularly around the University Many artists, including J M W Turner have painted the famous view from South Park across the 'dreaming spires'
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headington Road is a major through-route and key approach to the area – dividing the two parks and area in half. The parks are linked across Headington Road by a distinctive wrought iron footbridge Cheney Lane and Pullens Lane are quiet, rural lanes for local traffic Cuckoo Lane is an historic footpath link between Oxford city centre and Headington village and provides connectivity to the River Cherwell and its floodplain
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are contrasting views throughout the area, including framed views along Cuckoo Lane and open, panoramic views from South Park Headington Hill provides a green backdrop to Oxford city centre, where woodland and mature trees form the skyline Within the area is 'South Park' view cone, identified in <i>the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones'</i> (2015), which exemplifies the views of Oxford City Centre from Headington Hill. It is a view that has been admired for centuries for its aesthetic quality.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The character area is within the Headington Hill conservation area. High Wall – Grade II listed park and garden A small number of listed buildings along Headington Road including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grade II* Headington Hill Hall ➤ Grade II bridge over Headington Road
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Cuckoo Lane

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area is distinctive for its topography, open spaces, parkland and mature trees. The vegetation of the parks provides an important wooded backdrop to the city. The topography allows important visual connectivity with the city core, which is recorded

historically. The parkland with mature trees, the time depth of the landscape and architecture and the rural characteristics convey a sense of quality, stability and continuity.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Some monotonous, less distinctive architecture within the student villages and schools. Higher density and greater massing of built form within the Oxford Brookes University campus and less open green space.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate - substantial areas of deciduous woodland
Historic Integrity	High – impressive survival of historic features, conservation area designation
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High – famous view across South Park to the spires and domes of the historic core
Open Space	High

Sensitivity to change

The Headington Hill (Open Hills) character area is sensitive to change as a result of its historic integrity, important habitats, its prominent position on Headington Hill (visible from the Cherwell valley) and its eastern gateway location to the city. The area is also the location of the important viewpoint, identified within the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones'. The history and features of the parkland landscape are crucial to the character of this character area.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the public green spaces that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible on the hillside/top
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, insensitive to the historic vernacular and result in conspicuous rooflines
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with other/uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels that would reduce tranquillity
- Demolition of historic buildings
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core and views from the city core to wooded skylines

- Changes that would sever historic connections and footpaths through the area (such as Cuckoo Lane)
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of parkland and woodland vegetation, in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and/or mis-management
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species for visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the parkland vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Built form is established within the parkland that characterises Headington Hills. It largely respects the historical integrity and values of this area. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The elevated position and views provide a unique character. New development introduces new styles and types of built form, but is respectful of the overall identity. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Focussed areas of built form within the parkland landscape contribute to place-making and there are several memorable buildings and places in this area, although some difficult way-finding in places. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally accessible with some marked paths through the parks. Variety of spaces/destinations that users of the area can move between with relative ease. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Substantial green space with habitat value as well as recreational use. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Vast public open parkland in relative proximity to the city centre, providing informal recreation. Substantial areas of trees. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	The primary land use within the area is for institutions including Oxford Brookes University and associated accommodation. There are limited services Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	The buildings generally relate positively to the surrounding open space and amenity spaces are largely safe and provide for social interaction. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. New development makes use of new technologies and incorporates renewables. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Well-designed area that is largely well-maintained and adaptable. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Headington Hill character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Marston Road Allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: South Park Play Space: South Park Play Area Accessible Natural Green Space: Headington Hill Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: *** Private Open Space: School grounds including Rye St Antony Independents School and Cheyney School, Oxford Brooks University Headington Campus and Covered Reservoir Outdoor Sport: Headington School and Oxford Brooks University Headington Campus
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: substantial areas through Headington Hill Park
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Headington Hill character area make a **strong contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

7B SOUTHFIELD PARK AND HOSPITALS COMPLEX



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



Photo 6: Golf course across the undulating lower slopes of the hill



Photo 7: Distinctive curtain walls to modern buildings



Photo 8: Landscape grounds of Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital



Photo 9: Variety of architectural styles and materials

7B SOUTHFIELD PARK AND HOSPITALS COMPLEX

Description

The Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex character area forms part of the Settled Plateaux landscape type. The character area is formed by 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 ground 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 Churchill Hospital, indicating the site's importance as the location of early settlement.

The area comprises a large area of open space, which encompasses areas of medium- to high-density built form, including large scale and occasional grand buildings. The late 19th century buildings of Warneford Hospital Centre are set within landscaped grounds. Recent development has extended buildings of Warneford Hospital into surrounding open green spaces, but it retains important spacing between buildings.

The highest density of development is focussed on the hilltop, to the northeast of the area, comprising large scale hospital and university buildings with some smaller scale residential between the institutions. Churchill Hospital was established in 1942 as an emergency war-time hospital, of which the two-storey interconnected red-brick buildings remain. These have been somewhat dwarfed by larger scale three- to four-storey blocks around the west of the hospital site. North of this is the University of Oxford Old Road Campus, which comprises several blocks of large, four- to five-storey buildings built from a range of modern materials including steel frames, large areas of glass and curtain walls.

Former, single estate buildings have largely been incorporated into the large institutional complexes. Parts of the open grounds that these buildings were located within are retained, for example east of Warneford Hospital. Elsewhere, expansion of the institutions has reduced the green spaces between buildings. Properties lining Old Road and The Slade are large, detached, residential properties within large plots, which reflect the grandness of scale within this character area. The edges of the character area have been impinged upon by pockets of high density post-war residential terraces and flats along crescents and cul-de-sacs at New Headington, Southfield Park and newer development at Roosevelt Drive.

There is a low density of streets, and roads tend to follow the edges of the area with access roads into areas of development. The oldest street is Old Road, which is 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 appear at odds with the lush green space that encompasses the hospital.

The architecture of this area is varied, with occasional grand late-19th century brick and ashlar houses remaining, amongst the more modern large-scale steel frame and glass buildings. Materials of light brick, limestone, exposed concrete, painted render and glass pick up light reflection and stand out against the green backdrop.

The large area of green space includes the undulating hillside of the golf course and more secluded, small scale valleys, and forms a semi-natural backdrop to the large massing of built form. The green space is formed of several land uses, with generally poor intervisibility between them. Oxford Golf Club course forms a large area of mown grass with landscaped tree cover through the centre of the area. It links between less formal public green space of Warneford Orchard in the west and Cowley Marsh Nature Reserve in the east. The treed, enclosed, corridors of Boundary Brook and the Lye Valley are the only truly natural features

in this area, providing important habitats along the watercourses, which is reflected in the status of local wildlife site, SLINC and SSSI. This valley is a rare example of the underlying landscape punctuating the urban fabric. Its hidden valley character and rare fen vegetation make it an important asset and unique landscape feature which forms a setting for the built development. Sports fields on the flatter land in the south of the area are more open and exposed, in contrast with the well treed character of the hillside.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux landscape type – open hills enclose Oxford to the east
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of former common land around Churchill Hospital still remains as open space Historic cross-roads of Old Road and Windmill Road in NE corner survives Late 19th century hospital buildings along Warneford Lane/Old Road provide local sense of historic landscape structure 20th century development of Churchill Hospital, Oxford University Old Road Campus and residential areas of New Headington and Southfield Park 21st century redevelopment of Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, expansion of Warneford Hospital, Old Road Campus and parts of Churchill Hospital
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space of Headington's Southfield, with hospitals on former common land (Town Furze) Extensive remains of potters' workshops including kilns found in the grounds of Churchill hospital Roman kilns recorded at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital Historic land use for hospitals dating from the early 19th century – Warneford Asylum, early 20th century military hospital on the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital site and later military hospital on the Churchill Hospital site Warneford hospital – Victorian asylum
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built development largely focussed on the hill top Few roads, which tend to follow the edges of the area with access roads off, into institutions Occasional estate buildings incorporated into institutional complexes Properties lining Old Road and The Slade, in the northeast, are large, detached properties in substantial plots Pockets of high density post-war residential terraces and flats along crescents and cul-de-sacs
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some confusion over public and private space, within the grounds of the institutions and around flats Some stone boundary walls remain, demarking the boundary between public and private realms
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale buildings are typically set within open grounds – gaps between them are varied, particularly where new development/redevelopment has taken place Churchill Hospital is a large complex form of interconnected buildings, ranging from single-storey red brick to four- to five-storey concrete structures. High density development including relatively tall research and hospital buildings and lower-level terraces and flats in residential areas
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late 19th century buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Warneford hospital, built 1813 and altered 1977 – all ashlar blocks of limestone in the style of a country house

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Boundary Brook House has some remnant features of the former Highfield House that was once in a large park, that has since become Old Road Campus • The hospital sites contain a variety of building styles, materials and form • The inter/post-war warren of low-level red brick buildings still form part of Churchill Hospital, now surrounded by large massing of more modern buildings • Post-war rendered terraces/flats within New Headington • Modern architectural styles and materials contrast with the older buildings
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great variety in streetscape character and detail • Hospital access road is a tarmac road with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal lights with rural setting to the west • Old Road is a wide, busy road with mature streetscape bordered by limestone boundary walls in places and overhanging, mature vegetation including some large horse chestnuts • Post-war residential roads are quiet, spacious with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal tree planting
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high proportion of green space in this character area, which is formed of discrete units: • Oxford Golf Club course comprising undulating, mown greens defined by mature trees and shrubs, with limited public access • Lye Valley and Boundary Brook form incised wooded valleys that break up the area, with important wet woodland and public footpaths • Areas of grassland around the hospitals and adjacent to Boundary Brook are remnant common land and have public access to them, including Warneford Orchard • Formal, sports pitches in the south of the area • Interconnected blocks of woodland bounding green spaces
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: substantial areas of deciduous woodland, small area of traditional orchard and pocket of lowland fen in the Lye Valley • LWS: Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh • OCWS: Boundary Brook Corridor, Warneford Meadow and Orchard, Churchill Hospital Field • Interconnected woodland linking around open green space and along the watercourses
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use is predominantly institutional and recreational • It is a relatively rural and tranquil area within the middle of the city, with vast areas of green space • South Park is a popular location for festivals/fairs and group gatherings • Numerous students bring vitality to this area, particularly around the University • Many artists, including J M W Turner have painted the famous view from South Park across the 'dreaming spires'
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Road is an important arterial road from where many people view the area • Few access roads into the institutions • Several points of access along footpaths, including around the edges of the golf course and along Boundary Brook/Lye Valley and south to Cowley Marsh
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The green space is formed by several different areas that are not intervisible • There are some views across the valleys, between Churchill Hospital and The Slade

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panoramic views from the golf course, south over Cowley and Florence Park
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of listed buildings in and around Warneford Hospital site
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Warneford Meadow, Oriel College Playing Field and 58 Old Road

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area is distinctive for its topography, semi-natural environment, secluded valleys and mature trees that provide a green backdrop to Oxford. Historic land use for hospitals dating from the early 19th century. High landscape quality associated with the mature vegetation and green spaces.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Large massing of modern buildings can be intrusive on the edge of the green spaces. Some degradation and neglect of older institutional buildings. Building services often intrude on the public realm.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High – international and local importance of the Lye Valley
Historic Integrity	Moderate – survival of open space and location of substantial Roman pottery (lost)
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – views across east Oxford but no direct views to the historic core
Open Space	High – large areas of public and private open space

Sensitivity to change

The Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex character area is moderately sensitive to change. The ecological integrity and elevated position of the area are characteristics particularly sensitive change. This area has been subject to substantial change over the last few centuries, but retains a large area of green space within an urban setting. The common land, known as Town Furze, was developed post-war for residential housing and Churchill Hospital, and the former open field systems have been incorporated into the golf course. The streams still run their natural course and are valued features in this changing landscape. Incremental development for housing and expansion of the various hospitals has resulted in progressive erosion of the edges of the open space. Inward facing developments have changed the relationship of built form to the open space. The area has a strong history as the location of hospitals, dating from the early 19th century. The wooded, secluded valleys and interconnecting woodland are what characterise this area; contrasting with the large-scale hospital and research buildings on the hill top.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the green spaces that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New infill development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible on the hillside/top
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, insensitive to the existing vernacular and are detracting in the context of the Lye Valley
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with other/uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels that would reduce tranquillity
- Demolition or redevelopment of historic buildings
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of woodland and wetland vegetation, in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and/or mis-management
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species for visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the parkland vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Built form is located in a prominent position on the hilltop and its large scale and massing is locally dominant, although integrated in part by surrounding vegetation. Hospitals have been located in this area since the early 19 th century. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Incremental development and expansion of the hospitals and residential areas has resulted in a diversity of building form, size, style and materials and a lack of coherency through this area. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Institutions dominate and there are few destinations within this area. Incremental development has resulted in some poorly defined public/private spaces. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally accessible although public green space is generally located at the back of development and public routes in are not obvious. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Substantial green space with areas that prioritise nature. Some access issues. Moderate

Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A mix of public and private green space. Public footpaths connect along the valleys between small public spaces. Limited public space within the institutions. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	The primary land use within the area is for institutions including Oxford University Old Road Campus, Churchill Hospital, Warneford Hospital, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre and some student accommodation and small residential areas. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	The buildings often back onto the green spaces or are set back behind access roads. Mature tree boundaries generally separate the developed areas from the open space and there is limited relationship between the two Limited
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. New development makes use of new technologies and incorporates renewables. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Piecemeal development has resulted in some awkward spaces and services spilling into the edge of the open space. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: The Links Barracks Lane Allotments, Town Furze Allotments and Fairview Allotments Amenity Green Space: Pockets on Girdlestone Road Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: Girdlestone Road, Dene Road and Pauling Road play areas Accessible Natural Green Space: Lye Valley, Warneford Meadow and Orchard, Boundary Brook Wildlife Corridor Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: Oriel Wood and Warneford Hospital Outdoor Sport: Lincoln College, Oriel College and Jesus College Recreation Grounds, Oxford Spires Academy and Oxford Golf Club
Strategic blue GI	Boundary Brook flows through the area Lye Valley Cowley Marsh
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Local Wildlife Site: Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Boundary Brook Corridor, Warneford Meadow and Orchard, Churchill Hospital Field
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: various areas across the area Traditional orchard: small area in Warneford Hospital site

	Lowland fen: in Lye Valley
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Southfield Park and Hospitals Complex character area make a **strong contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

7C JOHN RADCLIFFE HOSPITAL



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



Photo 2: The grounds of the former Manor House contribute to the character, particularly in the east of the area



Photo 3: Hospital car parks and grass verges contribute to open space around the large scale buildings



Photo 4: The site is enclosed by boundary walls and mature vegetation along Osler Road



Photo 5: Views from the north of the site



Photo 6: The hospital is prominent in the view from Elsfeld



Photo 7: Variety of coloured cladding on the newest part of the hospital building



Photo 8: 18th century ashlar Manor House is retained within the site

7C JOHN RADCLIFFE HOSPITAL

Description

The John Radcliffe Hospital character area forms part of the Settled Plateaux landscape type, which is typified by hills of sand and calcareous sandstone, incised by narrow valleys. This is a discrete area on the hilltop, bound by distinctive stone walls along Osler Road and mature vegetation associated with the former Manor House estate and along rear garden boundaries of adjoining residential areas.

Open space of Headington Fields and the grounds to the Manor House survive in part, contributing to the setting of the hospital complex. The estate landscape associated with the former Manor House contributes to the character, particularly in the east of the area. 20th century development of the new Radcliffe Infirmary (relocated from Woodstock Road in the city centre in 1963) now dominates the area.

The Manor House remains on the site, a late 18th century ashlar country house. Some of the landscaped grounds and mature vegetation have also been retained and contribute to its setting in the east of the area. Other, small scale hospital buildings, including health centre and lodging, are located in this part of the site. The main hospital is located on the hilltop and northwest slopes. It is a large, high density, complex of connected buildings that range from two- to eight-storeys in height. It is predominantly a white-rendered building, with some exposed concrete, blue panelling and large areas of glass.

Pockets of green space and mature vegetation contribute to a sense of space between buildings, although the area is dominated by the large car-parking areas. Green space includes remnants of the designed grounds of the Manor House in the southeast, allotments in the west and mown grass verges and lawns within the complex. This space is constrained by surrounding residential areas, that are separated from the hospital complex by mature tree boundaries.

Although the site is locally well-screened by boundary walls and mature vegetation, the hill top location means that the hospital is a conspicuous and often dominant feature of views from various locations within and around the city, including from Elsfield. There are panoramic views over Oxford from within the area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux landscape type – Headington Hill is a prominent hill, enclosing Oxford to the east
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former open space of Headington Files and Manor House grounds (which survive in part) Late 18th century Manor House outside Headington village, now incorporated in the hospital complex John Radcliffe Infirmary relocated to the top of the hill, from the city centre, in 1960s Growth of the hospital – massing now dominates the space and adjoining suburbs
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late 18th century Manor House, estate trees and boundary walls
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self-contained space with large blocks of built form, three access points, encircling access road with smaller roads leading off to car parks and drop off places Contained and locally screened by walls and vegetation

Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access in and around the hospital complex is semi-private • The public/private interface is not always clear
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large massing and scale of blocks of built form with linked annexes across much of the site. • Smaller scale, mix of historic and modern buildings in the east/southeast of the site, set within open grounds • Sense of openness and exposure associated with the hill top location
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th century manor house of light coloured ashlar stone, 2.5-storeys with three bay pediment and clay tiled roof • Main hospital complex is 2- to 8-storeys, predominantly white render, with some exposed concrete and blue panelling and glass. • Limestone walls, approx. 2m high, bound the east of the site along Osler Road
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal roads around the hospital are generally quiet, tarmac with concrete kerbs, mown grass verges and municipal lighting columns
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited open space in contrast to the other Open Hill areas • Remnants of the designed grounds of the Manor House form the entrance to the east of the hospital • Small area of allotments in the west • Small areas of mown grass verges /lawns between hospital buildings
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority habitat: pocket of deciduous woodland in the north of the site • OCWS: None • Semi-improved grassland within the manor house grounds with specimen trees. Mature trees link around the edge of the area and into the adjoining Headington Village.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use is predominantly institutional • Busy, working hospital site • Part of one of the largest medical research complexes in Europe
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal access roads for the hospital only • Allotments accessed from adjoining area
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally screened by boundary walls and vegetation • The large, white hospital buildings and incinerator chimney on the hill top and sides are conspicuous in many views across the city and from surrounding rural areas including Elsfield and the northern by-pass • Panoramic views from the hospital buildings across central Oxford
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The east/southeast of the character area is within the Old Headington conservation area. • Manor House including Stable Block Grad II listed building
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area is distinctive for its topography and time depth associated with the characteristic limestone Manor House and boundary walls. Remnants of the former grounds to the Manor House provide an area of valued green space, which links with adjoining leafy village of Headington.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Large massing and height of the hospital buildings are conspicuous and occasionally detracting in views of the historic core. Some lack of clarity between public and private realm. Extensive car parks and vehicles dominate at the street level.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Moderate – survival of historic features associated with the Manor House
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – views from upper storeys of buildings across the Oxford skyline of domes and spires.
Open Space	Moderate – mostly private

Sensitivity to change

The John Radcliffe Hospital character area has some sensitivity to change due to its prominent hilltop location. The historic connections and green space with local biodiversity interest contributes to higher sensitivity in the east/southeast of the site. Boundary walls and mature vegetation are characteristic of the area and sensitive to change.

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 incrementally increased in size to accommodate new departments and annexes. There is ongoing redevelopment of the hospital site to modernise and meet demands.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the green spaces that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New tall development that is highly visible on the hillside/top and detracting in key views
- Extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and insensitive to the existing vernacular and vegetated landscape
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with other/uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Increasing traffic levels and car parking that would spill into green spaces within the area
- Demolition or redevelopment of historic buildings
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees and boundary vegetation
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species for visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the remnant parkland vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Built form is located in a prominent position on the hilltop and its large scale and massing is locally dominant, although integrated in part by surrounding vegetation. Some sense of place retained around the historic Manor House. Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Coherent vernacular across the main hospital complex. Tall and large massing of buildings with small spaces between and limited green space. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Institutions dominate. The site is generally walkable, although some legibility issues. Good public transport services. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Generally safe and accessible. Some green infrastructure between buildings and along main routes. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised. Mature boundary and parkland vegetation that links around the site and with adjoining suburbs. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Small areas of semi-private and private green space between buildings, along roadsides and in the east of the site. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	The primary land use within the area is for health care with a small allotment site. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	The buildings dwarf the limited green spaces and there is some poor definition of public and private realm. Services are largely set away from public areas. Limited
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. New development makes use of new technologies Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally designed for long term stewardship and grounds are well-managed. Moderate

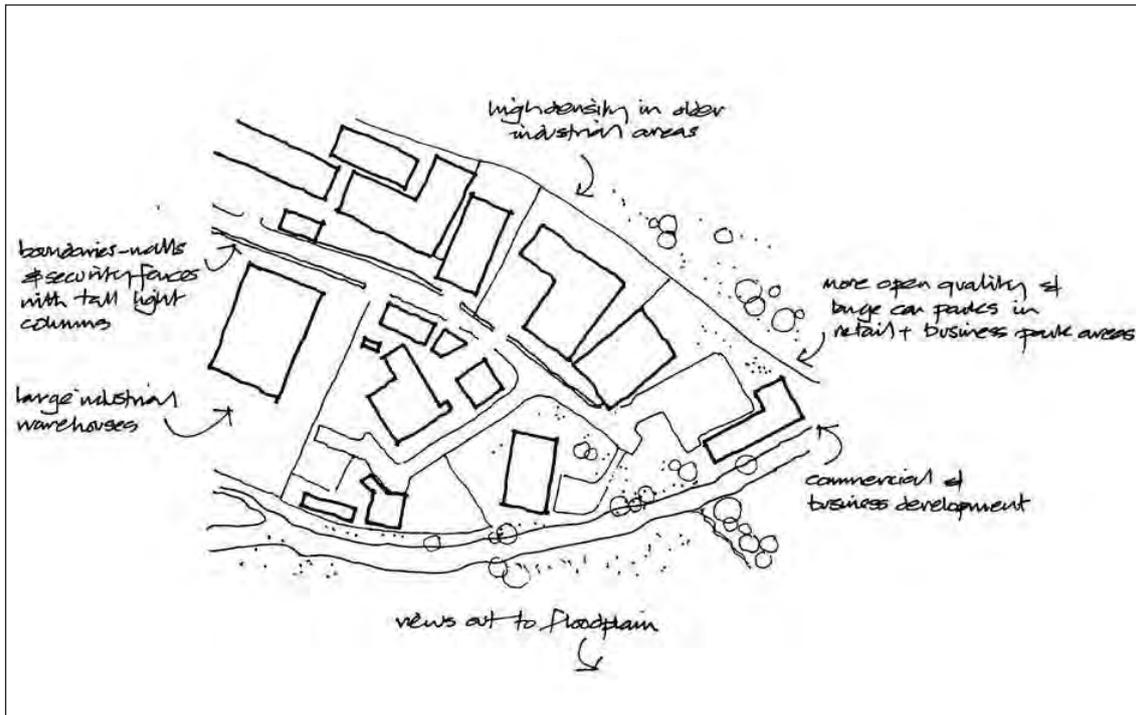
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the John Radcliffe Hospital character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Eden Drive Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	None
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small pocket in the north
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the John Radcliffe Hospital character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

8 20TH CENTURY FRINGE BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND RETAIL



Generic example of spatial characteristics

8 20TH CENTURY FRINGE BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND RETAIL

Generic Description

Oxford is an area with few areas of industrial activity. The notable exception to this is the Cowley Motor Works and other large industrial units, on the southeast 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 1930s onwards, to the more recent office-based 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 Floodplain. They tend to lack a sense of place or local distinctiveness as a result of the mass produced building materials, standard layouts, styles and details.

With its origins in the 20th century, there has been a variety of infill development within this character type over the last 20 years, particularly identifiable in character area 8B. There is ongoing transformation of land, including redevelopment of industrial units and high density residential development on former agricultural land.

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
- High density, residential infill (e.g. in Area 8B)

Character Areas

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

8A COWLEY MOTOR WORKS



Photo 1: Large scale industrial buildings at Cowley Motor Works



Photo 2: Contemporary business development alongside older industrial areas



Photo 3: Generous landscape context within the Oxford Business Park



Photo 4: Expansive, open car park areas throughout the area



Photo 5: Views to the surrounding open countryside across large areas of hardstanding



Photo 6: Smaller scale buildings in the Oxford Business Park

8A COWLEY MOTOR WORKS

Description

The Cowley Motor Works character area is focused mainly on the Cowley Motor Works site, 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. These are identified as discrete units of different scales and styles. The Eastern Bypass 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 larger 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 Oxford Business Park. The Cowley Motor Works has become a major landmark of Industrial Oxford, most recently with the mini a-top the tallest site building.

The area remains the largest industrial area of Oxford, dominated by the motor works. There is great contrast between the large scale, expansive works buildings and car parks in the north and east of the area, with the much smaller scale, formally laid out business park and leisure units to the east of the bypass.

There is limited green space through this area, including some sports fields in the northeast, wooded railway embankments through the centre of the area and occasional pockets of amenity lawns and verges. Landscaping including avenues of trees and planted roadside gardens in the Oxford Business Park is more considered, softens the built form and breaks up the massing.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux - large scale industrial area on flat sandstone plateaux.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial area of remaining motor works (and former Morris works) on former arable land of Cowley and Horspath Fields.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of old Roman Road passes along the eastern boundary of the Motor Works Areas of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale industrial land uses. Retail parks with large open car park areas. The western area consists of smaller scale commercial buildings, with smaller car parks, hedgerow and tree lined boundaries and pockets of green space.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some areas used for parking and access, the distinction between private and public land is unclear. Large areas of restricted access around the works, with clear signage for the visitor experience.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large, monolithic industrial sheds, with large open areas for parking and service yards. More recent smaller scale office-based buildings, in the western business park area, with trees and vegetation that soften the landscape and create a somewhat enclosed environment. The northern tip of the area consists of smaller scale, more compact industrial buildings, with a greater sense of enclosure.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main buildings of the Cowley Motor Works, which are a combination of large, flat or saw-toothed roofed industrial sheds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other modern industrial units of a variety of styles, colours and materials. • Some uniformity within the business park – clusters of buildings in identical styles and use of similar materials throughout
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ornamental planting in new business park areas. • Large scale service access road layouts and tall street lighting columns.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few public spaces. • Sports Grounds east of Roman Way, making up part of the green belt • Landscaping in the Oxford Business Park provides some characteristic planting, including presence of pines, reflecting sandy soils.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Small pockets of deciduous woodland along the railway track • No designated nature sites. • OCWS: None • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial, retail and business. Manufacturing is the dominant land use, with smaller pockets of retail and business areas. • Active working environment by the busy ring road.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ring road passes through the area, dividing the old Cowley Motor site into two parts – the west part now having been redeveloped as the business and leisure park • Sustrans route 57 extends east from the area, providing a cycle route connecting between the city centre and the countryside to the east. Additionally, local cycle routes connect the area to the surrounding suburbs. • Bus routes along Garsington Road link the area to the city centre and the southeast suburbs, as well as Oxford's outlying villages to the east.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowley Motor Works dominates the area, with open swathes of hardstanding contrasting with areas of large industrial buildings, creating a sense of enclosure and short views. • Views out to rural Oxfordshire to the east.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Stadium conservation area is located in the south of the character area
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area is a distinctive large scale industrial zone on the western edge of the city, dominated by the Cowley Motor Works, particularly the MINI plant. The more recent business parks and retail areas have attempted to develop more attractive working and retail environment through the use of contemporary architecture, ornamental planting and designed landscaping

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Many of the older industrial areas are utilitarian in character, with large, monolithic buildings dominating the area, alongside large swathes of hardstanding, providing car parking and servicing needs to the industrial buildings.

Indicators of landscape value

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

Sensitivity to change

This area has some sensitivity to change due to its contribution to the industrial heritage of Oxford. Recent change to the area has generally been positive, in the introduction of high quality architectural and landscape development. There may be pressure in the future for significant change through redevelopment and the expansion of the business parks.

Threats to local character include:

- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form
- Extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and insensitive to the existing vernacular
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric and replacement with other/uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Demolition or redevelopment of historic buildings
- Change of use of buildings that would alter the character of the townscape
- New landscapes / land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of mature trees and boundary vegetation
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species for visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the rural landscape to the east
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Expansion of the former works site has resulted in sprawl of large scale units that are out of context with the rural landscape. Redevelopment of the western, former work site is considerate of the scale of adjoining residential areas.

	Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	A strong identity as a manufacturing area. However, industrial development has resulted in an unattractive and stark environment, that lacks coherence. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Large private buildings and hard standing areas sever connections and reduce navigability in the large motor works area. Business parks are more compact and promote pedestrian activity. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Movement is restricted as a result of the large scale built form and substantial areas of private land. Cycle and bus routes encourage sustainable transport links to the wider area. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised in the area, with small pockets of undeveloped green space that are mainly used for recreational purposes. Railway line provides habitat potential. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Sports grounds provide safe and secure outdoor space. Limited public green space in the industrial and business areas, with much land being private. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	The area is dominated by industrial and commercial buildings, Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Variation in quality of external environments. Buildings in the business park related positively to private, shared and public spaces. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Buildings have been adapted/redeveloped over time to provide for advancements in circumstances and technology. Sustainable energy production is evident. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Generally, the built form was built to last. Public areas are largely well managed and maintained for their needs and uses. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Cowley Motor Works character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: John Smith Drive Outdoor Sport: Rover Sports Club and Oxford City Sports Club
Strategic blue GI	None

Green belt land	Small part in the north of the character area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small area in east
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Cowley Motor Works character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

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: Neglected historic Minchery Farm buildings with adjacent contrasting modern development



Photo 6: Modern buildings set within substantial vegetation, within landscaped grounds in the science park



Photo 7: Contemporary architecture in new housing areas



Photo 8: Former hospital converted to residential use

8B LITTLEMORE BUSINESS AND SCIENCE PARKS

Description

The Littlemore Business and Science Parks character area is located on the southern urban fringe of the city and comprises a number of areas of commercial as well as ongoing residential development. The area is bound by the railway line to the north, the A4074 to the west, residential development in Blackbird Leys to the east and the link road around the south. The railway effectively severs this fringe area from the main urban area of Oxford.

The area has grown around the remains of the traditional stone farm complex of Minchery Farm, which includes the site of a 12th century Benedictine nunnery. Only part of the former farm remains, in a state of neglect and surrounded by large-scale modern commercial buildings. The site of the former nunnery is a substantial area of natural green space in the centre of the area, between developments. Former agricultural land is no longer farmed and consists of pockets of unmanaged and managed grassland between and within development areas.

The area has expanded through the late 20th century to present day and comprises a series of discrete development areas. There is a range of contemporary development styles, including the Kassam football stadium, science, business and industrial parks containing buildings of varying scales and styles, redevelopment of the 19th century hospital and more recently 21st century expansion of the science parks and ongoing, high density residential development in the west of the area. Development areas are separated by retained rural landscape features including hedgerows, trees and watercourses (Northfield and Littlemore Brooks), the latter being particularly important ecological features that thread through the neighbouring urban fabric. New and incorporated planting and landscape areas within the development areas provide valuable green links through this area, which connect to the surrounding countryside and contribute to softening the settlement edge.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateau transition to Clay Vale to the south
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental edge of city mixed development, built on the former Littlemore rural countryside.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive multi-period remains including Bronze Age, Iron Age and Early Saxon settlement areas Extensive, dispersed Roman pottery manufacturing zones Important Palaeolithic to Bronze Age pollen sequence preserved in Minchery Fram peat fen Remains of historic stone Minchery Farm complex Remains of Benedictine nunnery founded in the 12th century. Littlemore Asylum burial ground Redevelopment of 19th century Littlemore Hospital
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrete areas of development accessed from main distributor roads with a combination of sweeping curves and roundabouts and contrasting grid pattern in the west.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary planting that defines the public from the semi-private land and signage to demarcate private parking in business parks. Private-public interface in residential areas is generally defined by a change of surface material or vegetation. Boundary can be less clear in parking areas.

Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixture of large scale, low density, discrete developments, as well as smaller scale, medium density residential developments.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale, visually prominent modern developments including the Kassam stadium, science park and reuse of the Littlemore Hospital. Architectural forms include cantilevered stadium and modern business park, with glass walls and brick buff. • 21st century residential development includes predominantly brick and rendered, two- and three-storey, semi-detached and flat style dwellings. • The former 19th century hospital (now residential use) is a collection of large turreted stone buildings. Low rise, 1950's brick buildings form the current hospital on the western side of Sandford Road. • The traditional Cotswold stone building at Minchery Farm contrasts with modern, 21st century architecture.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide streets, with grass verges, ornamental shrub planting and street trees, with tall lighting columns at roundabouts in the Science Park and industrial areas. • 21st century housing developments are characterised by off road parking, limited street trees and small grass verges and/or front gardens. • The hospital redevelopment includes modern landscaping and high security lighting, tall fencing and CCTV.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few public spaces. • Pockets of surviving woodland, grassland and wetland surrounding the discrete areas of development, providing a rural framework to the 20th and 21st century development. • Sports pitches and playing fields
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Areas of deciduous woodland. • OCWS: Littlemore Brook, Minchery Farm and Littlemore and Northfield Brooks • Littlemore and Northfield Brook (watercourses with water vole records; important linear ecological networks), and related Minchery Farm wetland. • Littlemore Railway Cutting SSSI, designated for its geological interest
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrete areas of distinct development types, including business, retail and residential areas. • Proximity to main roads means traffic noise is dominant. Retains elements of quiet rural area, punctuated by isolated areas of new development.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well used lane network, with local cycle routes, providing recreational access by foot and bike to Littlemore suburb, the surrounding suburbs and eventually the city centre. • Link road around the southern boundary connecting to the A4074
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open views across green spaces • Some prominent landmark buildings such as the stadium.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed buildings include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Minchery Farmhouse (Grade II*) ➢ Littlemore Hospital (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Built form in the area is generally high quality, low density development, allowing the area to retain remnants of a semi-rural landscape, including the framework of hedgerows, mature trees and watercourses. The Northfield Brook and surrounding undeveloped areas provide significant aquatic and wetland habitats that occur on the margins of the existing Science Park, including UK BAP Priority habitats.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The area is in an ongoing state of change, and therefore ongoing development, as well as traffic noise, reduces the tranquillity and the rural sense of place, and contributes to an urban fringe character.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	High
Historic Integrity	Low – retention of land associated with former nunnery
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate

Sensitivity to change

The Littlemore Business and Science Parks character area is a relatively new area on the southern edge of Oxford, previously comprising a rural landscape around the 19th century hospital and providing the context to Littlemore Village. Today, fragments of the rural landscape weave through the modern development areas and it is these natural features that leave this area moderately sensitive to change. The most sensitive features are the course of Littlemore Brook and the site of the 12th century nunnery and Minchery Farm. The area is in an ongoing state of flux with new building taking place.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on the green spaces and ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New built development that changes the clarity of definition of public and private areas
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge and in the context of existing urban form
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Neglect and demolition of historic buildings
- New landscapes / land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context

- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and / or neglect / mis-management
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Retained and new vegetation generally buffers the developments, making them less conspicuous in the landscape and more integrated into the semi-rural landscape Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	Discrete pockets of development are generally high quality and distinctive, however, each area has its unique identity, meaning overall coherence across the area is limited. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Development is spread out, in discrete areas that are well connected. Many distinctive and recognisable buildings within the area contributes to navigability, and public transport routes support sustainable development Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Cycle networks and paths encourage sustainable travel around the developments and into the surrounding suburbs. Mature trees and vegetation well integrated into the area. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Pockets and corridors of enhanced ecological networks, surrounded by ongoing development. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Much of the open space is semi-private or privately owned, limiting access to green space within the area. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	A mixture of business, retail, residential and educational facilities in discrete areas. Medium density residential areas that are a mix of semi-detached, terraced and three-storey flats Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Generally high quality external environment through the development areas. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Use of high quality, modern materials and sustainable energy production initiatives in places. Significant
Lifespan – made to last	Generally, the built form is built to last. Public and private areas are largely well managed and maintained. Significant

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Littlemore Business and Science Parks character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Denny Garden Allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: Land Adj to Eastern Bypass, Minchery Farm and Littlemore Brook Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: Northfield School Outdoor Sport: The Oxford Academy and Mable Pritchard Secondary Site
Strategic blue GI	Littlemore Brook flows through the area
Green belt land	None
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small, dispersed areas
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Littlemore Business and Science Parks character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

8C BOTLEY INDUSTRIAL AND RETAIL PARKS



Photo 1: Mix of styles and materials in 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



Photo 4: Empty and neglected buildings in Osney Mead industrial estate



Photo 5: Well-defined cycle route providing connectivity through the industrial estate

8C BOTLEY INDUSTRIAL AND RETAIL PARKS

Description

The Industrial and Retail Parks character area is located to the west of the historic city core, along Botley Road. It comprises two discrete areas – the older Osney Mead industrial estate and the more recent retail park at the western end of Botley Road that forms a ‘gateway’ to the city.

Osney Mead industrial estate is located on an island between an arm of the River Thames, Botley Stream and Bulstake Stream, to the south of the Victorian terraces of New Osney. It comprises a number of large commercial and light industrial units of various sizes, styles and materials, located along a single feeder road. Buildings are generally one- to two-storeys with some taller units encompassed by the trees along the southern area boundary. The Osney Mead industrial estate falls in the landscape within the historically admired view from Raleigh Park. The roofs of the industrial estate are visible in the foreground, although mature vegetation provides some screening.

The Botley Road retail area has established within the former field network, on the western edge of the city. Again, it is located on an island between Botley Stream, Bulstake Stream and other tributary watercourses. It comprises several large, low-level commercial units that are surrounded by expansive car parks and hardstanding including the park and ride site.

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

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly Rivers and Pastoral Floodplain
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1950s, 1960s and 1970s industrial development at Osney Mead • More recent 1980-present day development at west end of Botley Road.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area comprises peripheral development on former floodplain meadows • Bronze Age settlement and Iron Age finds
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central feeder road in Osney Mead area with plots of varying size and orientation. • Large central parking area for Botley Road retail park, with access via distributor road off Botley Road. Additional parking areas directly off Botley Road.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong boundary walls and fences in Osney Mead area and Botley Road retail park distinguishes between the public and private space. • Relationship can be less clear in Botley Road, between public parking areas and service zones.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale industrial and retail development, with extensive surrounding car parking and hardstanding.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale, particularly those buildings forming the retail park- brightly coloured signs and fronted by extensive car parks. The buildings at Osney Mead are of more modest scale and include two- to three-storey utilitarian buildings, predominantly brick. The estate includes the distinctive former Newspaper House for the Oxford Mail and Times, which is surrounded by a high wall of cream coloured brick. • Some of the buildings in the Osney Mead area are poorly maintained, with a few becoming empty and derelict.

Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The streetscape is utilitarian, with wide streets and junctions lined with boundary walls, mature trees, grass verges and lighting columns. Modern features include a designated cycle path in the Osney Mead area.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avenue of mature lime trees along Botley Road. Seacourt Nature Park, behind Botley Road retail park, provides areas of grassland, mature vegetation and pathways that link into Port Meadow.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority Habitats: edge of Lowland Meadows OCWS: None LWS: Osney Mead overlaps into this area, extending south of the Botley Road retail area Seacourt Nature reserve and the various streams and tributary watercourses around the two areas provide important habitats.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial and retail, including extensive areas for car parking, including the Seacourt Park and Ride site.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy vehicular access. Designated cycle route along the main road of Osney Mead industrial estate, as well as cycle routes from the area along the River Thames and to the wider Thames valley.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent views out to the surrounding lush green floodplain landscapes (willows, poplars ditches and electricity pylons). The area forms part of the landscape in the views from Raleigh Park, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The Westgate Centre and Council offices at Castle Street are noted as intrusive elements against the historic roofscape. The Osney Mead industrial estate is visible from the Raleigh Park view cone, identified in the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones' document.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The eastern boundary of Osney Island Oxford Conservation Area extends into the area.
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

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 connectivity to the River Thames and its tributaries contribute to a local sense of place.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The retail parks on Botley Road that form a first impression on the approach to the city from the west, bear little reference to the unique character of Oxford and present a standard, ubiquitous image common to many towns throughout England, and as such forms a poor gateway to the city. The utilitarian design of Osney industrial estate again provides little identity, exacerbated by some of the built form falling into disrepair.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Low
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core but the roofs of Osney Mead form part of the view from Raleigh Park
Open Space	Low

Sensitivity to change

The Botley Industrial and Retail Parks character area is moderately sensitive to change due to its importance as a gateway to the city centre and position on the edge of the Thames floodplain. Recent commercial development has generally been of high standard, although retail warehouses continue to dominate the character of Botley Road.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on/that encroaches on the limited green spaces and green corridors that alter pedestrian and ecological connectivity through the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, conspicuous and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- New built development on the outskirts of the area that encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Neglect and/or demolition of historic/landmark buildings
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation both in the public and private realm, particularly the avenue of trees along Botley Road
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and / or neglect / mis-management
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The large scale industrial and retail buildings contrast with the open, rural character of the floodplain. Limited
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The ubiquitous and utilitarian development has resulted in an unattractive and stark environment, that lacks coherence. Limited
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Development is compact, but much of the space is private, making navigability and walkability more challenging. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Cycle route through the industrial area promotes active travel. The walking and cycling environment is relatively safe and accessible, but not multi-functional or inclusive. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Some nature provision but is not prioritised or enhanced Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Limited public space within the area, but close proximity and easy access to the expansive open space of the floodplain. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	A mixture of business, retail, residential and educational facilities in discrete areas. Medium density residential areas that are a mix of semi-detached, terraced and three-storey flats Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	New developments have a lack of vegetation. The public-private interface is clear in most places, but not always positive. Limited
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology in places. Some empty and neglected buildings. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Not always built to last and some signs of mis-management. Limited

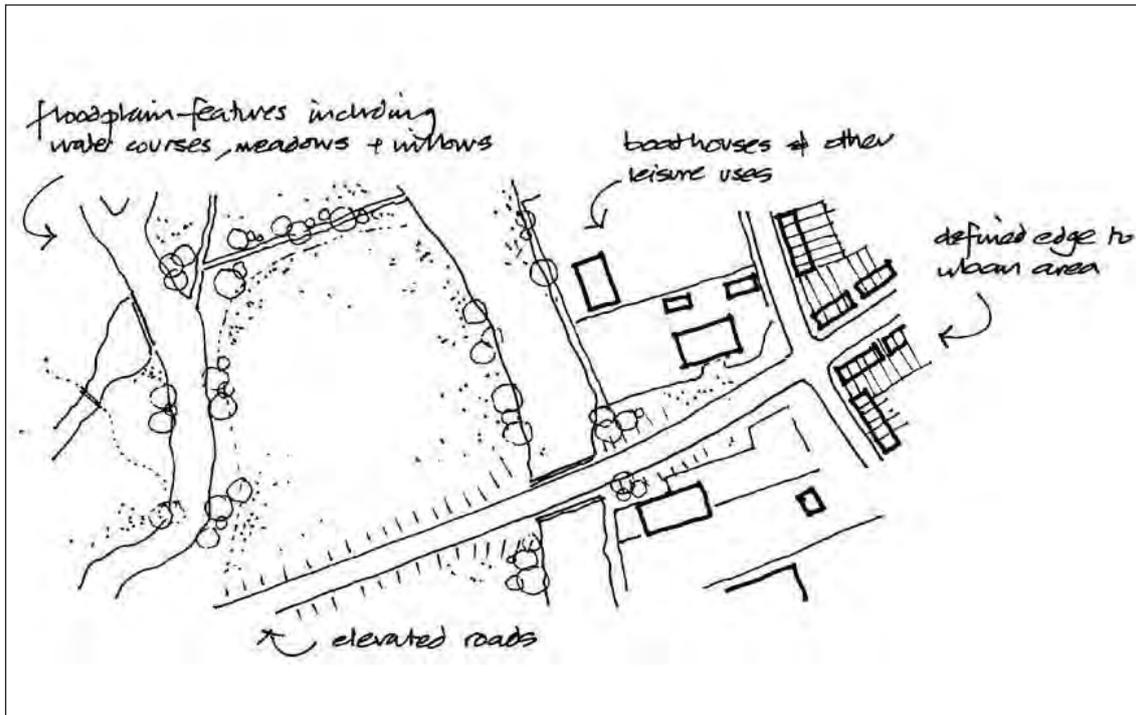
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Botley Industrial and Retail Parks character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: Seacourt Nature Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: West Oxford Community School Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Botley Stream flows through the north of the eastern area Seacourt Stream flows along the west boundary
Green belt land	Western part of the area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Lowland Meadows: Small area on the edge of North Hinksey Nature Reserve
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Botley Industrial and Retail Parks character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

9 PASTORAL FLOODPLAINS



Generic example of spatial characteristics

9 PASTORAL FLOODPLAINS

Generic Description

The Pastoral Floodplains 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 Pastoral Floodplains landscape type at 1:25000, but has been drawn accurate to 1:10000 for this assessment.

The tranquil pastoral scene of open meadows with cattle grazing amongst the silhouettes of mature floodplain trees is common throughout this type. These rural scenes contrast with the adjacent urban landscapes. Boathouses, locks and pubs are landmarks in the riverside landscapes. The floodplains are often the site of allotments, playing fields and other recreational facilities. There has been recent expansion of the settlement edge into parts of the floodplain, including high density residential areas, park and ride sites and educational facilities.

The character of these river floodplains varies in different valleys and along different stretches of the same watercourse. For example, the Thames (Isis) is a popular recreational landscape with rowing facilities, the Thames towpath and popular pubs, the Cherwell is a more rural area with greater sense of enclosure, and Bayswater Brook has experienced the greatest change over the last 20 years from ongoing residential-led development on former pasture.

Key Characteristics

- Flat, wide alluvial floodplains between the hills that enclose Oxford
- Tranquil pastoral floodplains with cattle often a feature of the scene
- Boathouses, locks and pubs are landmarks
- Allotments, playing fields and recreational buildings are often found in the open floodplain
- Views across the open landscape to adjacent urban areas
- Recent expansion of the settlement edge into the floodplain, particularly in area 9C

Character Areas

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

9A THAMES (ISIS) NORTH



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



Photo 2: Port Meadow has changed little since prehistoric times



Photo 3: There are long distance views across Port Meadow to the spires and domes of the historic city



Photo 4: The rural village of Binsey is typical of the floodplain



Photo 5: Thatched roofs are common in the floodplain

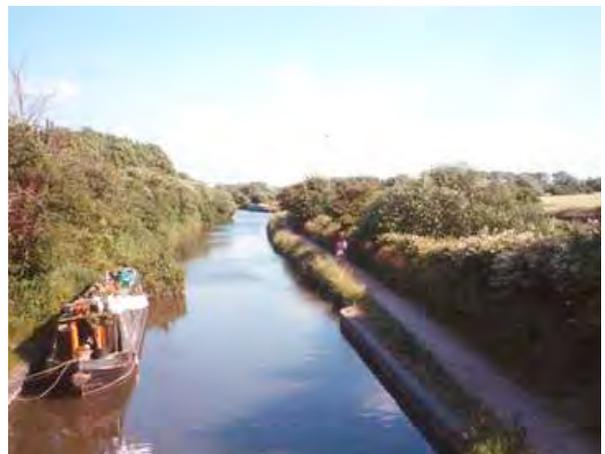


Photo 6: The Oxford Canal (built 1790) corridor has a unique character



Photo 7: Enclosed farmland to the west of the river is mixed crop and pasture, divided by hedgerows



Photo 8: The meadows are regularly flooded and support a diverse wetland flora



Photo 9: Modern development on the settlement edge is screened by surrounding vegetation



Photo 10: Modern architectural styles and materials close to the settlement edge



Photo 11: Wide, shallow river channel

9A THAMES (ISIS) NORTH

Description

The Thames (Isis) north character area is characterised by the meandering course of the River Thames on the northwest of Oxford, known locally as the River Isis. The river is bordered by large, historic floodplain commons where cattle and ponies graze in the shade of the floodplain trees. 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 pre-historic 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. Coppiced willows growing alongside the watercourses, are features of the floodplain. Some of the historic events that have defined the Thames (Isis) north character area are the informal 17th century enclosure of fields to the west of the river, the creation of the Oxford Canal in 1790 and the construction of the railway in the 19th century. More recently, the arrival of the northern ring road, gravel workings, industrial workshops, allotment gardens and high density residential development along the railway have affected the tranquillity of the area.

The area has a very low density of built development and is characterised by small clusters of farm buildings and historic sites including the ruins of 12th century Godstow Abbey, the site of St Margaret's Well and the rural hamlet of Binsey. Buildings are typically stone farmhouses, pubs and cottages, with a concentration of low-level sheds providing boathouses along the river. The Trout is one of the most famous pubs and is valued for its peaceful riverside setting. Local rubble limestone buildings, boundary walls and bridges are features of the rural built environment and bat moorings are common features along the course of the river. Enclosed farmland around Binsey and Godstow comprises small- to medium-size fields bound by hedgerows. 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 introduced to Oxford in 1790 and its corridor has a character of its own, with colourful barges and residential properties bordering it. The combination of the canal and the railway has, to some extent, helped to contain urban sprawl. Most recently, there has been a strip of high density residential development to the west of the railway, comprising small blocks of flats in a variety of materials.

The long management history, rare plants and bird populations contribute to the exceptionally high ecological value of the commons. 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 regularly flood and support a diverse wetland flora.

Port Meadow is one of the county's most popular haunts for birders. Annual winter floods bring spectacular flocks of wildfowl and waders. Lapwings 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 bird.

Access to the area is predominantly by foot and cycle, with vehicular access along Binsey Lane from the south, Welton Well Road or Aristotle Lane (across the canal) from the east, or Godstow/Wolvercote in the north. The west is bound by the busy ring road.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains – the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Benedictine Nunnery of Godstow founded in 1133 with a medieval bridge approach. Rural Oasis of Binsey originated from St Margaret's Church in the 12th century. Church Farm built 16th century. Commons were gradually enclosed by informal 17th century enclosure of fields. Opening of the Oxford Canal in 1790 and the railway in the 19th century influenced the character of the eastern edge of the area. 20th century additions include the northern ring road, gravel workings, industrial workshops, allotment gardens and, most recently, residential housing. 21st century has seen further expansion of housing between the railway and the canal, as well as high density student accommodation to the west of the railway.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive landscape of Bronze Age barrows and Iron Age settlements are well preserved and clearly visible from the air and in some cases on the ground, as shallow circular ditches and banks Godstow Abbey ruins. Site of St Margaret's Well. Historic meadows, pastures and commons around Port Meadow, Godstow, Binsey and Medley. Binsey earthwork enclosure may be of Saxon date Historic 'groves' adjacent to settlements. Castle Mill Stream and the Oxford Canal.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scattered, isolated historic stone buildings including farms, pubs and churches across the meadows. Closes and crescents of single, linear access road in high density residential areas along the east boundary of the area.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear division between public and private spaces. A large proportion of this character area is the public realm.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally characterised by low density of built development, including scattered farm buildings and historic sites. Great sense of exposure, particularly to the east of the Thames where there is little enclosure in the built development of field boundaries. Small blocks of mid-rise flats along the railway create a more enclosed environment.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modern, expanded settlement edge of Oxford, in the east of the area comprises of runs of terraces and small blocks of flats, in a variety of materials.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow rural lanes (Binsey Lane and Godstow Road) are characterised by a lack of kerbing, road markings or street lighting. Lanes are no-through roads. More urban features including brick boundary walls, lighting columns, kerb road edges and pedestrian walkways within the residential areas in the east.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area is dominated by its open greenspace including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Historic common land, untouched by the plough for centuries and rich in history ➤ Neutral grasslands within the meadows ➤ Canal corridor and including Trap Grounds reedbed along the edge of the floodplain, including Oxford Canal Walk Enclosed private farmland around Binsey and Godstow with hedgerows, small deciduous groves, brooks and ditches
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP Priority Habitats: Large areas of Lowland Meadows to the east of the river and Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh to the west the river. Pockets of Deciduous Woodland (including ancient woodland), Traditional Orchard and Semi-Improved Grassland. OCWS: Various across the area including Oxford Canal, Seacourt and Wytham Streams, Bulstake Stream, Godstow Abbey Meadow and Cripsey Island & Fiddler's Island LWS: Binsey Green and Trap Grounds Reedbed The area contains the Oxford Meadows SAC, designated for unique vegetation communities. The meadow is one of the finest examples of traditionally managed grassland in the country. Annual winter floods provide important habitats for flocks of wildfowl and waders. There are several SSSI in the area, including Wolvercote Meadows and Pixey and Yarnton Meads, which are areas of traditionally managed grassland, in the north of the area, supporting rich and diverse flora and fauna. Hook Meadow and the Trap Grounds SSSI are a series of unimproved and semi-improved neutral grasslands with fen, reedbed, ditches and watercourses providing additional habitats. Deciduous groves (Godstow Holt and Medely Manor Wood) include both wet and drier wood types. Species include herb Paris, cowslip hairy brome, giant fescue, field maple and guelder rose. Neutral grassland - unimproved and semi-improved neutral grasslands, predominantly cattle grazed. Scrub, wet grasslands, ditches, sedge-dominated wetland and pollarded trees on the banks of the River Thames provide additional habitats.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major land uses are agricultural and recreational. Cultural traditions of the Curator of Port Meadow and Freemen of Oxford who impound all grazing animals once a year. 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 picnics by the riverside.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good access to large areas of public open space by foot/cycle as a result of the long surviving commons and the Thames National Trail. Dead-end lanes ensure the area is remote to traffic. Thames National Trail and the Oxford Canal Walk are popular walking routes.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port Meadow forms the landscape in the view of the Port Meadow View cone identified in the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones' (2015). The open, low-lying character of Port Meadow allows uninterrupted and

	expansive views towards the city. The spires and domes are fairly distant and small, spread out in the view against an open sky.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binsey and Wolvercote with Godstow Oxford Conservation Areas. • Port Meadow, Godstow Abbey and Seacourt Medieval Settlement are designated scheduled monuments in this area. • There are numerous listed buildings within the area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Church of St Margaret (Grade I) ➢ Trout Inn (Grade II) ➢ Medley Manor Farmhouse (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Fiddler's Island Stream, Castle Mill Stream and Sheepwash Channel

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The 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, the richness of wildlife and survival of historic features that 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.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Encroachment of the settlement edge into the floodplain in the southeast of the area. High density flats on Roger Dudman Way are locally conspicuous.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High – international interest
Historic Integrity	High – impressive survival of historic features
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High – expansive views across Port Meadow to the spires and domes of Oxford
Open Space	High – large areas of public and private open space

Sensitivity to change

The Thames (Isis) North character 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 forms the landscape in the view of the Port Meadow view cone, which heightens its sensitivity to tall built elements. 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 character area.

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, high density residential development and retail parks, which have influenced its open and rural character.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the open landscape of the floodplain
- New built development on public green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/ or ecological connectivity through the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge or detracting in key views to or from the meadows
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, insensitive to the historic vernacular and/ or do not respect the landscape character
- New built development that results in loss of connectivity across the rural floodplains and/ or encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the character of the rural lanes and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Deterioration of streetscape features such as lamp posts, boundary walls and stone kerbs as a result of their age and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character
- Increasing traffic levels and/or increased parking on the rural lanes that would reduce tranquillity and/ or alter pedestrian movement
- Neglect and/or demolition of historic buildings
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core from new built development or mismanagement of vegetation
- Changes that would sever historic connections and footpaths through the area
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas
- Intensification and/or diversification of farming that would alter the land use, enclosure patterns and biodiversity of the meadows landscape

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Oxford settlement edge in the east of the area, introduces larger scale built form, that in places can be seen from the meadows. Vegetation acts as a buffer, reducing the influence of the built form across the wider area. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	A long history of traditionally managed public grassland provides a distinctive and coherent identity, that residents and visitors can freely enjoy. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Development is dispersed in small pockets across the area, with lack of access to public transport. Historic settlements provide distinctive and recognisable features, improving navigability across the area. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Numerous designated public footpaths/bridleways and common access through the meadows encourage active movement. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Designated nature sites prioritise and enhance a rich ecosystem of habitats, as well as maintaining easy public access Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	The majority of the area is open green space; promoting walking, cycling and boating. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	Some variety of dwelling types and tenures, including village cottages, high density flats and terraced houses. Limited services. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	The quality of the built form is generally good, relating well to the surrounding context. More recent development is less well integrated with the external environment Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and have been adapted to change of use overtime. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Buildings are generally made to last, evidenced by their historical longevity and more recent properties with modern innovations including green walls. Public and private areas are well maintained and managed. Significant

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Thames (Isis) North character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: several sites including Port Meadow Allotments, Trap Ground Allotments and Cripsey Meadow Allotments</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Stone Meadow, Wolvercote Picnic Area, Twenty Pound Meadow and Plater Drive</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Aristotle Lane and Botley Park</p> <p>Play Space: Wolvercote Green Play Space, Stone Meadow Play Area and Botley Road Play Space and MUGA</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: Extensive areas including Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common and Green, Thames Walk, Burgess Field Nature Reserve and Binsey Green</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: None</p> <p>Private Open Space: Merivale Square</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Oxford Golf Centre, Botley Road Tennis, St Philips and St James School and St Edwards School</p>
Strategic blue GI	<p>The River Thames (Isis) flows through the area</p> <p>Small streams and meadows</p> <p>Oxford Canal along the east boundary</p>
Green belt land	<p>Majority of the area</p>
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	<p>SAC: Oxford Meadows</p> <p>SSSI: Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common</p> <p>Local Wildlife Site: Binsey Green and Trap Grounds Reedbed</p> <p>Oxford City Wildlife Sites: various including Oxford Canal, Seacourt and Wytham Streams, Bulstake Stream, Godstow Abbey Meadow and Cripsey Island and Fiddler's Island</p>
Priority habitat Index	<p>Lowland meadows: large areas across Port Meadow, to the east of the river</p> <p>Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh: large area across the west of the area</p> <p>Deciduous woodland: dispersed pockets</p>
Historic parks and gardens	<p>None</p>

The above green infrastructure assets within the Thames (Isis) North character area make a **strong contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

9B CHERWELL



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



Photo 2: Tarmac and gravel 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 River 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

9B CHERWELL

Description

The alluvial floodplain of the River Cherwell is different, but no less important, than that of the Thames. The course of the River Cherwell is of a smaller scale and is less visible than that of the River Thames. It flows along a wooded course, through a mixed agricultural landscape of smaller, regular fields divided by hedgerows. Most land alongside the river is privately owned, although public footpaths provide access to stretches of the river, particularly in the north of the character area. This results in a more peaceful, remote character to the Thames valley to the west of Oxford.

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 used to grow fodder for the Angel and Greyhound coaching inns that were once important coaching inns on the High Street. The mixed agricultural landscape today is characterised by small regular fields that are a result of enclosure during the 18th century.

The Cherwell character area is notable for its absence of settlement. The most prominent built features are the bridges that cross the River Cherwell. Magdalen Bridge is a historic crossing point of the River 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 the northern ring road (A40) and Marston Ferry Road over the river.

The River Cherwell passes to the east of the historic core of Oxford, which is dominated by the University. This influences the character of the floodplain, whereby College grounds, sports fields and the University Botanic Gardens are familiar features of the Cherwell floodplain in proximity to the centre of Oxford. The area has a strong visual and cultural unity – the Cherwell is well known for its flat-bottomed punts.

The network of lowland meadows, lowland fens and good quality semi-improved grassland within the Cherwell Valley character area are of national ecological significance and are UK BAP Priority Habitats. The nationally scarce *Fritillaria meleagris* occurs in the valley, physically and culturally linked to the adjoining Magdalene College meadows. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains forming the alluvial floodplain of the River Cherwell
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 is a result of 18th century enclosure. There has been progressively greater access across the River Cherwell, resulting in increasing number of built features along the river. 20th century additions include the northern ring road, sports fields and pavilions and increased access bridges across the river.

Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic meadows and pastures. Fodder was grown in the Angel and Greyhound meadow for the two coaching inns by the same name, once prominent on the High Street in Oxford. • Viking burial by Magdalen Bridge • King's Mill is a historic building at a crossing point of the River Cherwell.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable for the absence of settlement. • Short access roads to college sports grounds.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via public and permissive footpaths across the fields and college grounds.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field boundary hedgerows and woodland vegetation alongside the River Cherwell provide a sense of enclosure within the area.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridges are the most notable built features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Magdalen Bridge – historic bridge crossing re-built in its present form 1772-1782 ➢ High arched footbridge provides access into the University Parks, built 1923 ➢ Modern road bridges of the A40 and Marston Ferry Road • Few buildings – isolated rural stone farm buildings (Park Farm and King's Mill) and sports pavilions of various designs
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable for the absence of streets. Limited influence from the adjoining settlement edges of the University Colleges to the west and residential suburbs to the east.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost entirely green space with most land privately owned with limited access, except for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Angel and Greyhound Meadow is leased by the city from Magdalen College for public use ➢ Sunnymead Recreation Ground is a popular riverside area with open public access including Sunnymead bathing place • Magdalen Meadows are unimproved neutral grassland meadows. The sports fields are managed as recreational open spaces with less ecological interest.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP priority habitats: Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Good quality semi-improved grassland, Lowland Meadows, Lowland Fens and Deciduous woodland • Four Local Wildlife Sites: University Parks, Almonds Farm and Burn Mill Fields, Great Meadow and Magdalen Meadow • OCWS: Victoria Arms Spinney is a small area of wet woodland with marginal riverside vegetation; Park Farm Meadows is an area of grassland with some rare plant species; University Parks contains some areas of semi-natural grassland and riverside marginal vegetation. • New Marston Meadows SSSI • Meadows, drier grassland and swamp are managed as summer pasture and hay meadows. Sites support fritillary, scarce Diptera and damselfly, breeding lapwing, lesser-spotted woodpecker and kingfisher.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful, rural landscape dominated by meadow and pasture with some playing fields and gardens close to the city centre. •
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle paths and footpaths - The Marston Cycle path connects from the east suburbs, across the Cherwell Valley into the Colleges and city centre, connecting to Sustrans route 51. • Road bridges over the river bring some traffic intrusion into the rural landscape. • Footpaths provide public access to the riverside

Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views out are constrained by layers of hedgerows and woodland and mature trees along the River Cherwell. The central and southern parts of this character area form part of the landscape in the view, within the Elsfield and Eastern Hills view cones identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones' (2015). The mature trees alongside the River Cherwell contribute to the wooded character of the middle ground in the view from Elsfield, above which the historic building punctuate the skyline. Similarly, in view from the Eastern Hills, the trees within the Cherwell Valley form a 'bowl of greenery' around the city.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central (City & University) conservation area extends through the south of the character area A small part of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation area extends into this character area The University Parks is a Grade II listed park and garden that extends into this character area Magdalen College Grade I listed park and garden is located in the south of the character area Grade II listed buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Footbridge over the River Cherwell at Parsons Pleasure Punt Rollers ➤ Merton College Sports Pavilion ➤ Kings Mill
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The Cherwell character area has a strong contribution to the landscape setting of 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 and grassland habitats, as well as the relative sense of tranquillity. It is a generally intact rural environment with rich ecological habitats and functional integrity that results in a high quality landscape.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

There are very limited intrusive or weak features associated with the Cherwell character area. Traffic on the A40 and Marston Ferry Road dual carriageways that cross the river in the north of the character area is locally intrusive. Sports pitches and recent development at Oxford Martin School on Manor Road extends the urban edge into the south of the Cherwell character area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High – nationally designated SSSI and locally designated sites
Historic Integrity	High – historic meadows form part of a conservation area and college grounds are historic parks and gardens

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

The Cherwell character area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its intact, nature, tranquil character and its contribution to the rural setting of Oxford. Its sensitivity is further enhanced by its ecological value and contribution to the green/blue infrastructure of the city of Oxford.

Since the 18th century enclosures this area has seen very little change. Conversion of floodplain meadows into close mown amenity playing fields has had an impact on the landscape and ecological character of the floodplain in places. The rural character, historic meadows and pastures, pockets of wet woodland and remote sense of tranquillity are crucial to the character of the Cherwell Valley.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the open landscape of the floodplain
- New built development on public green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/ or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge or detracting in key views, particularly considering the notable views from Elsfield and the Eastern Hills
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed, insensitive to the historic vernacular and/ or do not respect the landscape character
- New built development that results in loss of connectivity across the rural floodplains and/ or encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the character of the rural lanes and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Deterioration of streetscape features such as lamp posts, boundary walls and stone kerbs as a result of their age and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character
- Increasing traffic levels and/ or increased parking on the rural roads that would reduce tranquillity and/ or alter pedestrian movement
- Neglect and/ or demolition of historic features
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core from new built development or mismanagement of vegetation
- Changes that would sever historic connections and footpaths through the area
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime

- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas
- Intensification and/or diversification of farming that would alter the land use, enclosure patterns and biodiversity of the meadows landscape

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The surrounding built form has respect for the rural landscape of this character area and is generally well-integrated. The character area contributes to the sense of place and culture associated with the Colleges to the west. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a strong sense of place associated with this rural character area. The University Parks and meadows are valued assets and provide cohesion between the urban and rural landscapes Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The small amount of built form in this character area is generally compact and of an appropriate type, form and scale that relates well to the rural context. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	A number of public footpaths, with some well-defined and maintained footpath and cycle routes particularly linking between the eastern suburbs and the University Parks. Public footpaths along a stretch of the river in this character area. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	This is an important rural character area, with an abundance of natural resources including designated nature sites, between built up areas. There are some high quality public spaces within this. The meadows are particularly important. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	The University Parks, meadows and recreation grounds are valuable public spaces in the centre and south of this character area and contribute to the strong sense of place Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	This character area provides a valuable green corridor that contains pedestrian and cycle links between the adjoining urban/suburban areas, providing natural amenity for different user groups. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Not applicable
Resources – efficient and resilient	This rural character area is an important area for nature conservation as well as having generally good connectivity between adjoining urban/suburban areas. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Much of the character area is in private ownership so management and maintenance is varied. Public areas/features are generally well managed and have good access. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Cherwell character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: None</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Parson's Pleasure</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: ***</p> <p>Play Space: Angel and Greyhound Meadow Play Area</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: Includes Angel and Greyhound Meadow, Great Meadow, Music Meadow, New Marston Meadows and Wolfson College Nature Reserve</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: None</p> <p>Private Open Space: Wolfson College, Magdalen College and Bat Willow Meadow</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Includes Lady Margaret, Hertford College and Exeter and St Peter's College Recreation Grounds and Merton College Playing Field</p>
Strategic blue GI	River Cherwell flows through the area
Green belt land	Majority of the area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	<p>SSSI: New Marston Meadows</p> <p>Local Wildlife Site: University Parks, Almonds Farm and Burn Mill Fields, Great Meadow and Magdalen Meadow</p> <p>Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Victoria Arms Spinney, Park Farm Meadows and University Parks</p>
Priority habitat Index	<p>Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh: concentrated in the north</p> <p>Good quality semi-improved grassland: pockets, including Magdalen Meadow</p> <p>Lowland meadows: large area along the east of the river</p> <p>Lowland fens: along Peasmoor Brook and the Cherwell</p> <p>Deciduous woodland: swathes to the west of the river including Great Meadow</p>
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Parks • Magdalen College

The above green infrastructure assets within the Cherwell character area make a **strong contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

9C BAYSWATER BROOK



Photo 1: Urban fringe land uses, including sports grounds, dominate the area around Marston Junction



Photo 2: Recreational facilities throughout the floodplain



Photo 3: Gravel paths wind through public open green space, with informal meadow edges to the amenity grassland



Photo 4: Valuable green spaces along the green corridor of Bayswater Brook



Photo 5: Ongoing development of Barton Park - new buildings are integrated by new and existing trees



Photo 6: Modern architectural styles and materials in Barton Park development



Photo 7: Variety of property types and styles



Photo 8: Hierarchy of green spaces through the new development

9C BAYSWATER BROOK

Description

The Bayswater Brook character area lies at the bottom of the north slopes of Headington Hill, where the footslopes meet the alluvium and first river terrace deposits of the floodplain. Bayswater Brook is a tributary to the River Cherwell and its floodplain is separated from the Cherwell floodplain by the post-war development of New Marston. Once a rural floodplain, this area has undergone substantial transformation over the last 20 years.

The Northern Bypass Road (A40) divides the area in two, with the green spaces and sports grounds to the south and residential development of Barton Park to the north. to the northeast and Marston village and New Marston suburb to the west and south. The B4150 and Marston Junction further fragment this area. Strong roadside hedgerow and tree boundaries create a sense of enclosure and provide some buffering to the main roads as well as creating discrete areas of different land uses in this area.

The western part of the character area, to the north of Bayswater Brook around Marston Junction, is part of the former Marston Field. Small, enclosed fields are retained around an area of allotments to the west of the B4150, whilst sports pitches and semi-natural green space wrap around the north of New Marston to the east of the B4150. Bayswater Brook is not a particularly strong landscape feature, flowing through a shallow channel around the north settlement edge of New Marston. A strong tree boundary separates it from the built form and links with small woodland blocks in Court Place Nature Park and along the Northern Bypass Road to woodland in the eastern part of the character area.

The eastern part of the character area, to the south of Bayswater Brook, is part of the former Headington Meads. Ongoing development is transforming the former meadows into high-density, residential-led development with green corridors that connect with and along the Bayswater Brook. The residential development consists of high density development in varying states of completion. There are a variety of modern building styles and housing types, with generally two-storey detached and semi-detached houses in the east and two- to five storey flats and townhouses in the west. Bayswater Brook forms the northern boundary to this part of the area and is strong landscape feature defined by the robust riparian vegetation along its course. A substantial and distinctive green corridor with well-defined footpaths, pocket parks and balancing ponds has been established between Bayswater Brook and the ongoing development.

There are substantial areas of connected green space within this area, including Court Place Farm Allotments, sports pitches, Nature Park and linear green spaces along the brook and tributary watercourse.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains - forming the alluvial floodplain of the River Cherwell, on the lower slopes of the Settled Plateaux
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area to the south of Bayswater Brook is part of the former Headington Meads – formerly managed as meadows on the footslopes of Headington Hill and undergoing transformation to residential-led development.• The area to the north of Bayswater Brook and around Marston Junction is part of the former Marston Field, an area of open arable land during the medieval period and now host to various recreational spaces.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remaining present day field pattern dates from the parliamentary enclosure and is in part identifiable by the blocks of development in the east of the area. 20th /21st century additions include the Northern Bypass, football training ground and sports centre, cycle speedway, adventure playground and extensive residential development with educational and community facilities.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of former Marston Field and Headington Meads, which is shown as meadow on 1802 map.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst hedgerows have largely been removed, the block pattern of Barton Park development has its origins in the enclosure pattern of the former fields. Curvilinear road pattern has been overlaid across this, with a winding main distributor road and straight access roads off into discrete development blocks.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footpaths and cycle ways indicate public access throughout the area. There are substantial shared spaces within the residential development and private front boundaries are sometimes unclear. Embankments and fencing separate the private and public recreational sports facilities in the west of the area.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree boundaries along roads and remaining field boundaries contribute to a sense of enclosure, particularly in the west of the area. High density residential development formed of discrete blocks of different housing types, including two- to five-storey flats, terraced two- to three-storey townhouses, and small to large detached and semi-detached houses, which create various degrees of enclosure, with more open shared spaces around the periphery.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern sports centre and football stadium. Variety of modern building styles within Barton Park development, using grey, buff and red brick with contrasting lintels and fenestrations, flats with balconies, solar panels on the roof of every new building, sedum roofs to flats.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main distributor roads are macadam, with shared / side roads block paved, with granite set and low kerb details to their edges. Different block patterns denote walkways, crossing points and parking bays. Parking bays separated by low hedges and street trees. Low wooden bollards to define the edge of walkways with the vehicular routes. Low-level shrubs form the boundary between public and private realm in places.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been reduced over the last 20 years, by the ongoing development of Barton Park, although substantial interlinked spaces exist through the development and particularly along the corridor of Bayswater Brook. Open space in the east of the area includes community playing fields/sports pitches, linear green space along tributary streams and retained hedgerows, green corridor along Bayswater Brook incorporating equipped play areas, balancing ponds and well-defined footpaths. The west of the area comprises a substantial area of open space with some remaining pasture, allotment gardens, sports pitches and informal green space that extends through Court Place Farm Nature Park, around the north of New Marston, along the southern edge of the Northern Bypass.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP priority habitats: Pockets of deciduous woodland and area of lowland meadow Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Bayswater Brook

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good connectivity of mature trees and small blocks of woodland, between the west and east of the area and along the Northern Bypass. • Species rich hedgerows and wetland and aquatic habitats associated with Bayswater Brook provide important habitat potential for the area. Court Place Farm Nature Park, at the east of the site enhances associated habitats.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban fringe affected by traffic noise associated with the Northern Bypass and junctions in the area. • Emerging community atmosphere in the east of the area. • Various community facilities and spaces that appear well used and maintained.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Northern Bypass is a busy dual carriageway, with a connection into the area at Marston Junction with the B4150. Bus routes along the B4150 provide connections to the city centre. • Cycle path along the Northern Bypass connects the area to the Cherwell Valley, as well as surrounding residential areas. Well-defined footpaths and cycleways through the area promote active travel and access to open greenspace and recreation facilities. • Access to north Oxfordshire countryside is fragmented by the A40.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views out are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation alongside Bayswater Brook. • The western part of this character area forms part of the landscape in the view, within the Elsfield view cone identified in the '<i>Assessment of Oxford View Cones</i>' (2015). The mature trees along Bayswater Brook contribute to the rural foreground of the view.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marston conservation area extends into the west of this character area
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area contains a variety of well-connected green spaces, providing for both formal and informal recreation and ecological connectivity. Bayswater Brook has been retained and enhanced as part of a green corridor around the ongoing development at Barton Park.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The area has become fragmented by ongoing transformation and development. The main roads are locally intrusive, although tree boundaries offer some buffer. Urban signage that detracts from quality green spaces.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Moderate
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – some hierarchy of public open spaces

Sensitivity to change

The Bayswater Brook character area has undergone significant transformation over the last 20 years. The creation of the Northern Bypass, introduction of recreational facilities and buildings, and ongoing development at Barton Park have substantially altered the character of this floodplain. Pockets of rural landscape are retained and green spaces between development provide connectivity through the area and between urban Oxford and the surrounding countryside to the north.

This area has high sensitivity to further change, associated with the remaining rural landscape, Bayswater Brook as an important landscape feature and location of the west of the site within the view from Elsfield.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development on green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/ or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that is highly visible, particularly on the urban edge or detracting in key views, particularly considering the notable view from Elsfield
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the landscape character
- New built development that results in loss of connectivity across the rural floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Deterioration of streetscape features and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core from new built development or mismanagement of vegetation
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	New development generally responds well to its location on the floodplain with a positive relationship to the brook. Existing trees and woodland help to integrate built form in this area. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	There is a strong sense of place associated with the new development, with the relationship of the area with Bayswater Brook enhanced by the provision of green corridors between development blocks. Identity is less strong in the west of the area. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Development in this area is largely walkable and has good accessibility to local transport and community facilities. Streets are generally well-defined by the building layout and there are memorable green spaces and buildings at key nodal points. Significant
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	The network of streets is generally safe and accessible. A variety of transport modes are provided for, although the car has priority. There are well-defined footpaths and cycle routes. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Existing natural features are well-integrated and new features established within the development, providing attractive spaces and a multi-functional network in parts. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	There are two hubs for public space in this area, providing for formal and informal recreation, with smaller and linear spaces through the new development that also connect to adjoining character areas. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	There is an integrated mix of housing tenures and types within the area. There are various community facilities and plans to provide services as part of the ongoing development. Significant
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	The new development provides good quality spaces and properties generally relate positively to private, shared and public spaces. Services are generally well integrated although parking bays dominate the street scene. Significant
Resources – efficient and resilient	New development is generally well designed and incorporates planting, balancing ponds, solar panels and green roofs to contribute to climate resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The neighbourhood has been designed and planned for long-term stewardship and is generally well managed and maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Bayswater Brook character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	<p>Allotments: Court Place Farm Allotments</p> <p>Amenity Green Space: Showmans Field and Barton Park</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Boults Lane Recreation Ground, Court Place Farm Nature Park and Foxwell Drive Park</p> <p>Play Space: Barton Park Play Area, Barton Community Play Space, Foxwell Drive Play Area, Court Place MUGA and Boults Lane Play Area</p> <p>Accessible Natural Green Space: None</p> <p>Civic Space: None</p> <p>Churchyards and cemeteries: None</p> <p>Private Open Space: Barton park Primary School</p> <p>Outdoor Sport: Oxford City FC and Netball, Barton Recreation Ground and Football Pitch and Barton Tennis</p>
Strategic blue GI	Bayswater Brook flows along the southern and northern boundaries
Green belt land	The western part of the area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Bayswater Brook
Priority habitat Index	<p>Deciduous woodland: Pockets in the west</p> <p>Lowland meadow: small area in the west</p>
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Bayswater Brook character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

9D THAMES (ISIS) SOUTH



Photo 1: Christ Church meadow is the archetypal English river scene



Photo 2: The ancient city walls mark the boundary between the floodplain and the city, along the north of the area (photo shows Merton College)



Photo 3: The southern part of the Thames (Isis) 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 Grandpont Nature Park is a landmark



Photo 6: Boats moored along the river sides



Photo 7: Limited access along paths and tracks



Photo 8: Thick hedgerows enclose the meadows

9D THAMES (ISIS) SOUTH

Description

The Thames (Isis) South character area forms the 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 near Christ Church Meadow and established the first recorded settlement. Christ Church Meadow, with its open character and silhouetted floodplain trees is the archetypal English river scene and forms a setting for some of the oldest of the Oxford Colleges, namely Christ Church and Merton, as well as Oxford Cathedral. The view from the towpath back towards the city centre is well documented and encompasses most people's first impression of the City of Oxford.

This southern part of the River Thames (Isis) is greatly influenced by the rowing culture of the University, with a clusters of college boathouses along the river. It is a busy stretch of river, particularly during regattas when the banks can be full of spectators. Pubs, such as the Isis Farmhouse and the Iffley Lock, provide focal points for activity.

The river is wide through this area and is a prominent feature in the floodplain. Weir Mill Stream branches off the river near The Kidneys, providing pools and secluded boat moorings alongside the preserved and nationally important Iffley Meadows, notable for its carpet of fritillaries in the spring.

The floodplain comprises swathes of meadow and pasture with large college sports grounds on the periphery in the north of the area, areas of woodland and pockets of allotments and scattered stone buildings located a key river crossing points. Whilst it is an active area, it is a tranquil and generally preserved rural landscape. Donnington Bridge provides the only road crossing of the river in the area. There is a network of pedestrian and cycle routes through the area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains – flat, wide alluvial floodplain of the River Thames (Isis) south of Folly Bridge
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic meadows and pastures (Christ Church Meadow and Merton Field) strongly influence the character of the floodplain close to the city centre 20th century alterations include college sports grounds, pavilions, boat houses and St Mary and St John Primary School on the settlement edge to the east of the area.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ Church Meadow is an important historic, ecological and amenity resource and forms a setting to the oldest part of the city. Grandpont Causeway scheduled monument runs along the edge of Christ Church Meadow, along the west boundary of the area) Oxford City Walls scheduled monument border Merton Field to the north.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scattered settlement of pubs, boathouses, lock houses with private access along gated tracks.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of this area is privately owned, with access along designated public footpaths
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open meadows and low density of built development contributes to tranquillity and sense of openness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees and woodland provide enclosure in places, particularly during summer months.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pubs, locks and boathouses of varying styles and materials, with views out onto the river. Local rubble stone buildings and boundary walls, particularly at the pubs and lock houses. Donnington Bridge is a modern road bridge across the floodplain, that has been subjected to graffiti and vandalism.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winding, single width tracks for private, gated access to scattered properties and boathouses. Donnington Road connects the east and west suburbs through this area.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is predominantly green, open space – much of the land is privately owned with good access via public footpaths. Floodplain Meadows (Iffley Meadows, Long Meadow, St Hilda’s College Meadow) are areas of unimproved meadow and pasture within a network of river channels, willow lined ditches and hedges. Aston Eyot and The Kidneys are nature reserves comprising a mix of improved and semi-improved grassland with scrub and bounded by woodland.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP priority habitats: Swathes of deciduous woodland, substantial area of lowland meadows, floodplain grazing and pockets of good quality semi-improved grassland and traditional orchard OCWS: Longbridges Nature Park, Aston’s Eyot and The Kidneys, Rivermead Nature Park Local Wildlife Sites: Longbridges Nature Park Fen, Long Meadow and Meadow next to Iffley Meadows Include areas of meadow, mixed swamp habitat and rare marsh vegetation Iffley Meadows SSSI is home to a rich diversity of wildlife typical of unspoilt meadowland. The meadows support the largest population of fritillary in the region, in addition to adders tongue, great burnet and ragged robin.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peaceful and rural landscape dominated by meadow and pasture with activity centred around the river and Oxford’s rowing culture.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, connecting southern suburbs with the city centre.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views across the open meadows, but constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation alongside the river. The character area forms part of the landscape in the view, within the Rose Hill view cone, identified in the ‘<i>Assessment of Oxford View Cones</i>’ (2015), with views across green space of the Thames Valley. Views across Christ Church Meadow towards the city centre are notable.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ Church is a grade I listed park and garden in the north of the area. Scattered grade II listed buildings include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Folly Bridge with former Toll House ➤ Old Iffley Lock ➤ Eastwyke Farmhouse

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Aston's Eyot, The Kidneys, Long Meadow historic landscapes and Roger Bannister Running Track.
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The Thames (Isis) South character area has an extremely important role in the setting of Oxford. It has a highly distinctive rural character, historic meadows, rowing culture and views to the historic core and particularly Christ Church. The intact survival of historic features, rich ecological habitats and functional integrity results in a landscape of exceptional high quality.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

There are very limited intrusive or weak features associated with the Thames (Isis) South character area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High – local and national designations
Historic Integrity	High
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	High – views across Christ Church Meadow to historic core
Open Space	High – large expanse of open green space

Sensitivity to change

The Thames (Isis) South character area 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. It is highly sensitive to change due to its historic integrity, tranquil character, rich biodiversity and the role it plays in the setting of Oxford.

Since the 18th century enclosure, this area has seen very little change. Conversion of floodplain meadow into close mown amenity playing fields has had an impact on the landscape and ecological character of the floodplain along the settlement edge, particularly in the north of the area.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the rural landscape of the Thames (Isis) floodplain and affects access to the river
- New built development on green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/ or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that is highly visible, conspicuous and/or detracting particularly on the urban edge or detracting in key views
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the landscape character
- New built development that results in loss of connectivity across the rural floodplain

- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Deterioration of streetscape features and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Demolition of historic buildings
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core from new built development or mismanagement of vegetation
- Changes that would sever historic connections and footpaths through the area
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The adjoining settlement edge largely respects the character of the area, and is well integrated. The area contributes to the sense of the place of the colleges on the edge of the meadows and creates a rural setting to the city. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	This rural character area provides a distinctive, visually appealing and coherent identity, for all to enjoy. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	The built form is scattered throughout the floodplain, largely at riverside locations, with footpaths forming connections between them. Navigability is aided by the river. The built form is generally of type and scale appropriate to the context. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	There are a number of well-defined and maintained footpath and cycle routes, including a nationally important path along the course of the river. This promotes connectivity along the floodplain to the city. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	This is a multifunctional site of ecological importance, with a number of nationally and locally designated nature areas, that prioritise and enhance nature value. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Numerous public footpaths and cycle routes allow access into the extensive network of green-blue infrastructure. There are significant areas of private land, largely associated with college grounds. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	This character area provides a valuable green corridor along the river that contains pedestrian links to the city centre, providing natural amenity for different user groups. The area is characterised by Oxford's rowing culture, with numerous boat houses along this stretch of the river. Moderate
Homes and buildings –	Buildings are limited in this area, comprising boat houses, lock houses and a scattered properties that relate positively to the river and countryside.

functional, healthy and sustainable	Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Buildings in this area are generally well designed, although some signs of aging and little evidence of environmental resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private areas are generally well managed and maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Thames (Isis) South character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Fairacres Road Allotments Amenity Green Space: Poplar Walk Parks and Recreation Grounds: Meadow Lane Park Play Space: Meadow Lane Park Play Area and Skatepark Accessible Natural Green Space: Substantial area including Iffley Meadows, Christ Church Meadow and Longbridges Nature Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Outdoor Space: Includes Merton College, Long Meadow and Isis Canoe Club Outdoor Sport: Includes Queen’s College and Brasenose College Recreation Grounds and Magdalen College
Strategic blue GI	River Cherwell flows into the area and confluences with the River Thames (Isis) Weirs Mill Stream
Green belt land	Majority of the area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	SSSI: Iffley Meadows Local Wildlife Site: Longbridges Nature Park Fen, Long Meadow and Meadow next to Iffley Meadows Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Longbridges Nature Park, Aston’s Eyot and The Kidneys and Rivermead Nature Park
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: swathes through the north Lowland meadow: substantial area in the south Coastal and floodplain grazing: large area in north around rivers Good quality semi-improved grassland: small area in the east Traditional orchard: small, isolated area
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ Church

The above green infrastructure assets within the Thames (Isis) South character area make a **strong contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

9E HINKSEY/BULSTAKE STREAMS



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

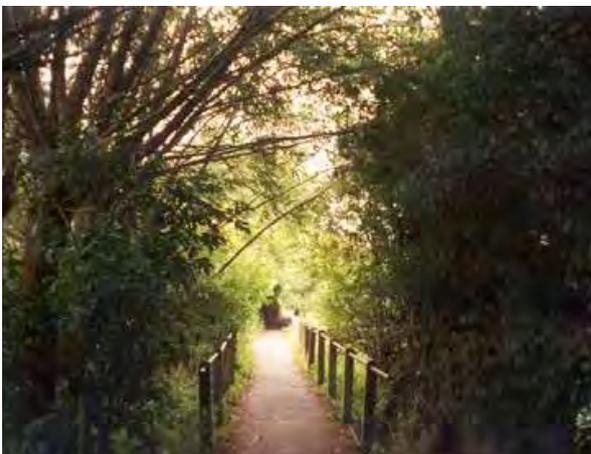


Photo 5: A network of tracks and footpaths with footbridges provide access to the floodplain



Photo 6: Sports grounds have been reclaimed at Hogacre Common

9E HINKSEY / BULSTAKE STREAMS

Description

The Hinksey / Bulstake Streams character area forms part of the wider flat, alluvial floodplain of the southern part of the River Thames, comprising the streams and tributaries that border the southwest of Oxford. It is separated from the main river corridor (character areas 9D) by the intervening river terrace (character areas 4C, 5I and 10E). This floodplain 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. The presence of these small watercourses is indicated by lines of pollarded willow, bands of osiers and low scrub. They are set within fields of pasture and rough grassland with mixed scrub, some of which is grazed by horses. There are a number of open water bodies including Hinksey Lake and smaller pools arising from previous gravel extraction in proximity to the railway. Transmission lines and the consecutive vertical structures of both electricity pylons and telecommunications poles are a very prominent feature in the flat landscape. Other dominant features are the railway line bordering Hinksey Lake to the east and the A34 cutting through the landscape to the south and west of the area. A network of tracks and foot bridges provides access into the area, often hidden amongst vegetation.

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, comprising pavilions associated with sports and recreational use. Some small scale commercial development and the large Park and Ride site are concentrated in the south of the area, at the junction of the A34 and A4144. There are pockets of close mown grass associated with college and community sports grounds, which are largely secluded and integrated by woodland vegetation.

The character area is critical in forming part of the landscape setting to the historic core, painted by Turner and celebrated in poetry by Matthew Arnold. It forms part of the landscape in the view of three notable view cones, from the Western Hills.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers and Pastoral Floodplains – flat, wide alluvial floodplain of the River Thames (Isis) to the west of the intervening river terrace
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic meadows and pastures strongly influence the character of the floodplain 20th century alterations include the railway, electricity pylons, Oxford Ice Rink, gravel extraction and reclamation and creation of the Park and Ride site with nearby commercial development. The 21st century has seen former playing fields transformed to Hogacre Common Eco Park and OxGrow Community Garden.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement between former Thames Palaeochannels sealed below the alluvium Historic causeways from Binsey cross east to west Historic meadows, pastures and commons. The pollarded trees and ditches are important historic landscape features.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable for its lack of settlement. The majority of development is in the south, largely consisting of single, small scale retail and commercial

	units and large areas of car parking. Other built features consist of the ice rink and scattered sports pavilions.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of this area is privately owned with public access via a network of footpaths. Recreation grounds, playgrounds and nature parks provide public open space.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low density of built development. Vegetation provides a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General absence of build development including occasional small sports pavilions including that converted to a café at the Hogacre Eco Park are largely hidden by dense hedgerow boundaries Concentration of commercial development in the south, and ice rink and school in the east characterised by a variety of materials and form, a result of piecemeal development expanding the settlement edge into the floodplain. The wider floodplain introduces traditional villages, with vernacular stone buildings and walls (traditional villages of North and South Hinksey are beyond the city boundary). Electricity pylons and power lines are prominent.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable for the absence of streets. The A4144 and Old Abingdon Road, pass through the south of the area to the busy junction forming the southern gateway to Oxford.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large areas of open space with good access, including rights of way and permitted paths, plus large areas of public open space as a result of long surviving commons. Grandpont Nature Park has been created on the site of former Oxford Gas works and comprises rough neutral and acidic grassland and scrub managed for wildlife with public access to the Thames. Secluded playing fields and recreation grounds such as to the south of Botley, adjacent to the Ice Rink and to the west of Grandpont, alongside the railway track. Hogacre Common is a community led eco-park, established on the site of a former college sports grounds in the 21st century, providing the local community with low carbon activities and events. Botley Meadow (Osney Mead) is a large area of remnant floodplain meadow, traditionally managed by light grazing horses and a hay cut. Hinksey Pools, Hinksey Stream and Hinksey Lane contain aquatic habitats, which include a narrow pool, where the northern end is used for fishing and the southern end undisturbed with reeds and scrub, marginal aquatic vegetation and a larger lake.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP priority habitats: large areas of semi-improved grassland, alongside floodplain grazing, lowland meadows and pockets of deciduous woodland support a rich and diverse ecosystem OCWS: Field north of Osney Mead and Hinksey Pools Local Wildlife Sites: Osney Mead and Willow Walk Meadow Hinksey Pools, incorporating Hinksey Stream and Hinksey Lane, contains aquatic habitats, and bittern and water vole have previously been recorded.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A peaceful and largely rural area that has a timeless quality created by the historic meadows, pastures and commons. Well integrated recreational spaces.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tranquil, rural landscape impinged on by traffic noise from A34 and transected by the railway line. The area offers public access into the floodplain and beyond. The most notable is the 'Matthew Arnold' path, which is a popular walking route from the city via a footbridge over Hinksey Lane and linking with the wider public access including the Chilswell valley walks to Boars Hill.

	Vitally important in contributing to the experience of a rural landscape in close proximity to the city, a key characteristic of the city.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views across meadows are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation alongside the river. The character area forms part of the landscape in the view, within the three view cone from the Western Hills, identified in the 'Assessment of Oxford View Cones', namely Raleigh Park, Boars Hill and Hinksey Hill A34 interchange. The flat, low-lying meadows are seen with the iconic skyline of Oxford rising beyond them.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Osney Island Oxford Conservation Area extends into the north of the character area. Scheduled Monuments: Old Abingdon Road culverts
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Oxpens Meadow, part of Castle Mill Stream and Former Gas Works Rail Bridge

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The area has an important role in the setting of the city of Oxford, providing a sense of rural landscape in proximity to the urban area, with good survival of floodplain features. The area is critical in the iconography of Oxford, forming part of a much painted and documented view from Boar's Hill and North Hinksey. The area retains a strong visual and cultural unity and vast areas of tranquil, rural countryside.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Detracting features include the pylons and transmissions lines and railway that transect the area. There is some encroachment of built development along the settlement edges with the floodplain and some intrusion of traffic on the busy main roads around the periphery.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Moderate
Historic Integrity	Moderate – survival of historic meadows indicate longevity of land use and ditches are important historic features
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Moderate – glimpses of some of the tallest buildings of the historic core from the floodplain
Open Space	High – large expanse of open green space

Sensitivity to change

The Hinksey / Bulstake Streams character area is one of the major floodplains that defined the historic growth of the city and provides the unique juxtaposition of urban and rural environments at the centre of the city. It is highly sensitive to change due to its historic interest, rich biodiversity and open character. Its location within the Western Hills view

cones heighten its sensitivity to change, particularly associated with tall built elements and mis-management of vegetation.

Since the 18th century enclosure, this area has seen some change along the settlement edge, resulting from expansion of close mown amenity playing fields, introduction of pylons and transmission lines and gravel extraction. The introduction of the railway line fragmented the area but also introduced the notable, colourful railway bridge across the river. At the end of the 20th century, the old Oxford Gas works site was restored to natural habitat and is now a nature park managed for wildlife. Much of the area provides important habitats for a diverse ecosystem.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the rural landscape of and access to the floodplain
- New built development on green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/ or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that is highly visible, conspicuous and/or detracting particularly on the urban edge or in key views
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the landscape character
- New built development that results in loss of connectivity across the rural floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Deterioration of streetscape features and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Demolition of historic features
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Alteration to key views of the historic city core from new built development or mis-management of vegetation
- Changes that would sever historic connections and footpaths through the area
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Loss of green space, both in the public and private realm could threaten the rural character
- Rising water levels resulting in more frequent flooding
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The adjoining settlement edge largely respects the character of the area, and is generally well integrated by floodplain vegetation. The low-lying meadows continue to provide the juxtaposition of rural and urban associated with the historic city. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The character area generally provides a strong sense of place and identity as a rural context to the urban areas. Significant

Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is scattered across the area, with higher density development on the settlement edges. Due to piecemeal development, built form is not coherent. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	A number of paths provide good access to the extensive network of blue green infrastructure from the surrounding suburbs and villages. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	This is an area of ecological importance, with a number of priority habitats, and some locally designated sites that prioritise and enhance nature value. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Various designated and permissive footpaths provide access across the meadows and there are recreation/sports grounds and nature parks near to the settlement edge. Significant
Uses – mixed and integrated	This character area provides a valuable green edge to Oxford, providing natural amenity for different user groups. Some commercial land use. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are limited in this area, comprising small sports pavilions, commercial units and a school that are generally integrated and relate positively to the countryside. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Buildings in this area are generally well designed, although some signs of aging and little evidence of environmental resilience. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Public and private areas are generally well managed and maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

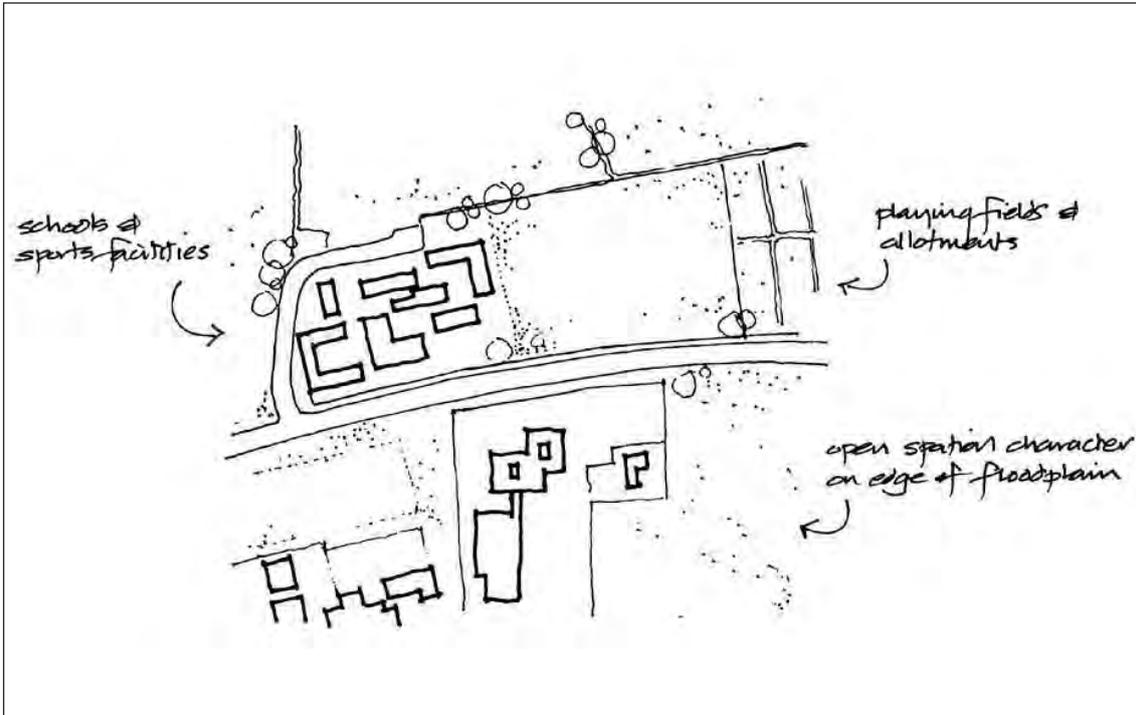
The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Hinksey / Bulstake Streams character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: OxGrow Community Garden and Spragglesea Mead and Dean's Ham Allotments Amenity Green Space: King George's Field Parks and Recreation Grounds: Oatlands Recreation Ground Play Space: Oatlands Play Space Accessible Natural Green Space: Osney Mead, Willow Walk Meadow, Hogacre Common Eco Park, Grandpont Nature Park, Dean's Ham Meadow and Kennington Copse Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: None Outdoor Sport: Pembroke College Sports Ground
Strategic blue GI	The River Thames (Isis) flows through the north of the area Bulstake Stream Hinksey Stream along the west boundary Ponds/lakes

Green belt land	Majority of the area to the west of the railway
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Local Wildlife Site: Osney Mead and Willow Walk Meadow Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Field north of Osney Mead and Hinksey Pools
Priority habitat Index	Semi-improved grassland: Large areas Coastal and floodplain grazing: around Bulstake Stream in the north Lowland meadows: in the north of the area Deciduous woodland: scattered pockets
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Hinksey / Bulstake Streams character area make a **strong contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

10 OPEN RIVER TERRACES



Generic example of spatial characteristics

10 OPEN RIVER TERRACES

Generic Description

The Open River Terraces comprise those areas of open land remaining between the dense urban development that characterises the underlying Settled and Open River Terrace landscape type. These open spaces lie on the same domed deposits of river terrace gravels that 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 generally low density of built development, possessing a remote tranquil character in comparison to the busy, urban character of the adjacent areas. They are areas of ongoing transformation, as a result of them adjoining the settlement edge. They are affected by proximity of built development, land use by playing fields and recreation grounds, and most recently expansion of the settlement edge. Rural buildings, including scattered farmsteads, are typically limestone with red brick detailing. A variety of modern materials are seen in the construction of schools and sports pavilions.

The area has experienced transformation of different scales over the last 20 years, including ongoing expansion to the north of Oxford (area 10B) and new University development (area 10D).

Key Characteristics

- Areas of open greenspace on the Settled and Open River Terrace landscape type
- Rural, tranquil character that contrasts with adjacent urban areas
- Retained field structure and hedgerow boundaries date to Parliamentary enclosure
- Schools, playing fields and recreation grounds are dominant land uses
- Historic lowland hay meadows with rich biodiversity and rare habitats
- Form a buffer between urban areas and the sensitive floodplains
- Ongoing expansion of the settlement edge across the river terraces, particularly in area 10B

Character Areas

10A North Oxford Open River Terrace

10B Peartree Open River Terrace

10C Marston Open River Terrace

10D St Clements Open River Terrace

10E New Hinksey Open River Terrace

10A 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 generally low. Local vernacular is local rubblestone and red brick with red clay tiles



Photo 4: More recent development is higher density, including three- to four-storey terraces and flats



Photo 5: Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park is a designed landscape and public park adjacent to the Cherwell floodplain



Photo 6: Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park contains a variety of spaces and activities



Photo 7: Views to adjacent wooded ridgelines are important features



Photo 8: Sports pavilions are located in the corner of fields



Photo 9: Robust boundary hedgerows and belts of trees contribute to the sense of enclosure in this landscape

10A NORTH OXFORD OPEN RIVER TERRACE

Description

The North Oxford Open River Terrace occurs in three distinct parcels across the North Oxford River Terrace landscape area. They were formerly part of the Cutteslowe and Water Eaton Fields (arable and pasture) and St Giles Fields (open arable fields) and have evolved into open recreation green spaces adjacent to the urban landscapes of Oxford. Many have retained their hedgerow boundaries, which indicate their former land use. They contain no designated sites of ecological value and are predominantly managed for amenity. Mature trees that line pockets of pasture and amenity grassland, within the parks and allotments, bounding school grounds and occasional private gardens, and small blocks of relatively new woodland all contribute to local ecological value and enclosure within these areas. Much of the area is privately owned, with limited access. The exception to this is the northern parcel, containing Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park, which provides a variety of recreational activities and spaces.

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 lay tile roofs. School buildings and sports pavilions of varying ages and styles, now form the predominant built component of the landscape, often located in the corner of fields. Residential development has recently expanded into the south of the area, comprising relatively tight streets of high-density, three- to four-storey flats and terraces of red and buff brick with render.

Belts of poplar, mature specimen trees and old stone buildings are characteristic features of the more rural parts of the river terrace. Vegetation provides a sense of enclosure, particularly in the summer. Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park is open to the public and provides an important recreational resource with a variety of recreational activities and spaces. Acquired by the City Council in 1935, it is a designed parkland landscape that lies along the River Cherwell. Views to adjacent wooded ridges of Wytham Hill are an important feature of this area.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled and Open River Terraces - the river terraces adjacent to the floodplain of the River Thames and River Cherwell.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 overlaid and often contained by retained hedgerows and trees. 20th and 21st century expansion of the settlement edge into these areas.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Saxon burials and Iron Age settlement areas
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clusters of educational facilities, single estate and recreational buildings, sports pavilions. High density residential development, consisting of mainly blocks of three- to four-storey terraces and flats.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally low density of built development across the area, with individual and clusters of buildings often positioned on the edge of green spaces. • Vegetation along boundaries provides a sense of enclosure, particularly in summer. • High density residential area with tight and often narrow street layout, contributing to sense of enclosure.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated rural stone buildings (including Cutteslowe Park House and farms) with newer built schools and sports pavilions, built in a variety of materials and styles. • Local vernacular is local rubble stone and red brick buildings with clay tile roofs. • Residential buildings are predominantly red or buff brick and white render.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access lanes and tracks to institutions and playing fields. • Residential areas with front gardens/grass areas open to the pavement, black railing boundaries in places, lantern style lighting columns, block paved parking bays and driveways, occasional street trees, some hedge boundaries.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the playing fields are privately owned land with little public access. School and College playing fields are manicured grass playing fields set within existing field boundaries. Sports pavilions are located on the corner of each playing field. • Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park is open to the public and provides an important recreational resource. It was acquired by the city council in 1935, and lies alongside the River Cherwell. It has been awarded the Green Flag Award, and its designed grounds include and equipped play area, a splash park, a miniature railway, tennis and volleyball courts, grass sports pitches and allotment gardens.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: small area of deciduous woodland • No OCWS or local wildlife sites in the area. • Contains no sites of designated ecological importance. Open spaces are predominantly managed for amenity, resulting in a dominance of short mown grassland that supports limited wildlife. Mature trees, allotments and private gardens provide local ecological value. • Isolated ponds in the park and residential development support possible aquatic habitats.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant land uses are educational and recreational facilities, with a small area of residential. • Some pockets of peacefulness, in contrast with adjacent urban areas. However, temporal changes associated with educational facilities, can result in a busy and lively sense of place at certain times of the day.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor access tracks. • Marston Ferry Road crosses the area on its approach to its route across the Cherwell Floodplain. • Access via public footpaths to Oxford's wider countryside from Cutteslowe Park. A number of local cycle routes also provide connections to the city centre, the northern suburbs and across the Cherwell Valley to Oxford's eastern suburbs.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views across the area are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries. • Trees are skyline features - belts of poplars and hedgerow trees form a green backdrop to the open space.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

These areas are distinctive because of their open space, rural character and green back drop in contrast to the adjacent settlement areas. They provide a transition from the settlement edge and form an important setting to the floodplain landscapes of Oxford.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Clusters of educational buildings are visually intrusive in places and have altered the historic enclosure pattern. Open space is being constrained by expansion of the settlement edge.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – unrecorded sites of local interest only
Historic Integrity	Low – hedgerow pattern of parliamentary enclosure in places
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	High – large expanse of open green space

Sensitivity to change

The semi-enclosed nature of the landscape and absence of nationally important 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 including the expansion of close mown amenity playing fields and gradually more intensive land management, and expansion of the residential settlement edge. However, the land has remained open and forms a setting to the adjacent floodplains.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between existing buildings
- New built development on green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/ or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that is highly visible, conspicuous and/or detracting particularly on the urban edge
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the landscape character
- New built development on the settlement edge that results in loss of connectivity with the adjoining floodplain

- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the local character
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Further fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Loss of green space, both in the public and private realm could threaten the rural character
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as wind breaks / visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Provides a green boundary to the urban edge and buffer to the rural floodplain. The urban development is largely buffered by strong hedgerow and tree boundaries, creating a sense of separation and enclosure. Significant
Identity – attractive and distinctive	A coherent identity associated with the open spaces and educational facilities. Encroachment on these areas has altered the context as a buffer between settlement and floodplain. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is not compact, comprising of isolated/clustered buildings within large plots of generally private, and some public, land. Some difficulty in wayfinding in this area. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Within public land, movement is facilitated through footpaths and cycle routes, promoting active movement and interaction. Movement is restricted where large plots of private land dominate. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised or enhanced in this area, as a result of land uses that prioritise recreation and education. Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park provides an important and valued public open space, that supports a range of activities and community facilities. The remainder of the area is largely privately owned land. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	Dominance of open spaces with educational and recreational land uses, with area of high density residential development and limited services, Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings are limited in this area, comprising small sports pavilions, commercial units and a school that are generally integrated and relate positively to the countryside. Moderate
Resources –	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology.

efficient and resilient	Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Land is designed and planned for long-term stewardship, allowing public and private land to be well managed and maintained. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the North Oxford Open River Terrace character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Cutteslowe Allotments and Marston Ferry and Blackhall Allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: Cutteslowe Park and Ryder Close Park Play Space: Cutteslowe Park Play Area and Splash Park Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: Elizabeth-Jennings Way Pond, Oxford High School and Summer Fields School Outdoor Sport: Various school and college grounds including St Edwards School, Keble and St Hugh’s Sports Ground and Cherwell School playing fields
Strategic blue GI	Small ponds and watercourse within Cutteslowe park Oxford canal along west boundary
Green belt land	Northern part of the area
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: small area
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the North Oxford Open River Terrace character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

10B PEARTREE OPEN RIVER TERRACE



Photo 1: The Peartree interchange is a major traffic junction at the northern gateway to Oxford



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



Photo 3: Busy main roads with frequent buses



Photo 4: Variety of architectural styles and materials



Photo 5: Ongoing transformation of the area



Photo 6: Exposed earth and construction vehicles on site

10B PEARTREE OPEN RIVER TERRACE

Description

The Peartree Open River Terrace is located in the northwest of Oxford, on an area of Lowland Clay Vale to the western edge of the Settled and Open River Terrace. The area was previously Wolvercote Fields, an open arable pastoral landscape. Today it is dominated by the Peartree Interchange, a major road junction at the northern gateway to Oxford. The area is undergoing transformation to create 'Oxford North', which will be the city's new innovation district.

At present, the area is characterised by transport related services in the north and south, to the east of the A34 junction and west of the A40 junction respectively. These areas comprise relatively low-level built form of motels, service stations and associated parking areas, including the Pear Tree Park and Ride site in the northeast of the area. The area is constrained by the A34 to the west and railway to the east, with the A40 and A44 cutting through it. Where there was previously open agricultural fields, excavated bare soil and ongoing construction works now dominate the landscape to the west of the A44 and south of the A40.

The masterplan for the development of 'Oxford North' is for a new, unique and sustainable district for the future. It will be an innovative mixed-use development that provides a home for a thriving science and technology community. It will comprise relatively high density commercial, business, research and residential built form, set out around a series of connected open spaces that will enhance biodiversity, include new parks and incorporate new cycle paths.

The area is an important northern approach and gateway to the city of Oxford. It contributes to the setting of Wolvercote conservation area, Goose Green and the Thames floodplain. The new development proposes to respect this and provide improved connectivity through this area to the canal and river that form the southern boundary.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowland Clay Vale to the edge of the Settled and Open River Terrace on Oxford clay and river gravel river terrace adjacent to the Thames floodplain
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An area previously known as Wolvercote Fields, shown as arable agricultural land on 1765 maps. Late 20th century development includes the A34 ring road, A40 link road and transport related infrastructure including motels and service stations. Ongoing 21st century development to create an innovative and sustainable new district at the north gateway to the city.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the setting to Wolvercote conservation area and Goose Green
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single medium scale buildings (motels, service stations and car showrooms) clustered at the major road junctions. A40 and A44 dissect the area. New development will introduce a tighter street and block pattern, broken up by a hierarchy of open spaces.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development will provide new public open spaces including parks and multifunctional green spaces, incorporating footpaths and cycleways
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built form comprises generally medium scale buildings with substantial, open car parking areas. • Ongoing transformation of the area will create a high density mixed-use development with enclosed public and private spaces • Future development will introduce new technology and a variety of architectural styles and materials
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing vernacular is red brick or coral rag stone buildings with red clay tile roofs at Red Barn Farm. • Metal frames and large signs at the service stations. Motels are generally three- to four-storey, in a variety of architectural styles
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peartree Interchange on the A34 and Wolvercote Roundabout (A40 and A44) are major road junctions with associated signage and tall lighting columns. • Main roads through the area have metal safety barriers, large signs and regular lighting columns. • New development will introduce a variety of streetscape details
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hierarchy of open spaces will be created through the new development area. They will have varying characteristics, where nature and / or people are prioritised. • A small area of pasture will be retained in the north of the area.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: small area of deciduous woodland and Traditional orchard in the very north of the area • No OCWS or local wildlife sites in the area. • Contains no sites of designated ecological importance. • Future development provides an opportunity to enhance biodiversity in this area, through creation of new green spaces and particularly considering links south to the canal, river and meadows.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport infrastructure and related services are the existing main land use in this area. • The majority of the area is undergoing transformation from agriculture to mixed-use development. Future development is intended to provide a vibrant, new district for Oxford.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peartree Interchange is a major road intersection that dominates the northern approach to Oxford. There is a substantial park and ride site with frequent buses along the A44. • Wolvercote Roundabout is also a busy road junction, providing access into the northern suburbs of Oxford. • New roads will link from the A40 into the new development
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees are skyline features - belts of poplars and hedgerow trees form a green backdrop to the open space. • There are existing open views across the excavated land. These will become constrained by ongoing development.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolvercote with Godstow conservation area extends into this area, comprising small pasture fields with strong, peripheral hedgerow boundaries.
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

Robust peripheral hedgerow and tree boundaries along the A34, canal corridor and in the north of the area help to integrate existing infrastructure and development as well as providing some connectivity through the area. New development will create a new identity for this area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The landscape of the area has been fragmented by major infrastructure. Ongoing transformation means that there are few important landscape features and limited strength of character.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low – unrecorded sites of local interest only
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	High
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	Moderate – future hierarchy of open spaces proposed

Sensitivity to change

The Peartree Open River Terrace is in a visually sensitive location, at the gateway to Oxford from the north. It also forms a setting to Wolvercote conservation area, the historic Goose Green and the Thames floodplain to the south. The area, therefore, has a moderate sensitivity to change.

The masterplan for the ongoing transformation of the area will change the appearance and identity of the area. Proposals are for a sustainable and innovative district, being created in phases of development.

Threats to local character include:

- New tall development that is highly visible or detracting at the northern gateway to Oxford
- Creation of new landscapes that do not respond to the wider landscape context
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and do not respect the landscape character
- New built development that results in loss of connectivity with the adjoining floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that do not respond to the landscape character
- Increasing number of buses and levels of traffic along the main roads that could dominate the landscape
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation, woodland and mature trees, both in the public and private realm

- Further fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development or mismanagement
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries and open space
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species as wind breaks / visual screening / boundary features that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Existing development has little regard for the surrounding landscape and features. Future development seeks to create a new district that respects important, existing features. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The existing area has little identity and is not particularly attractive. Future development seeks to create a coherent, attractive and sustainable new district as part of the northern gateway to Oxford. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Existing development is incoherent and has a poor relationship. Future transformation seeks to provide a sustainable, connected and coherent mixed-use development. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Existing priority is vehicles on the road, with park and ride facilities to promote sustainable travel into the city centre. Future development will improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists from this area into the city. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised or enhanced in this area at present. Future development seeks to improve the biodiversity of the area and provide multi-functional spaces Limited
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Currently very limited and not well-located or attractive. Future development will provide a hierarchy of open spaces including new parks and smaller local spaces. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	Transport focussed land uses that are not well integrated. Future development will provide a mixed-use development with a variety of integrated land uses. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Existing buildings are functional and not often well-designed or with a positive relationship to the surrounding countryside. Future development seeks to provide good quality, sustainable living and workplaces. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Existing built form is not particularly adaptable nor innovative. Future development aims to use innovative technologies and sustainable resources. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	Existing development is fit for purpose but not particularly adaptable. Future development is for an innovative new district, as part of Oxford's growth. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Peartree Open River Terrace character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: Oxford Hotel Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Small drain/watercourse through the north of the site
Green belt land	Small part of the green belt in the north of the area, north of the former railway line
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	Traditional orchard: pocket in the north of the area Deciduous woodland: strip along railway in the north of the area
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Peartree Open River Terrace character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

10C MARSTON OPEN RIVER TERRACE



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



Photo 2: Hedgerows and mature trees create the rural framework



Photo 3: Well defined cycle and pedestrian route alongside the B4495

10C MARSTON OPEN RIVER TERRACE

Description

The Marston Open 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 is a typical arable landscape with medium, cropped fields defined by low hawthorn hedgerows, with occasional hedgerow trees of ash or oak.

The area is notable for its open rural character and low density of built development, including an isolated pub built in the local Coral rag stone and located by the river, a small farmstead with mix of out buildings and cluster of low sheds and container units, to the north of Marston Ferry Road. South of the road is a large, modern school and college development comprising a series of two- to three-storey metal framed buildings clad in buff brick, wood and painted render.

Hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees are important in creating the rural framework. The area is notable for its open and rural character and absence of streets. Narrow lanes link from Marston village to the pub and farm. Marston Ferry Road (B4495) and the Northern Bypass cut through the landscape bearing no relationship to landscape pattern or character. The Northern Bypass has limited access into Marston and particularly this area.

The area is important in providing access to rural countryside from Marston village core via tracks and footpaths to the River Cherwell. From here there is extensive access with footpaths and cycle routes continuing along the river and into the north of Oxford and the University Parks. Historic meadows and pastures on the edge of the Cherwell Valley support a diverse ecosystem of flora and fauna and are regularly managed by a volunteer working group to enhance and protect the valued habitats. There are a variety of important habitats in this area including Victoria Arms Spinney small area of wet woodland.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled and Open River Terraces – occupies part of the river terrace to the east of the River Cherwell
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area retains a rural landscape pattern, originating from the former open fields associated with the medieval nucleated village of Marston. Marston Common lies to the north of the area, beyond the city boundary. It is likely that the survival of open fields until the 19th century discouraged development of this area. The area remains largely open agricultural landscape between the village and the river. A hub of educational facilities in the southeast of the area emerged in the 20th century and expanded with the Swan School development and relocation of Meadow Brook College in the 21st century.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Its interest lies in history, inextricably linked with the historic village core and its proximity to the river and floodplain, evidenced by the location of the former Marston Ferry. Iron Age settlement and rural landscape Roman settlement and kiln at Swan School
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is notable for its open rural character, with development limited to small clusters of buildings accessed via tracks and more recently private access road for the schools.

Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via designated footpaths.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low density of development across the area. • An area of larger scale built form in the southeast, contrasting with the surrounding open countryside with small scale rural buildings, but generally well integrated by strong hedgerow and tree boundaries. • The hedgerows and mature oak and ash trees are important in creating a rural framework, but do not contribute much to sense of enclosure.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local vernacular Coral rag stone buildings. • Small sheds and metal container units, single storey properties and outbuildings within the farmstead. • Larger scale, 21st century educational buildings are typically rendered and clad, introducing modern materials and form to the area.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable for the absence of roads. Minor lanes/tracks following the field boundaries access the farm and pub. • Marston Ferry Road and the Northern Bypass are main roads that are superimpose on top of the landscape, with little regard to the underlying landscape pattern or character. • Marston Ferry Road provides a wide vehicular route with separate designated cycle and pedestrian route alongside it, with hedgerow boundary between.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an open area of countryside, comprising a mixture of pastures, meadows and some arable fields. • The area is important in providing access to the rural countryside from Marston village, via tracks and designated footpaths to the River Cherwell. From here, there is extensive access along the valley with footpath and cycle routes continuing along the river into the north of Oxford, the University Parks and area known as Mesopotamia. • Sports fields and courts form part of the complex of educational buildings in the southeast.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Lowland meadows, Semi-improved grassland and smaller areas of Deciduous woodland and traditional orchards contribute to a diverse ecosystem • OCWS: Victoria Arms Spinney wet woodland with field maple, redcurrant and song thrush recorded • LWS: Almonds Farm and Burnt Mill Fields are ancient meadows with rare plant species, managed by volunteers • New Marston Meadows SSSI extends into the south of this area – designated for the ancient meadows and particularly the fritillary each spring.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arable farmland with a peaceful, rural and tranquil quality. • An emergent educational hub in the southeast.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is fragmented by two major vehicular routes, namely the Marston Ferry Road and the Northern Bypass that forms the northern boundary to the area and the city administrative boundary with Cherwell District. • A number of rights of way permit public access in and through this area and connect it with central Oxford.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views across the area are constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries. • Trees are skyline features – belts of poplar and hedgerow trees form a green backdrop to the open space.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The landscape of the Marston Open River Terrace is comprised of pastoral and arable farmland including ecologically rich meadows, bound by low hawthorn hedges. The rural/urban contrast is so distinctive to Oxford and offers a variety of rural walks within the city boundary. It has a peaceful, rural and tranquil quality as well as providing valuable ecological connectivity through the area and with the adjoining floodplain.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

There are no particularly notable landscape features and it is a fairly indistinctive agricultural landscape that is bisected by a busy road.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	High – historic meadows on the edge of the Cherwell floodplain are nationally valued
Historic Integrity	Moderate
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Low – no views of the historic core
Open Space	High – expanses of open green space

Sensitivity to change

The Marston Open River Terrace is highly sensitive to change due to the presence of nationally important, historic meadows and pasture and the peaceful and rural qualities of the landscape. Its proximity and contribution to setting of the River Cherwell is important as part of the green wedge that separates the settlement on the North Oxford River Terrace from the extensive development east of the River Cherwell. It also contributes to the rural setting of the village of Marston.

Since the enclosure of the landscape this area has seen progressive changes in agriculture, resulting in a more intensively managed landscape. However, the rural land has largely remained open and it forms part of the wider green corridor of the Cherwell river valley.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the open and rural landscape of the Cherwell Valley
- New built development on public green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and / or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that does not have regard for the spatial characteristics of the landscape
- New tall development that is highly visible, particularly on the edge of the village and in the context of the existing local settlement form

- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings in the locale, which are poorly designed, result in conspicuous rooflines and/or do not respect the street character
- New built development on the edges of the village that results in loss of connectivity with the surrounding rural floodplains and/or encroaches on the floodplain
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape / use of new materials and textures that stand out in the rural landscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Increasing traffic levels that would reduce tranquillity or alter pedestrian movement
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and / or neglect / mis-management
- Loss of green space both in the public and private realm that could threaten the rural character
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas
- Intensification and/or diversification of farming that would alter the land use, enclosure patterns and biodiversity of the meadows landscape

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	Strong hedgerow boundaries create a sense of enclosure in most areas. Surrounding residential development is well integrated with the area, through trees and hedgerows. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	A distinctive, rural agricultural landscape is evident. Built form is less coherent and varies according to age of development. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	Built form is not compact, with sparsely scattered individual buildings. The educational complex is a memorable and recognisable group of buildings, which promotes a strong sense of place as an educational hub. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Numerous paths and cycle ways across the area and along the main roads, promote activity and access to a valued green infrastructure network, from the surrounding suburbs. Significant
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is prioritised and enhanced in this area through designation and careful management of nationally and locally designated sites that are well connected through the area and into adjacent areas. Significant
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	A large proportion of the area is private land, with access to open space permitted via numerous footpaths and cycle lanes. Moderate

Uses – mixed and integrated	Predominantly an area of open countryside with occasional dwellings and a substantial educational facility, servicing the adjacent suburbs. Moderate
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	New and old buildings generally relate positively to the surrounding countryside. New buildings are not intrusive and are well integrated. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient, although more temporary units on the farmstead are not adaptable over time. New development uses materials and technologies to minimise the environmental impact. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The land and built form is largely well managed and maintained, both in the public and private realm. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Marston Open River Terrace character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: Mill Lane Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: Part of New Marston Meadows, Victoria Arms Spinney and Almonds Farm and Burnt Mill Fields Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: The Swan School and Meadow Brook College Outdoor Sport: St Nicholas Primary School
Strategic blue GI	River Cherwell flows along the west boundary and Marston Brook along the southeast boundary
Green belt land	N/A
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	SSSI: New Marston Meadows Local Wildlife Site: Almonds Farm and Burnt Mill Fields Oxford City Wildlife Site: Victoria Arms Spinney
Priority habitat Index	Lowland Meadows: New Marston Meadow Semi-improved grassland: modest area in the south of the area Deciduous woodland: isolated pocket Traditional orchards: isolated, small site
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the Marston Open River Terrace character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

10D 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 hedgerows are supplemented by more exotic species including pine and cypress



Photo 4: Much of the area is privately owned



Photo 5: St Clements meadow contains the 19th century church of St Clements



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

10D ST CLEMENTS OPEN RIVER TERRACE

Description

The St Clements Open River Terrace is an open tract of green space at the foot of Headington Hill, on the eastern edge of the Cherwell floodplain. The Victorian village of New Marston defines the edge of the 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. 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. The southern part of the terrace consists of the former Headington Meadow and St Clements Meadow. Remnants of St Clements Meadow encompass the 19th century church of St Clements. The prominent, 21st century buildings of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies with associated formal gardens and sport pitches are located on the former Headington Meadow.

The area is notable for its generally low density of built development. St Clement Church, the rubblestone built King's Mill House (on the boundary with the river), rubblestone dwellings to the west of Marston Road and several newer built sports pavilions are scattered built features through this area. The 21st century development of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies has introduced a larger massing of built development to the centre of the area. It is a prominent and extravagant development with contrasting modern and traditional Islamic architectural features, built from local stone.

The local vernacular is local rubble stone buildings and walls. Marston Road runs along the eastern edge of the area, bounded by high stone walls and railings along the front of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. Within the area, rural lanes and tracks access the individual buildings. Coral rag stone walls bound Kings Mill Lane, an ancient lane leading to King's Mill House and the River Cherwell, now a public footpath.

The original field patterns are retained in places, with thick hedgerow boundaries. These hedgerows and roadside boundaries are often supplemented with more exotic species, particularly pine, cypress and copper beech. Much of the area is privately owned, by University colleges. There are areas of ecological importance within the terrace landscape, including semi-improved rough grassland in St Clements churchyard and New Marston Meadows. Trees form a distinctive backdrop to the river terrace landscape.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled and Open River Terraces – occupies part of the river terrace to the east of the River Cherwell
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former meadows of Headington, St Clements and Marston Field have largely remained as open space adjacent to the Cherwell floodplain. Parliamentary enclosure with 20th century land use changes including creation of sports grounds and formal gardens. 21st century development of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kings Mill Lane, an ancient lane bordered by Coral rag stone walls leading down to King's Mill House on the area boundary with the Cherwell floodplain.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single buildings and sports pavilions sit within a rural landscape. Sport pavilions are located in the corner of each sports ground. Lanes and gate accesses from Marston Road.

Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large proportion of this character area is in the private realm with public access via designated footpaths.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally low density and massing of development across the area. • The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies has more recently introduced a larger scale and massing of built form at the centre of the area.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated, local vernacular Coral rag stone buildings and boundary walls. • Newer built, generally indistinct sports pavilions. • The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies is a prominent and extravagant development with contrasting modern and traditional Islamic architectural features including turrets and domes, built from local stone.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable for the absence of streets. • Marston Road runs along the eastern edge of the area, bounded by a combination of railings and stone walls, with tall lighting columns and occasional signage.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area is dominated by green space, that is predominantly privately owned, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ St Clements churchyard, an area of semi-improve grassland with scattered trees ➢ St Clements Field, semi-improved rough grassland encompassing the churchyard ➢ College sports grounds with manicure grass pitches set within remnant field boundaries ➢ Formal gardens within the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies • Pollarded willows are a feature of the riverside. • Good access through the area to the Cherwell Valley.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Lowland meadows and Deciduous woodland, with some Lowland fen extending into this area • OCWS: Park Farm Meadow extends into the north of the area • New Marston Meadows SSSI extends into the south of this area – designated for the ancient meadows and particularly the fritillary each spring. • St Clements churchyard is semi-improved grassland with scattered tree. Cowslip has previously been recorded. St Clements Field is semi-improved rough grassland with ruderal species adjacent to the churchyard.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A peaceful riverside landscape in contrast with adjacent urban areas. • Land use is predominantly recreational and educational with some meadow and paddocks in the north of the area.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ancient lane leading to King's Mill and the River Cherwell, now a public footpath. • Gated access and private lanes/roads lead off Marston Road into the various land uses. Marston Road connects from the city centre to the northern suburbs of New Marston and Northway. • The Marston Cycle Path runs along the northwest boundary and connects the area with the northern suburbs, the Cherwell Valley and the city centre.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views across the area are generally constrained by layers of hedgerows and mature vegetation along boundaries. • Trees form a backdrop to views and act as buffers to the road and river networks. • The area forms part of the landscape within the view from Doris Field Memorial Park and Headington Hill Allotment, identified in the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones'. Vegetation within this area contributes to the character of these views.

Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Clements and Iffley Road conservation area extends through the southern part of the area, including the churchyard and Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. • Magdalen College Grade I listed park and garden • Few listed buildings within the area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Church of St Clement (Grade I) ➢ St Clements, Oxford War Memorial (Grade II) ➢ Kings Mill (Grade II)
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional locally designated assets

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The St Clements Open River Terrace has a distinctive character as a result of its open space, remnant hedgerows, historic King's Mill Lane and lowland meadow and grassland habitats adjacent to the Cherwell floodplain. It provides public access to the river and peaceful walks close to the city centre. Coral rag stone walls and historic isolated buildings are a feature that contribute to the strength of character in this area.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies has introduced a large mass of built form that has altered the rural and open qualities of the area.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	High – lowland hay meadows and grassland
Historic Integrity	Moderate – some survival of historic meadows and retained ancient lane
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – glimpsed views of the spires through vegetation
Open Space	High – functions as an important green space for recreation and as a strategic gap between the suburb of New Marston and St Clements and the floodplain

Sensitivity to change

This landscape is highly sensitive to change as a result of its strategic function as a gap between the suburb of New Marston and St Clements, its contribution to the setting of the River Cherwell and the links it provides between the Cherwell valley and open space on Headington Hill. The ecological sensitivity and historic features also contribute to the sensitivity to change. Part of the area also lies within the view cones identified from Headington Hill Allotments and Doris Field Memorial Park, which heightens its sensitivity to tall 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. There are still substantial areas of open space that form part of the wider green

corridor of the Cherwell valley. The 21st century development of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies introduces larger scale, prominent built form in the otherwise rural landscape.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the open and rural landscape of the Cherwell valley and/or obstructs access to the Cherwell valley
- New built development on public green spaces and/ or ecologically sensitive sites that alters pedestrian and/or ecological connectivity through the area
- New built development that does not respect the scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, conspicuous and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and/ or insensitive to the historic vernacular
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape / use of new materials and textures that stand out in the rural landscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric
- Deterioration of streetscape features such as lamp posts and boundary walls as a result of their age and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Increasing traffic levels that would reduce tranquillity or alter pedestrian movement
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Fragmentation of ecological networks as a result of development and / or neglect / mis-management
- Loss of green space both in the public and private realm that could threaten the rural character
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas
- Intensification and/or diversification of farming that would alter the land use, enclosure patterns and biodiversity of the remaining meadows landscape

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The area contributes to the setting of the River Cherwell, forming a gap between the rural valley and the surrounding suburbs. Development largely respects the local sense of place and identity. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The area has a generally positive identity in context with the river floodplain. Recent development brings a large, impactful building to the area, which is memorable but alters the coherent character. Moderate
Built Form –	A mix of building styles and types, with memorable features that contribute to the sense of place. Incoherent pattern of development.

a coherent pattern of development	Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Much of the area is privately owned, with public access along designated, well defined and safe footpaths and cycleways. Marston Road links along the boundary of this area, between the city and northern suburbs. Moderate
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Some priority for nature with designated sites amongst the more intensively managed landscape of the recreational fields and formal gardens. Hedgerows and tree belts retained and well-connected. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Much of the area is in private ownership, with access through the area to the extensive blue-green network of the Cherwell Valley. Moderate
Uses – mixed and integrated	Dominance of recreational fields and University buildings with individual dwellings and grassland. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	New and old buildings generally relate positively to the surrounding countryside, with positive internal and external interfaces. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient, with a range in ages and styles present. The condition of the historic built form is testament to its longevity. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The land and built form is largely well managed and maintained, both in the public and private realm. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the St Clements Open River Terrace character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: None Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: Small part of New Marston Meadows Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: St Clements Church Private Open Space: Magdalen College Fellow's Garden and Church Meadow Outdoor Sport: Trinity College and Magdalen College Recreation Grounds and Marston Road AGP
Strategic blue GI	Within the floodplain of the River Cherwell – the river flows along the west boundary
Green belt land	N/A
Statutory and non-statutory	SSSI: New Marston Meadows Oxford City Wildlife Sites: southern edge of Park Farm Meadows

designated wildlife sites	
Priority habitat Index	Lowland Meadows: part of New Marston Meadows Deciduous Woodland: bands along the edge of the River Cherwell
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of Magdalen College

The above green infrastructure assets within the St Clements Open River Terrace character area make a **moderate contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

10E NEW HINKSEY OPEN RIVER TERRACE



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



Photo 2: Built development is at a very low density, including the ornate sports pavilion



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



Photo 4: Extensive allotments demonstrate active local food growing close to the heart of the city

10E NEW HINKSEY OPEN RIVER TERRACE

Description

The New Hinksey Open River Terrace character area is a relatively small area on the west bank of the Thames (Isis), fronting onto Abingdon Road. Although on the first river terrace gravels of the Thames, the area lies within the floodplain. Formerly part of St Aldate's farmland, it has remained as open green space next to the River Thames. The area is largely in recreational or amenity use with land including extensive, well-tended allotment gardens, University sports grounds and buildings and grounds of the Oxford Spires Hotel.

The area is notable for the absence of streets and built development. Low density built development consists of scattered buildings, including Oxford Spires Hotel on the site of the former Eastwyke Farm and a sports pavilion in the corner of the University sports ground. The area retains an open, green character with tall hedges with mature trees and glimpses of willows in the floodplain beyond, hinting at the presence of the river. The Thames Path National Trail runs along the west bank of the River Thames, to the east of the area. However, access to the river from this area is limited, with the land primarily in private ownership or use.

The green frontage that this area provides to Abingdon Road is an important feature of this major route into the historic city core, contrasting with the Victorian terraces on the opposite side of the road. The extensive allotment gardens create a very locally distinctive landscape with their patchwork of plots, sheds and shelters, demonstrating active, local food growing close to the heart of the city. These contrast with the exposed, manicured grass of the adjacent college sports ground.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled and Open River Terraces- the first river terrace adjacent to the alluvial floodplain on the Thames.
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formerly part of St. Aldate's farmland that has remained as open greenspace next to the Thames. Framework of hedgerows dating from Parliamentary enclosures enclosing modern 20th century uses including allotments and sports grounds.
Archaeological and historic interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ridge and furrow earthworks
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable absence of streets. Properties and allotments are accessed via tracks with hedgerow boundaries, from Abingdon Road.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear divisions between public open space and private open space, generally marked with fences and gates.
Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low density of built development. Thick hedgerow boundaries provide a sense of enclosure, particularly in the summer. The Oxford Spires Hotel introduces larger massing of built form than the surrounding area, however its positioning and surrounding vegetation provides enclosure and buffering from the road.
Architecture and built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ornate sports pavilion. The hotel forms a modern large scale building on the site of former Eastwyke Farm. Local vernacular is local rubble and soft red brick with clay and tile roofs.

Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable for the absence of streets. • Abingdon Road runs along the western edge of the area, with a combination of boundary features, including black iron railings and wire security fencing with trees behind. • Rural lanes and tracks access sports ground and allotments, following the hedgerow boundaries.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the area forms part of an open greenspace, with allotments and recreation grounds, as well as small, remaining pastoral fields. • Willows and poplars and the framework of tall hedges are especially important in creating a green 'semi-rural' area.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: None recorded • OCWS: None • The allotments, hedgerows and ditches provide local habitats for wildlife. The ecological value of the area is enhanced by its proximity to the river corridor, forming part of an extensive green wedge along the Thames floodplain.
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively cultivated garden allotments and sports fields. An area used for recreation, amenity and sports.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access to the area. Visual links, but no physical access, to the adjacent River Thames. • Abingdon Road along the western boundary, provides bus and cycle routes into the city centre.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall hedges and lines of mature trees form a backdrop to views. • Glimpses of willow hint at proximity to the river. • Extensive views across the area from the Abingdon Road are an important visual experience on the approach to Oxford from the south. • The area forms part of the landscape within the view from Hinksey Hill/ A34 Interchange, identified in the '<i>Assessment of the Oxford View Cones</i>' (2015), forming part of the green rural landscape of the Thames Valley floodplain.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The New Hinksey Open River Terrace is an open undeveloped area of the river terrace, including allotments and sports grounds and surrounding trees that is very important in creating an overall green character. The framework of trees provides clear visual links with the river and are a feature along Abingdon Road, on the southern approach to the historic core, creating a strong sense of place associated with Oxford and its rivers.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Metal post and wire fencing along the boundary to Abingdon Road is detracting from the green and rural qualities of the area. Overgrown vegetation along the road boundary restricts views across the green space towards the floodplain.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	Moderate
Biodiversity	Low
Historic Integrity	Low
Re-creatability	Moderate
Intervisibility	Moderate – glimpsed views of the spires through vegetation
Open Space	High – functions as an important green space for recreation and as a strategic gap between the Thames and Grandpont

Sensitivity to change

This landscape is highly sensitive to change as a result of its strategic function as a gap on the edge of the Thames floodplain and its location bounding Abingdon Road on the main southern approach to the historic centre of Oxford. It also forms part of the landscape in the view from Hinksey Hill/A34, heightening its sensitivity to tall buildings.

Since the enclosure of the landscape, this area has seen progressive changes in land use, resulting in more intensively managed landscape primarily for recreation. Parts of the area have been retained as pasture and the variety of green spaces contribute to the wider green corridor along the River Thames into the city. The Oxford Spires Hotel is built in a locally distinctive style, which has respected and strengthened the built character of the rural landscape.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development that affects the rural landscape of the Thames valley
- New built development that does not respect the scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, conspicuous and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and/ or insensitive to the historic vernacular
- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape / use of new materials and textures that stand out in the rural landscape
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including streetscape features such as lamp posts and boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Increasing traffic levels along Abingdon Road that would reduce tranquillity and experience of the green space
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space both in the public and private realm that could threaten the rural character
- Removal of hedgerow boundaries
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Abstraction or flood defence work upstream, or drainage associated with building works, resulting in changes in the river flooding regime
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

- Intensification and/or diversification of farming that would alter the land use, enclosure patterns and biodiversity of the remaining pastoral landscape

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The area contributes to the setting of the River Thames and relationship of the river with the city, forming a gap between the rural valley and the surrounding suburbs. Development largely respects the local sense of place and identity. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The identity as a rural boundary to the southern approach to Oxford is strong, with mature trees adding to this unique quality. The mixed land use in the area reduces its distinctiveness. Moderate
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A mix of building styles and types, with memorable features that contribute to the sense of place. Incoherent pattern of development. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Much of the area is privately owned, with public access limited. Abingdon Road links along the boundary of this area, between the city and northern suburbs. Limited
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Nature is not prioritised. However, there are large areas of open green space, mature trees and allotments that contribute to local ecological habitats. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Much of the area is in private ownership and there is poor access to adjoining public spaces/routes. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	Rural landscape with limited services, facilities and housing. Mostly private land uses. Limited
Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	New and old buildings generally relate positively to the surrounding countryside, with positive internal and external interfaces. Moderate
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The land and built form is largely well managed and maintained, both in the public and private realm. Moderate

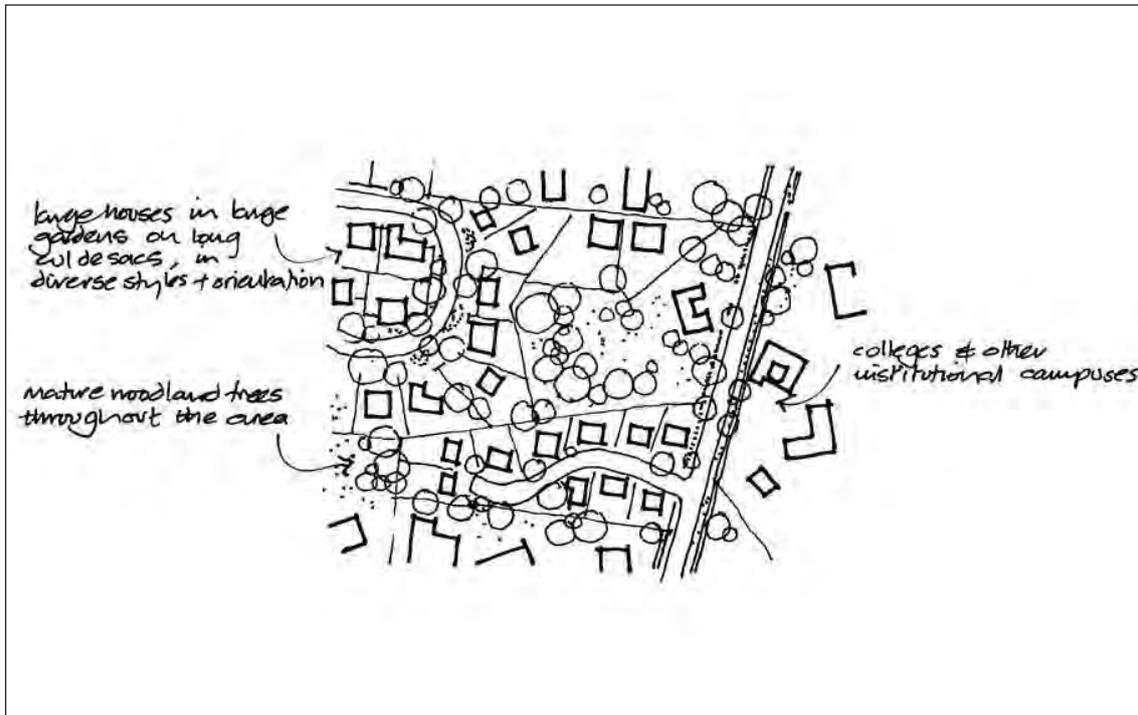
Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Historic City Core character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Crowmead and Abingdon Road allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: None Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Open Space: University College and Corpus Christi College Sports Ground Outdoor Sport:
Strategic blue GI	Drain and small watercourse along east boundary
Green belt land	N/A
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	None
Priority habitat Index	None
Historic parks and gardens	None

The above green infrastructure assets within the New Hinksey Open River Terrace character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change.

11 GARDEN SUBURBS



Generic example of spatial characteristics

11 GARDEN SUBURBS

Generic Description

The garden city movement was introduced 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.

There is one garden suburb within Oxford, namely Headington Hill. The Headington Hill Garden Suburb is located on the Settled Plateaux landscape type, which is characterised by its prominent landform (Corallian platforms of sand and calcareous sandstone) and sandy soils.

The garden suburb landscape type within Oxford displays many features that are typical of other garden suburbs. The cul-de-sac is a feature, giving a 'sense of community' to those living within it. Private roads limited through-traffic. Low density and large, often detached buildings set within large plots with surrounding mature trees, create a sense of spaciousness and rural character.

Key Characteristics

- Located on the Settled Plateaux landscape type to the east of Oxford
- Cul-de-sacs and private roads with few road markings or kerbs
- Large, detached residential (and some institutional) properties dating from the turn of the century to present
- Large plot sizes with extensive gardens and private grounds
- High tree cover, creating a wooded character
- Narrow valleys containing tributary brooks are features of the landscape
- Views over the city of Oxford

Character Areas

11A Headington Hill

11A HEADINGTON HILL



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: Pullens 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: A mix of old and modern architecture set within the mature vegetation



Photo 7: Curved streets with occasional lamp posts and very limited signage



Photo 8: Views towards Oxford from Doris Field Memorial Ground with open green space in the foreground and hills in the background



Photo 9: Views towards the historic centre of Oxford are restricted by vegetation

11A HEADINGTON HILL

Description

Headington Hill Garden Suburb character area 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. The character area comprises a mixed development of detached houses dating from the turn of the century to the present day, on the former Headington Fields. Pollock House (1889) and Cotuit Hall (1890) were built at the end of the 19th century and are the oldest buildings in this area.

The low-density suburb is set out on curved streets and cul-de-sacs with large, detached buildings set in substantial plots. Properties are of a consistent scale, with variation in the architectural style, materials and detailing that give each property a unique character. The two main access roads (Jack Straws Lane and Pullens Lane) are rural lanes that are no-through-routes, with few road markings or signs and are only partially kerbed. Woodland vegetation borders the lanes, providing a sense of enclosure and leafy, wooded character to the suburb. Ornamental shrubs and trees within large gardens, mown grass verges, clipped hedges and ornamental Victorian lamp posts have tamed the rural character in places.

Street lighting is limited, resulting in dark streets at night, further enhancing the rural character of this area. Red brick or stone boundary walls and clipped hedges are features of the streetscape along Pullens Lane. Gravel driveways provide tantalising glimpses of private plots beyond boundary walls and vegetation. The degree of enclosure provided by vegetation, restricts and contains views to the narrow roads. There is an important viewpoint identified, at Doris Field Memorial Park that provides valued views across green open space towards foliage in the valley of the River Cherwell, beyond which the historic domes and spires are seen against the backdrop of the hills. A more restricted, but equally valuable view is identified from Headington Hill, Pullens Lane and John Garne Way Allotments, although woodland vegetation constrains the present day view. The allotments, woodland and trees through the area and natural space in the Memorial Park, as well as substantial gardens, provide valuable habitats for wildlife.

Checklist and key characteristics

Underlying landscape type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settled Plateaux – forms the skyline to the east of the Cherwell valley
Evolution of townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of the former Pullen’s Farm Architectural fabric of older buildings, eg. High Wall built in 17th century style and gardens laid out by Peto.
Street and block pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curved streets and cul-de-sacs with varying sized, detached buildings set in large plots at a low density. Large, mature trees line the streets, providing a leafy character.
Private/public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private space dominates. Private roads with access to the public cause some confusion between the public/ private interface.

Massing and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally large, individual properties are set well back from the roads and largely screened by mature trees and vegetation. • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, detached buildings within extensive grounds, scattered at low density. • Variety in architecture- each house has a unique character. • Red brick dominates, with rendering and tile cladding also evident. • 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. • Long, gravel drives with gates. • Modern extensions/alterations to properties ongoing.
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 limited, contributing to a rural sense of place. • Red brick or stone boundary walls or clipped hedges are features of the streetscape along Pullens Lane.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of the open space is private. Large amount of green space is present in the form of private gardens and grounds and grass verges. • Allotments in the south and Doris Field Memorial Park in the north, form the only public open space in the area. • Mature garden and woodland planting contributes to the leafy character of the area.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK BAP Priority Habitats: Areas of deciduous woodland and pockets of Traditional orchard • OCWS: Headington Hill Viewpoint • Large private gardens, Doris Field Memorial Park and allotments provide notable habitats, including mature trees, scrub, flowering herbs and ruderal plants
Land use, culture and vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet residential suburb, with sense of enclosure and rural character. • Students passing through to access halls of residents in the south. • Private lanes and streets gives a sense of exclusion in places.
Access and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private roads are access only and discourage through traffic. • Cuckoo Lane (historic pedestrian route) runs along the southern boundary. • Local cycle routes through the area connect to the city centre and surrounding suburbs.
Views and visual patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall hedges and lines of mature trees form a backdrop to views. • Glimpses of willow hint at proximity to the river. • Extensive views across the area from the Abingdon Road are an important visual experience on the approach to Oxford from the south. • Two important views, identified in the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones' (2015), are located in this character area, namely Doris Field Memorial Park and Headington Hill Allotments. The views are over a foreground of green space and foliage, with the domes and spires visible beyond, against the backdrop of the surrounding hills.
Designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headington Hill conservation area • High Wall, Headington Grade II registered park and garden

Local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Cuckoo Lane historic carriage road passes along the southern boundary of the area
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Strength of Character

Positive / strong characteristics and features

The Headington Hill Garden Suburb is a unique suburb of Oxford, distinctive for its low density development of large, often prominent houses with a mature woodland setting and 'rural' leafy lanes. There are important views of the city from the green spaces in this area. Mature vegetation structure, richness and variety of architectural detail and the generally well-maintained fabric contribute to the strength of character.

Negative / weak characteristics and features

Piecemeal development within larger plots, alterations and extensions has resulted to some intrusive features and incoherent pattern of built form in places.

Indicators of landscape value

Landscape Quality	High
Biodiversity	Low – local interest
Historic Integrity	Moderate
Re-creatability	Low
Intervisibility	Moderate – noted views but often restricted by vegetation
Open Space	Low – predominantly private gardens

Sensitivity to change

The Headington Hill Garden Suburb character area form an important backdrop to the centre of Oxford and the Cherwell valley and, as such, is highly sensitive to change. Mature and dense vegetation provides a degree of enclosure and screening that enables the area to absorb some change without adverse impacts on landscape character.

Incremental development has taken place, while the landscape has continued to mature. The large scale and low density of the built form, mature woodland setting and 'rural' leafy lanes are critical to the character of the area.

Threats to local character include:

- New built development results in the erosion of high quality landscape between the buildings
- New built development that does not respect the street and block pattern or scale of built development typical of the area
- New tall development that is highly visible, conspicuous and detracting in key views particularly associated with the identified View Cones
- New housing infill that results in fragmentation of the area
- Conversions, extensions or alterations to existing buildings which are poorly designed and/ or insensitive to the historic vernacular

- Use of low quality materials in built development and the streetscape
- Road improvements that alter the curvature of the streets and introduce urban detailing of the streetscape and open spaces including kerbs, road marking, signage and fencing
- Ageing and deterioration of the built fabric including streetscape features such as lamp posts and boundary walls and replacement with uncharacteristic styles and materials
- Incremental addition of streetscape details such as signs, lighting, bollards and paving materials that result in cluttering of the streetscape
- Demolition of historic buildings
- Changes that would sever historic connections through the area
- Land use changes that do not respond to their wider landscape context
- Ageing, disease and subsequent loss of vegetation and mature trees, both in the public and private realm
- Loss of green space both in the public and private realm that could threaten the rural character
- Deterioration of front gardens of properties that result in a general degradation in streetscape quality and diminishing urban wildlife habitats
- Planting of inappropriate tree and shrub species that are out of character with the locally native vegetation
- Incremental erosion /graffiti/ vandalism and neglect of public areas

Contribution to good design / place-making principles

National Design Guide Characteristic	Evaluation of contribution to the National Design Guide Characteristics
Context – enhances the surroundings	The enclosed nature of this character area, with mature vegetation and low-density development, provides a sense of detachment from the surrounding suburbs. Moderate
Identity – attractive and distinctive	The character area has a distinctive identity as a leafy, rural style residential area on the crest of Headington Hill. Isolated, detached properties set back from the road in large plots provide this attractive identity. Significant
Built Form – a coherent pattern of development	A mix of building styles and types, with memorable features that contribute to the sense of place. Development is not compact nor particularly accessible. Moderate
Movement – accessible and easy to move around	Movement is restricted, a result of private lanes and routes, as well as large areas of private land. Limited public rights of way or cycle routes through the area. Limited
Nature – enhanced and optimised	Small, isolated pockets are enhanced and prioritised for their nature conservation value. Much of the area holds potential for urban wildlife systems, generally in private gardens. Moderate
Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive	Much of the land is private, with public open space restricted to Doris Field Memorial Park and grass verges. Limited
Uses – mixed and integrated	A quiet, residential area, with some recreational land use. Limited

Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable	Buildings generally relate well to the external environment. Properties are set back from the roads and well-integrated within large, open green space and mature vegetation. Significant
Resources – efficient and resilient	Properties are generally resilient and in places have been adapted and altered over time to provide for changes in circumstances and technology. Moderate
Lifespan – made to last	The built form is generally well managed and maintained, both in the public and private realm. Sustainable energy production is evident in some places, minimising the environmental impact. Moderate

Provision of green infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure assets as defined and mapped in the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study (2022) within the Headington Hill Garden Suburb character area is summarised below:

Green Infrastructure Assets	Provision within the character area
Open space	Allotments: Pullens Lane Allotments and corner of Marston Road Allotments Amenity Green Space: None Parks and Recreation Grounds: None Play Space: None Accessible Natural Green Space: Doris Field Memorial Park Civic Space: None Churchyards and cemeteries: None Private Outdoor Space: Corner of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School grounds Outdoor Sport: None
Strategic blue GI	Small, inaccessible watercourse
Green belt land	N/A
Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites	Oxford City Wildlife Sites: Headington Hill Viewpoint
Priority habitat Index	Deciduous woodland: several unconnected pockets Traditional orchard: in private gardens
Historic parks and gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Wall, Headington

The above green infrastructure assets within the Headington Hill Garden Suburb character area make a **weak contribution** to the resilience of Oxford’s green infrastructure network to climate change.

APPENDICES

1. Evaluation Criteria

Contribution to Good Design / Place-making Principles

Evaluation of a character area's contribution to good design/place-making principles is based on an analysis of how its existing landscape/townscape components are aligned with each of the following National Design Guide characteristics¹²:

1. Context – enhances the surroundings
2. Identity – attractive and distinctive
3. Built form – a coherent pattern of development
4. Movement – accessible and easy to move around
5. Nature – enhanced and optimised
6. Public Spaces – safe, social and inclusive
7. Uses – mixed and integrated
8. Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable
9. Resources – efficient and resilient
10. Lifespan – made to last

Using professional judgement, contribution is evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Significant:** the landscape/townscape components are well-aligned with the Design Guide Characteristic
- **Moderate:** the landscape/townscape components are partially aligned with the Design Guide Characteristic
- **Limited:** the landscape/townscape components are poorly aligned with the Design Guide Characteristic

Provision of Green Infrastructure

Evaluation of a character area's contribution to the City of Oxford's green infrastructure network is based on an analysis of its green infrastructure provision as identified by the Oxford City Green Infrastructure Study¹³, which includes the following green infrastructure assets:

- Open space
 - Allotments
 - Amenity green space
 - Park and recreation grounds
 - Play space (children and youth)
 - Accessible natural green space (>0.15ha)
 - Civic space
 - Churchyards and cemeteries

¹² National Design Guide (DLUHC & MHCLG, October 2019 – Updated January 2021)

¹³ Oxford City Council Green Infrastructure Study, Ethos Environmental Planning, Final Version (July 2002) and associated GIS shapefiles (August 2022)

- Private open space
- Outdoor (fixed, private and restricted use)
- Strategic blue GI – rivers, streams, canals, lakes and ponds
- Green belt land
- Statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites
- Priority habitat index
- Historic parks and gardens

The contribution that the type, quantity and connectivity of green infrastructure assets within the character make to the resilience of Oxford's green infrastructure network to climate change is evaluated using professional judgement, against the following criteria:

- **Strong:** high levels of provision (both type/quantity) of green infrastructure assets within the character area with good connectivity
- **Moderate:** moderate levels of provision (both type/quantity) of green infrastructure assets within the character area with some connectivity
- **Weak:** limited levels of provision (both type/quantity) of green infrastructure assets within the character area with limited connectivity



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