



PART 5

The Oxford View Cones: Views from the Eastern Hills

2015 Report



OXFORD
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Historic England



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5.1 Doris Field Memorial Park Analysis Summary

5.1.1 Introduction

This is a less famous view than those from the western hills or the more trafficked areas of Headington Hill to the south. However, it has been accessed and appreciated since, at least the mid-18th century and recorded by artists including J. B. Malchair and J.M.W. Turner. In the mid-19th century routes across the hilltop were made more accessible as a result of enclosure and the construction of Pullens Lane. The quality of the view attracted development of large houses for middle class residents in the late 19th and early 20th century. In the later 20th century the potential impact of further development led to a campaign to protect the view from the last remnants of farmland on the hill, resulting in the Council's recognition of the importance of this view and the creation of the Doris Field Memorial Park. The Park is now a much-valued local amenity. Historically the meadows of the Cherwell Valley were more clearly evident than now as low-lying pasture at the foot of the mixed woods and fields of the hill and running up to the tree-lined course of the River Cherwell. Nevertheless, the historic high buildings are still seen above the belt of trees and against the green backcloth of Boars Hill, Harcourt Hill and Hinksey Hill. A secondary view of similar quality is seen looking across Milham Ford Nature Park (formerly the playing

fields of Milham Ford School), which is now a popular local park.

5.1.2 The Viewers

The view provides a shared experience of seeing Oxford's landscape and architecture with others who have admired it in the past three centuries. The view is less well known than other views of Oxford but the experience of viewing it still provides a connection with past artists of local and national importance that have portrayed and popularised it as a close up view of Oxford's historic high buildings in a green setting. Its influence on house builders in the early 20th century is seen in the positioning of buildings and landscaping of the grounds at Jack Straws Lane to exploit its aesthetic and historic value. The concern to preserve the view inspired protest and activism in the 1970s with the resultant recognition of the view's significance in the Local Plan and the protected status of the viewing place as a memorial park held in trust, allowing many local residents to experience it and building on its communal value. The secondary view from Milham Ford Nature Park influenced the design and landscaping of the former school (now Oxford Brookes School of Health Care Studies) and is now a special feature of the parkland that is accessible for the whole community.



Oxford from Headington Hill by William Matthison. Image reproduced with kind permission of S Jenkins



William Turner of Oxford, Oxford from Headington Hill, early 19th century © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

5.1.3 Present Viewers

<p>A freely accessible and popular view</p>	<p>The view is now a democratic or freely accessible view that many local people can enjoy as part of the low-density area of Headington Hill amongst the more densely built-up suburbs of New Marston and Northway.</p> <p>As it is not on a route to anywhere people using the park are likely to be visiting it specifically to enjoy the green space, wildlife and the view to the city centre.</p>
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5.1.4 Viewers in the Past

<p>Artists of the 19th and 20th centuries</p>	<p>J. M. W. Turner's sketchbook from 1839 includes examples of views from the northern end of Headington Hill which are notable for the close-up view of the Radcliffe Camera's dome, with St Mary the Virgin Church spire standing to the left and the tower of St Clement's Church in the foreground.</p> <p>William Turner of Oxford's portrayal of the view capitalised on the mixed fields and woods foreground and the dip between Harcourt Hill and Boar's Hill, which draws the eye down to the Radcliffe Camera's dome and St Mary the Virgin Church spire above the belt of trees on the Cherwell to make these the focus of the view.</p> <p>Matthison's postcard view of Oxford from Headington Hill shares the appreciation of the rural foreground, and exploits the full width of the historic skyline, using Magdalen Tower to mark the eastern limit of the city against the rising shoulder of hill.</p> <p>Despite the impact of development in the valley on the rural foreground the focal features of the skyline and the wooded backdrop remain such that the view seen by these historic artists may still be appreciated today.</p>
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Early 20th century house builders	<p>The houses built around the northern branch of Jack Straw's Lane, were set out with their main frontages aligned to provide vistas looking south west over the green space to the City Centre skyline. This reflects the appreciation of these views in the early 20th century and the value they added (and continue to add) to these prestigious homes as an attractive setting that provides a connection with the historic interest and identity of Oxford.</p>
Late 20th century campaigners	<p>When the view was threatened with further intrusive development, local residents, the Council and landowners came together to protect the view by recognising its special value as a preserved historic experience of seeing Oxford from its green setting. The view they sought to protect can still be experienced.</p>

5.1.5 The Viewing Place

The Viewing Place is regarded as being the northern part of Headington Hill including the public open spaces of Doris Field Memorial Park and Milham Ford Nature Park, as well as the streets of houses on the hill that benefit from this view, either by design or through good fortune. The view from this location has inspired artists from the 18th to the early 20th century and contributed to the draw of the area

for middle class housing. The protection of the view through the creation of the Memorial Park and the construction of the terrace at Milham Ford School reflect its importance for the local area. Access is via footpaths and local roads and the viewing place is linked with the views from the Headington Hill allotments to the south and Headington Hill Hall and South Park beyond forming the group of views from the eastern hills.



The green space of the Doris Field Memorial Park preserves a fragment of the rural foreground admired by historic viewers



Aesthetic value of the foreground	The public green open spaces of the Memorial Park and Nature Park provide a green and open foreground to views, with fringing by trees both within the parks and in surrounding gardens that provides soft, semi-natural forms and textures that contrast with the striking architectural forms and hard materials and textures of the historic high buildings.
Historical value of the green setting	The parks both have a local historic interest. The former school fields have formed part of the life experience of many local children who attended it prior to its closure in 2003. The former school building is positioned to benefit from views over the field/park towards the city. The campaign to protect the view over the last fields of Jack Straw's Farm contributed to community identity within this neighbourhood of the city. This has been cemented by the park's status as a memorial to the mother of one of the main campaigners.
Changing views	The suburbs of Oxford have grown out from the city to wrap around these public open spaces, which survive as islands of green, undeveloped land amongst the settlement. This has increased their value as opportunities to see the views of the city from a green setting.
Ecological value	Both areas of open space have been recognised for their ecological value, which has been enhanced through management programmes. Viewing the city from sites that include a high level of biodiversity interest adds to the experience of the view through the rich and changing contribution of fauna and flora on the senses of the viewer throughout the year.

5.1.6 The Landscape in the View

From either Doris Field Memorial Park or the terrace above Milham Ford Nature Park the viewer looks across a green open space, with a mixture of parkland and naturalistic landscaping towards the band of foliage that marks the River Cherwell, above which the historic high buildings rise against the green backdrop of the Hinksey Hill, Boars Hill and Harcourt Hill. In the foreground the pyramid-roofed houses of New Marston now create a break between the parkland greenery and the trees along the river, reflecting the early 20th century expansion of Oxford. These include attractive 'set-piece' developments such as the Croft Road Estate and Old Marston Road. Generous green verges and tree planting along the roads help to soften the outline of the roofscape in the views. The Cherwell Valley trees screen the general City Centre roofscape allowing the historic high buildings to be admired alone.

The Radcliffe Camera and St Mary the Virgin's Church take a dominant position at the centre of the view, marking the heart of the University. They form a group with the two low towers of All Soul's and the tower of All Saint's Church (Lincoln College Library) rising above the

many pinnacles of All Soul's College and the Bodleian's parapets. This creates a distinctive spiky skyline. Other high buildings support this group, including, the Tower of the Five Orders, New College Bell Tower and Robinson Tower. The flèche of Exeter College Chapel and the cupola of the Sheldonian Theatre form a slightly detached part of this group. The prominence of this group reflects the development of the University and colleges into the area north of the High Street between the 14th and 18th centuries. The group is given added prominence by the dip between Harcourt Hill and Boar's Hill, which draws the eye down to these buildings.

Although they were visible in the early 20th century, towers of Magdalen College and St Clement's Church are now screened from this view by trees. The towers and spires of Christ Church, and St Aldate's Church can be seen from some vantage points, but are much less prominent in these views (and therefore form a fragile element of the roofscape) due to their position on the falling ground running down to the river Thames beyond the City Centre. They are currently lost to view from the main viewpoint in the Doris Field Memorial Park.

5.1.7 Topography and layout of the view:

<p>The skyline is seen from close up and from an elevated position to the north east of the City Centre</p>	<p>The City Centre historic buildings are viewed from just over a mile away (measured to the nearest high buildings at New College). Architectural details can be identified and are distinct.</p> <p>The viewing point is elevated with the historic high buildings rising up to the eye-line of the viewer and the foreground dropping rapidly in front of the viewer ensuring that houses in the foreground are below the viewer's eye line and do not compete with the historic high buildings.</p> <p>The hills in the background form a green backcloth against which the limestone of the historic high buildings have a strong contrast, particularly when brightly lit by direct sunlight. The dip between Boars Hill and Harcourt Hill draws the eye down to the City Centre focal group.</p> <p>This is not a framed view. Rather the groups of high buildings draw the eye to particular points where they rise above the canopy of trees in the Cherwell valley and meet the viewer's eye line.</p>
<p>Green open spaces within the suburbs</p>	<p>Both the Doris Field Memorial Park and Milham Ford School are experienced as open green space, with evidence of attempts to provide naturalistic planting and the remnants of older hedgerows surrounding them. This makes an important contribution to the quality of the foreground, whereas in many surrounding streets the views out are enclosed by houses or mature tree planting.</p>
<p>The bowl of green</p>	<p>The joining up of the greenery of the foreground, the trees in the Cherwell valley and the background sets the city in a bowl of greenery that has been described by writers since the early 19th century.</p>

5.1.8 Green characteristics:

<p>Green foreground</p>	<p>Both viewing places provide an opportunity to experience Oxford from a green setting that resembles the historic rural setting from which past viewers have portrayed it.</p>
<p>Foreground trees</p>	<p>Trees in the parkland and elsewhere on Headington Hill preserve some of the rural character that existed before the area's suburban development in the 20th century. Nevertheless, they are a part of that suburban development and make an important positive contribution to the area's character.</p>
<p>Trees in the middle ground</p>	<p>The line of trees alongside the River Cherwell, and a wide variety of ornamental trees in the parkland that wraps around the eastern fringes of the City Centre (continuing into college gardens) provides a mantle of greens and purples above which the historic high buildings rise. The tree canopy helps to hide much of the lower level roofscape of the city making the high buildings more prominent.</p>
<p>Trees in the background</p>	<p>The hills to the west of Oxford create a wooded skyline with patches of fields providing a variety of greenery.</p>



View at Sunset (late September) from Milham Ford Nature Park



5.1.9 Architectural Characteristics:

<p>The focal group of buildings</p>	<p>The historic high buildings in the north eastern quarter of the City Centre, which is closest to the viewer (defined by High Street to the south, Turl Street to the west, Holywell Street to the north and Longwall Street to the east) are the most prominent and provide the focus of the view.</p> <p>This group of historic buildings of outstanding historic and architectural interest are seen to mark the location of the City Centre and are viewed against the backdrop of the green hills without other buildings interrupting the background.</p> <p>They have a uniformity in their materials (limestone ashlar), which draws them together as a group. The multiplicity of spires and pinnacles creates a highly ornamented and complex roofscape. Above this the spires of St Mary the Virgin and Lincoln College Library and the towers of New College and the Old Bodleian provide a series of features that attracts the eye. Changing roof materials respond to the forms created, but are mainly restricted to the palette of limestone or lead.</p> <p>Together they help to tell the story of the University's growth as an institution along with notable Colleges from the 13th century (the University Church of St Mary the Virgin) through to the 18th century (The Radcliffe Camera and Lincoln College Library) with every century between represented by a building of great interest and beauty.</p> <p>The distinctive dome of the Radcliffe Camera and the prominent spire of the University Church of St Mary's are larger elements that catch the eye and help to orientate the viewer</p>
<p>The City Centre roofscape</p>	<p>To the right (north) of the focal group the land in the City Centre rises gently and the spread of rooftops in the northern edge of the City Centre is seen, including the area between Mansfield Road and New Road. Those seen are mainly larger roofs of University and college buildings. The greenery of mature trees in the streets, colleges, recreation grounds and University Parks rises amongst these buildings masking lower ones (which are indicated mainly by chimney stacks) and softening the outline of taller ones.</p> <p>At intervals this roofscape is punctuated by groups of historic high building including the Sheldonian Theatre's cupola and Exeter College's chapel spire and the cluster of Nuffield College, the Wesley Memorial Church and the lower spire of Hertford College and the bell shaped cupola on the corner of No. 32 Cornmarket Street.</p> <p>At present trees in the foreground of the view from Doris Field Memorial Park screen the buildings of Christ Church College and Magdalen College. However, these were recorded as a feature of this view historically and should be expected to form a positive element of it in future.</p>
<p>Foreground buildings</p>	<p>The early 20th century suburban houses that have replaced the rural landscape of much of the foreground are low buildings allowing the viewer to view the City Centre from points within the viewing places. Their roofs are relatively shallow pitched, allowing the eye to pass over them without interruption, whilst the use of mainly red clay roof tiles provides a contrast with the lighter coloured limestone, lead and copper of the historic high buildings, helping the latter to stand out.</p>
<p>Edges</p>	<p>The view has no clear edge to the right, continuing to views over the tree canopy that marks the North Oxford suburb, which is otherwise marked by the squat spire of the Church of St Philip and St James.</p>

5.1.10 The Influence of light and the Seasons:

	<p>Trees form a major element of this view and their changing colours through the seasons provide different contrasts with the materials of the City Centre's high buildings.</p>
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	<p>On sunny days the limestone of the Radcliffe Observatory, St Mary's Church and the buildings of All Souls' and New College in particular is illuminated, drawing attention to these buildings. An optimum time of day for this effect is late morning when the buildings are lit from the left, picking out the masonry and architectural details, whilst providing shadows that help to reveal the curving forms of the domes and spires of the buildings.</p> <p>At sunset the skyline is seen to particularly good effect as a silhouette from the terrace above Millham Ford Nature Park.</p>
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5.1.11 Detractors:

Intrusive buildings	The bulky modern building of the Department of Engineering (Thom Building) and the adjacent Denys Wilkinson Building (Department of Physics) form part of the northern continuation of the view. They detract from the fineness of detail of the historic high buildings but do stand apart from the main focus of the view. Nevertheless, the eye is drawn towards them due to their scale and reflective materials.
Intrusive roof materials on the edge of the City Centre	Growing use of profiled sheet roofs which have narrowly spaced ribs and a higher reflectivity than the older lead roofs in the area around Mansfield Road is starting to create an area of different character that draws the eye away from the historic high buildings.

5.1.12 Sensitivity to change:

Change in the foreground	The foreground is comprised of a mixture of the green open spaces of the parks and the surrounding houses of New Marston. The survival of publicly accessible pockets of green open space and the rural character of the hedgerows on their boundaries make these views particularly special. The surrounding housing has effectively replaced the wider rural foreground and there may be some latitude for change within these areas, including change to the roofscape that would be considered harmful to the view. However it is likely that development rising significantly above the existing roof level, that is conspicuous in the views, drawing attention away from the historic high buildings as the focal feature of the views could be considered harmful to the view.
Change in the middle ground	The middle ground is made up of the tree canopy of the Cherwell Valley, including belts of trees along the river channels and within the grounds of Magdalen and St Catherine's College. No buildings in this area obtrude above this canopy (St Cat's is effectively hidden from view) allowing an unhindered view to the historic high buildings and roofscape of the City Centre. New development that broke above the canopy, arresting the eye and competing with the historic high buildings of the City Centre would be regarded as harmful to the view.
Change in the City Centre	The City Centre roofscape in this view is made up of the graceful or slender forms of the historic high buildings, with the lower roofscape of the pinnacles and parapets of New College, All Soul's and the Bodleian and the whale-back of Exeter College Chapel, as well as limited areas of surrounding domestic buildings. These provide the focus of the view and, together the distinctive character of the University City for which Oxford is famed. Development within this area that disrupts this character by introducing discordant forms or materials or blocking views of the historic high buildings would result in harm to the view.
Change in the background	The background of green hills completes the setting of the City centre and historic high buildings. Development that rises up between City Centre and the hills, disrupting this relationship is likely to result in harm to the view unless it is seen as a natural continuation of the fine grain roof surface of the City Centre. Change to the green character of the hills in the background is likely to result in harm to the view, although at this distance small scale development are unlikely to have a significant impact.



Figure 5.1.1



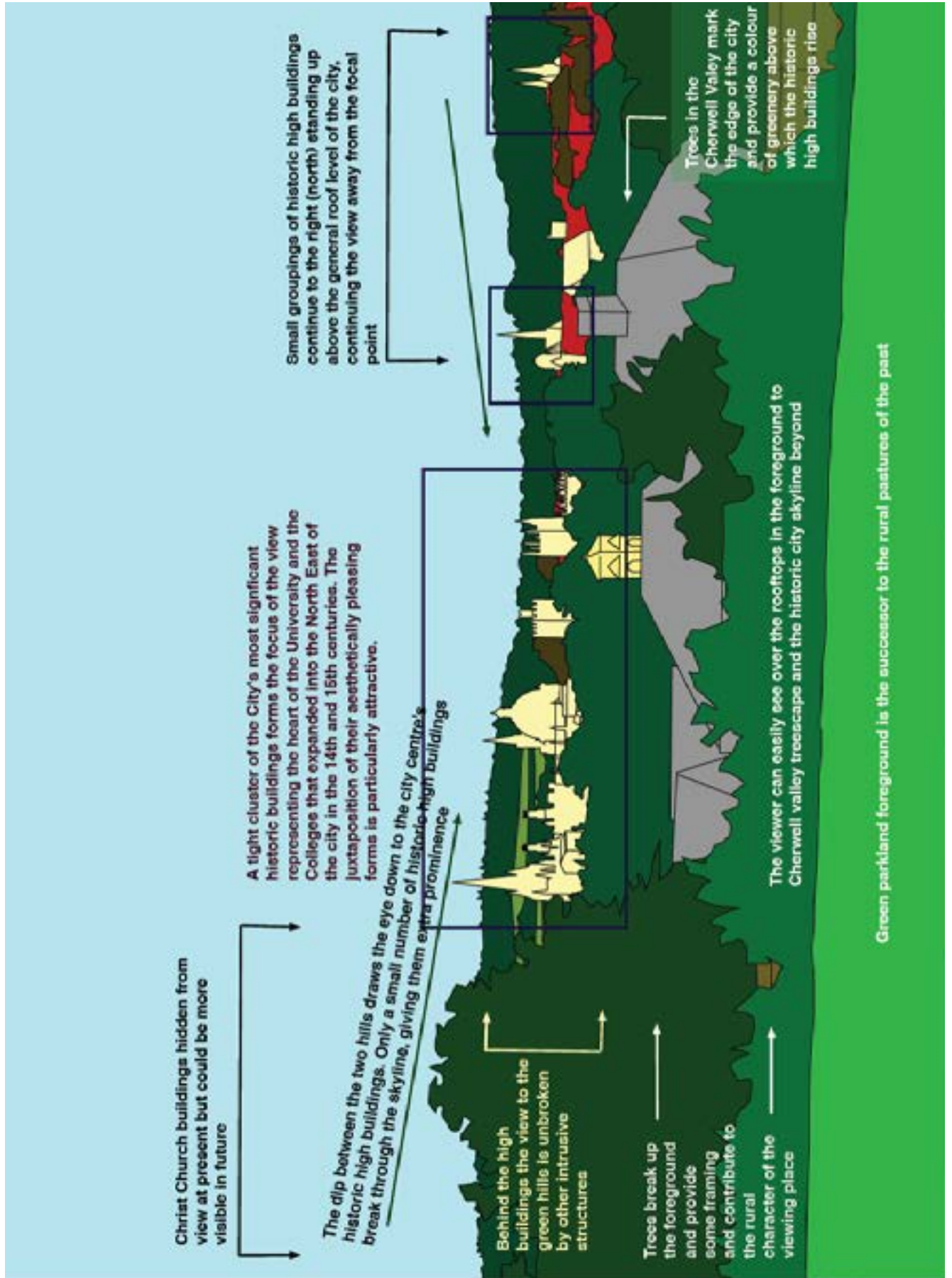
Photograph of the view from Doris Field Memorial Park

Figure 5.1.2



Illustration 1: Simplified render of the view from Doris Field Memorial Park

Figure 5.1.1.3
 Illustration 2:
 Annotated render of
 the view from Doris
 Field Memorial Park





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5.2 Headington Hill, Pullen's Lane and John Garne Way Allotments

5.2.1 Introduction

The view from Headington Hill has been appreciated since, at least, the late 17th century as an opportunity to view the city's high buildings from a rural setting just outside its boundary. Following the enclosure of Headington's open fields and the expansion of the University in the 19th century the Hill became a desirable location for new prestigious homes on the outskirts of the city which benefitted from, and were designed to allow enjoyment of, the views. The purchase of farmland by the Morrell family allowed for the preservation of the rural setting of their home at Headington Hill Hall as well as the opportunity of seeing the city from the green open landscape of the hill side. These later became allotments. During the 1970s increasing pressure for development of both housing and institutions on the open hillside prompted the Council to create an area of public open space specifically for viewing Oxford, through their Headington Hill Policy Statement (1976). Trees have grown up that obscure the view from the intended viewing point, but it can still be appreciated from points across the two sets of nearby allotments and from publicly accessible areas of Headington Hill Hall.

5.2.2 The Viewers

Experiencing this view provides a connection with past viewers. The views from within and around the allotments have been appreciated since the 17th century. The Rev. Josiah Pullen (Vice-president of Magdalen Hall) has been remembered for his daily walks up Headington Hill in the late 17th century which, apparently, has inspired many others to visit this spot.

The point where he turned to return along Cuckoo Lane, was marked by an elm tree called Jo Pullen's Tree and served as a popular point to view the city, although the view from the site of the tree is now blocked by the walls and tree planting of Headington Hill Hall. In around 1700 the University paid for the construction of a raised footpath that allowed scholars and fellows to take healthy exercise by walking up the hill, with a possible return route along Cuckoo Lane. The view from Headington Hill painted by J. B. Malchair in 1777 appears to be from between Cuckoo Lane and Headington Road. When the Morrells built their country house on the hill it was provided with a grand terrace and veranda that gave views over their gardens and parkland to the city beyond. They also bought the farmland to the north of their gardens in the later 19th century to preserve the rural character of the area surrounding their home. Advertisements and records of the houses built on Pullens Lane in the late 19th century record the efforts of builders to exploit the setting by providing views from the houses and their gardens over the city. Writing about Oxford and its history in the early 20th century Cecil Headlam picked out the view of the city from Headington Hill and Pullens Lane in particular as one of the finest views of the city, suggesting it was popular at this time. During the 1970s increasing pressure for development and awareness of the quality of these views led the City Council to create a special viewing place from which the public would be able to enjoy the experience of gazing down on the city. In 1986 the Council recognised the view's significance in the local plan.



Photo of the View from the John Garne Way Allotments



5.2.3 Present Viewers

Local residents and allotment users	Relatively few people have access to the views from the allotments or the nearby housing. However, for those lucky enough to have access the views to the City Centre provide a special value to the daily scenes, transforming a home, garden or allotment into part of a world famous city.
Walkers	In the 1970s the City Council set out plans for a network of footpaths to run along the hillside which would join up viewing places and provide access to green spaces for residents. This network was never fully completed and local residents in cul-de-sac streets may not be altogether keen on encouraging increased footfall, nevertheless parts of the routes do exist including the links from Cuckoo Lane to William Street, which provide an opportunity for many to see the view. The opening of the route through the grounds of Headington Hill Hall has also made the view from the terrace publicly accessible. As such these views have the potential to be publicly accessible as part of walking routes through the area given appropriate management of the viewing places.

5.2.4 Viewers in the Past

16th and 17th century viewers	Evidence of viewing from the hill in the 16th and 17th centuries. View of Oxford by George Hoefnagel used to symbolise the city in Braun and Hogenburg's map of Oxford c. 1570. The construction of the raised walkway up Headington Hill c. 1700 by Oxford University responded to the use of the walk onto the hill by scholars accessing the city's landscape setting. The return route along Cuckoo Lane has been suggested as a continuation of Addison's Walk through the grounds of Magdalen College.
People arriving in Oxford	The experience of viewing from the hill has been part of the arrival into Oxford along the medieval road to London (Cheney Lane) and the later Stokenchurch Turnpike on the north side of the park.
18th and 19th century artists	1777 View of Oxford from Headington Hall by J. B. Malchair. And again in 1790 as 'Entrance to Oxford from London' from near London Place (Ashmolean Collection). Sketched by J. M. W. Turner (see the 1839 Mossell and Oxford Sketchbook, Tate Collection).
The Morrells – a designed view	Exploited for the family's ostentatious country house with terraces, veranda and balcony overlooking the city. Protected from suburban housing development by the Morrells in 1874 to preserve the green setting of Morrell Hall and surviving as farmland until the Morrell Hall allotments were created by the Morrell Trustees in the early 20th century.
Late 19th and early 20th century residents	Wealthy citizens, including professors of the expanding University bought houses on the hill top that included views down onto the city as a designed feature that added to their value.
Early 20th century allotment users	The development of the allotments opened up the views from the hillside to many more people, including residents of New Marston and New Headington.

5.2.5 The Viewing Place

The contribution of the viewing place to the significance of the view includes both its aesthetic qualities and its history as a place used for looking out over the city for several centuries. This includes its associations with past viewers and the provisions made for viewing, both past and present. The view from parts of this area

is currently obscured by tree growth but the potential for the view to be experienced remains subject to changes in vegetation coverage. The viewing places within this area form the central part of the views from the western hill with routes along the hillside providing links to the views from Milham Ford Park and Doris Field Memorial Park to the north and South Park to the south.

Aesthetic value of the foreground	The publicly accessible viewing place has a naturally established woodland character of self-sown oak and ash trees that is an attractive setting for viewing the city.
Contribution of the view to the designed aesthetic value of Headington Hill Hall and its grounds	The building and grounds of Headington Hill Hall (Listed Grade II*) including the formal garden terraces and the veranda and balcony of the building were designed to provide views to the City Centre skyline as part of their designed aesthetic value.
Contribution of the view to the designed aesthetic value of houses and gardens on Pullen's Lane	Several of the Victorian and Edwardian houses and gardens built on Pullen's Lane were designed to exploit the aesthetic value of the views over the city. These include the Grade II registered gardens of High Wall, designed by Harold Peto (a nationally significant Arts and Crafts garden designer) in the early 20th century.
Historical value of the rural setting	The allotments and public viewing place preserve a green setting, including trees, hedgerows, streams and a 'productive landscape' that preserves elements of the rural character of the area that was cut off from the countryside by surrounding suburban development in the early 20th century. As such it provides a connection with past agricultural use of the area and the green rural landscape that provided the viewing place outside the city for artists and viewers in the past.
Detractors	Within many of the viewing places the mature tree cover now restricts views out over the City Centre. However, the density of the tree canopy is an important contributor to the historic character of Headington Hill as a picturesque Victorian and Edwardian suburb, as well as part of its contribution to views of the City Centre from the western hills. With appropriate management and perhaps some improvement or redirection of the footpath routes the viewing place created in the former allotment site could again be a place where people can go to see the famous view over the city.

5.2.6 The Landscape in the View

Although the view from the Council's viewing place is currently blocked by the growth of woodland the view can still be experienced from the adjacent allotments. This has a high aesthetic value provided by the rough texture and detail of the allotments' greenery in the foreground which leads the eye down to the richly coloured foliage on the lower slopes of Headington Hill and filling the Cherwell Valley. Above this a group of historic high buildings, centred on the iconic dome of the Radcliffe Camera, are the only buildings seen and mark the position of the City Centre. The suburbs beyond the City Centre are hidden whilst Hinksey Hill rises as a green backcloth in the far distance against which the buildings' limestone,

lead and copper provide a strong contrast adding to their prominence. The tallest high buildings break above the horizon of the hill's crest whilst the massed spires and pinnacles of the roofs of New College create a distinctly spiky skyline to this group. Other historic high buildings, including Merton College Chapel's tower, the copper cupola of Queens College and the pyramid of the Museum of Natural History form isolated points of interest spread out in the panorama of the view. On the extreme right of the view the Tower of the Thom building is seen as a disparate element with a bulky rectilinear form and a horizontal emphasis provided by its exposed concrete frame that contrasts with the masonry and strong vertical emphasis of other high buildings in the skyline.



5.2.7 Topography and layout of the view:

<p>An elevated view point</p>	<p>The allotments and terraces of Headington Hill Hall and High Wall provide a vantage point that is both close to and level with the upper portions of the City Centre’s historic high buildings. These cross the level of the viewer’s eye line near the point where they break the horizon of the wooded hillside beyond, adding to their prominence, but allowing part of their structure to be seen against the darker backdrop of the hill.</p>
<p>The City Centre sits prominently in the mid-ground with a green backcloth of hills and a mixed foreground of allotments and trees, which merge into the green belt of trees in the mid ground in the Cherwell Valley.</p>	<p>The allotments and Headington Hill Park provide an open foreground area with a green character. Beyond the open space, the tree canopy carries the eye in an uninterrupted plane to the historic high buildings of the City Centre. Taller trees in the foreground provide framing to individual views and screen some taller buildings.</p> <p>Despite its elevation above the floodplain, the mass of the City Centre (as well as St. Clement’s suburb) is hidden by the tree cover, allowing the high buildings to be seen in isolation from other buildings.</p>
<p>Tight focus of historic high buildings in the middle ground</p>	<p>The view is wide and expansive with little framing. The strength of the focus of the view on the historic high buildings is a result of the tight cluster of buildings which break above the tree canopy without other high buildings competing for the viewer’s attention.</p>

5.2.8 Green Characteristics:

<p>Green foreground (allotments)</p>	<p>The allotments preserve the characteristic of a ‘productive landscape’ and a more open viewing foreground that illustrates the area’s rural past. The numerous plots with varied crops provide a richly textured foreground with rising and falling masses of foliage in numerous colours and shades of green, yellow and purple, as well as areas of exposed rich brown earth. The numerous poles and temporary supporting structures for plants provide further texture and vertical emphasis that leads the eye up to the horizon and the focus of the view. Allotment plots running down the hillside draw the eye forward towards the City Centre.</p>
<p>Green Foreground (Headington Hill Hall and Park)</p>	<p>The green garden and parkland foreground of Headington Hill Hall is aesthetically pleasing and illustrates the picturesque landscaped parkland and formal gardens of the Morrell’s country estate, adding historical value.</p>
<p>Trees screening foreground buildings in the view</p>	<p>Trees in Headington Hill Park and on the edges of the allotment help to screen surrounding buildings, including the student housing blocks built off John Garne Way, preserving the character of the foreground as a green and undeveloped landscape beyond the urban area of the City Centre. They include numerous ornamental varieties that add to the rich variety in colour and texture of foliage in the view.</p>
<p>Trees in the Cherwell floodplain</p>	<p>The trees running alongside the River Cherwell and in the green spaces in its floodplain form a thick mass of woodland that conceals the city beyond and rises to form a rough textured blanket of foliage that seems to fill the valley.</p>

Trees on Hinksey Hill	The suburb of Botley is seen as a tree covered area on Hinksey Hill with trees dominating the character of the hillside, despite the dense suburban development they represent. This provides the green backcloth to the historic high buildings in the City Centre.
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5.2.9 Architectural Characteristics:

Hidden buildings between foreground and middle ground	<p>Buildings between the viewing place and the focus of the view have been concealed by foliage but are also sufficiently low for this effect to be achieved. These include intentionally low-scale buildings such as St Catherine's College, designed specifically to avoid impact on the view.</p> <p>The low-rise school building at the foot of the hill is sufficiently plain as to avoid drawing the eye away from the historic high buildings. It is balanced by green open space surrounding the school and the thick tree line that bounds this.</p> <p>Although they are large buildings, the John Garne Way buildings are screened from view both by foliage on the boundaries of the allotments and by being set lower down the hill. Other buildings surrounding the allotments have a utilitarian character, generally being small, single storey buildings without eye catching ornament that would draw attention away from the focus of the view.</p>
Hidden City Centre	The City Centre roofscape is hidden by foliage allowing the historic high buildings to be seen in isolation.
The high buildings and focus of the view	<p>Historically, Magdalen Tower, Christ Church Cathedral Spire and Tom Tower were seen as a group creating a focus to the view from the hill (see the view by Malchair above). This grouping is now only visible from the terrace at Headington Hill Hall due to the thick cover of parkland trees lower down the hill. The Tower with its pinnacles, the short spire and the ogee cap of Tom Tower form a group spanning the 13th to 17th century and representing development of the University from a religious institution in the Middle Ages into a post-Reformation centre of learning with royal patronage, as well as the durability of the Gothic in Oxford.</p> <p>The University buildings group appear as a cluster of buildings with a strong juxtaposition of forms. These include the highly detailed roofscape of New College and All Soul's as well as the Towers of The Bodleian Library and New College Bell Tower, along with the juxtaposed spires of St Mary the Virgin and All Saints (Lincoln College Library). In the background other spires add to this group, including the spires of Nuffield College and The Wesley Memorial Church and the Fleche of Exeter College Chapel, which all rise behind the mass of the Old Bodleian. The white paint and copper cupola of the Sheldonian Theatre provides a bookend on the right edge of the group.</p> <p>The dome of the Radcliffe Camera provides a large mass within this group and is seen particularly in juxtaposition with St Mar the Virgin spire as two strongly contrasting forms that are icons of Oxford. Both break above the skyline of the hill beyond, whilst the large dome is probably the most instantly recognisable landmark in the view.</p> <p>As a group these buildings represent the spiritual and academic heart of the University, representing its history from the 13th to 18th century.</p>
A common palette of materials	These historic high buildings share a common palette of materials and colours, as well as providing a strong vertical emphasis (predominantly limestone, lead and green copper) uniting them as a group despite their variety in form and design.



The New Bodleian	The rooftop of the New Bodleian Library also rises above the tree canopy in materials and is united with the group through its materials and adding to the story of the University in the early 20th century. However it has a more horizontal mass, making it distinct from the focal group.
Outlying historic high buildings	The Museum of Natural History and Merton College Chapel rise up above the tree canopy outside the main focus of the view, providing an indication of the extent of the historic City Centre and of buildings associated with academic activity. They have aesthetic and historical value individually but as part of the wider view also contribute to the cumulative value of the skyline.
Recent additions	The dome and minaret of the Centre for Islamic Studies have been carefully designed to fuse traditionally Middle Eastern architectural forms with the Gothic character of Oxford's architecture. They are, concealing the latter in this view.

5.2.10 The Influence of light and the Seasons:

Skyscape	<p>It is seen to great effect at mid-morning, with the sun in the south east and clouds emerging over the hills to the west adding a dramatic skyscape, whilst bright sunlight is reflected by the limestone of the high buildings.</p> <p>The quality of light at sunset provides an attractive silhouette of the city with mist gently falling into the valley, blurring the roofscape and emphasising the high buildings (this effect is often reproduced in painting and photography, and contrasts with the daytime view).</p> <p>Early or mid-autumn, when the treescape provides the greatest variety of colour in the foreground and middle-ground (also the time when the allotments will have reached a stage of annual maturity) provides one of the most interesting viewing experiences. This also allows low angled sunlight to pick out the architectural detail of the buildings in the focus of the view.</p>
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5.2.11 Detractors:

Thom Building	The tower of the University's Engineering Department (the Thom Building) is seen on the extreme right of the view as a disparate element in the view, rising above the tree line with a bulky top heavy form that is given horizontal emphasis by its exposed concrete frame, contrasting with both the materials and vertical emphasis of the historic high buildings.
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5.2.12 Sensitivity to change:

Change in the foreground	<p>The allotments, school playing fields and parkland of Headington Hill Hall and Park provide an attractive green foreground that is an important element of both the beauty of the view and the historic relationship between the green open viewing place and the historic city centre. This view cone was designated partly in response to the loss of the green space to student accommodation blocks on the lower slopes of the hill that threatened to rise into the views from higher up. Development that introduces built forms that detract from the green and open character of the foreground, disrupting the expanse of green space that leads the eye to the trees in the Cherwell Valley and the city centre beyond would be regarded as harmful to the view.</p> <p>The specially created viewing place on the former allotment site is now so overgrown with self-sown trees that the view can no longer be seen from it, resulting in a significant loss of the amenity this space was designed to provide. Whilst it is desirable to maintain and enhance the ecological value this area of woodland provides there is potential to open out a viewing area through selective tree thinning and management, as well as creation of walks with better signage that would be beneficial in provide better public access to the view.</p>
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Change in the middle ground	<p>The tree canopy in the Cherwell Valley provides an attractive blanket of greenery that conceals any development between the green foreground and the historic high buildings of the City Centre. Loss of the tree canopy, or development that rises above it, introducing built forms within this area that distract from the views to the historic high buildings would result in harm to the views.</p> <p>The construction of the Centre for Islamic Studies has provided an example of the inherent difficulties in trying to introduce new tall buildings in this area. The choice of a mixture of Middle Eastern forms and Gothic detailing and use of limestone ashlar has helped to provide an approach that introduces delicate forms and locally distinctive materials that complement the historic high buildings in the skyline. In views from the allotments or Headington Hill Hall it stands to one side of the main view as an isolated high building. Nevertheless adding more than isolated example of such buildings would result in a districting clutter that would be harmful to the view.</p>
Change in the City Centre	<p>This is one of the closest views to the City Centre in which the detailing of the historic high buildings and other buildings can be clearly discerned. From this angle the City Centre skyline includes a 'jumble' of towers, long college roof areas with parapets and pinnacles and copper clad cupolas in addition to the taller spires and Radcliffe Camera's Dome. Whilst new development could add to this jumbled mass without detracting from its character, very careful consideration would be required for choices of form, materials and detailing to create a fitting addition to this mass of buildings. Development that rose above the general level of the City Centre and did not conform to the characteristics of this roofscape would be considered harmful to the view.</p>
Change in the setting of the view	<p>The view cone has a broad setting to the north with the arc of view extending well to the right of the view cone as seen from the allotments. The impact of the bulky and conspicuously coloured Thom building demonstrates the potential for new development to detract from the wider view by drawing attention away from the main focus of the City Centre skyline. Nevertheless, the finer spires and pyramids of buildings such as the Museum of Natural History demonstrate that higher development outside the City Centre can be complementary to the main focus of the view.</p>
Change in the background	<p>The historic high buildings rise against an unbroken green backdrop of the western hills, revealing Oxford's location in a broader countryside setting. Development that introduced conspicuous built forms between the historic high buildings and the green hills that did not continue the positive characteristics of the City Centres roofscape would cause harm to the view.</p>

Figure 5.2.1
Photograph of
the view from the
John Garne Way
Allotments



Figure 5.2.2
Illustration 1:
Simplified render of
the view from the
John Garne Way
allotments

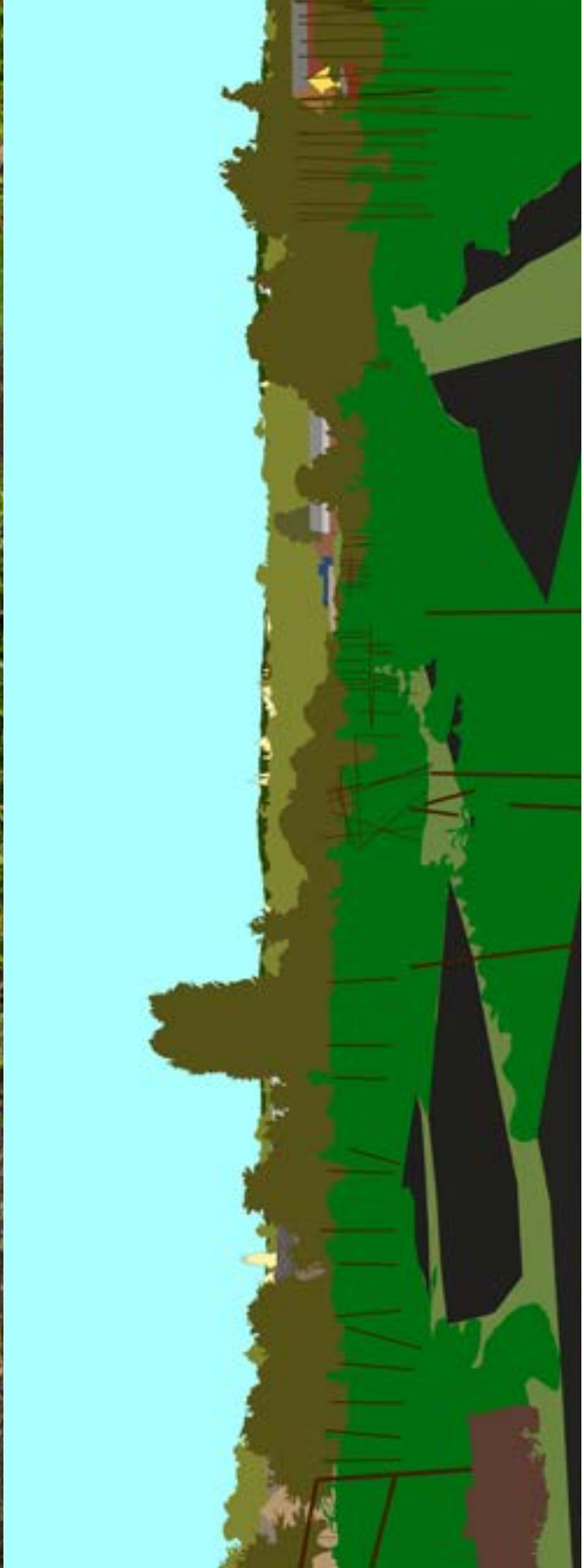
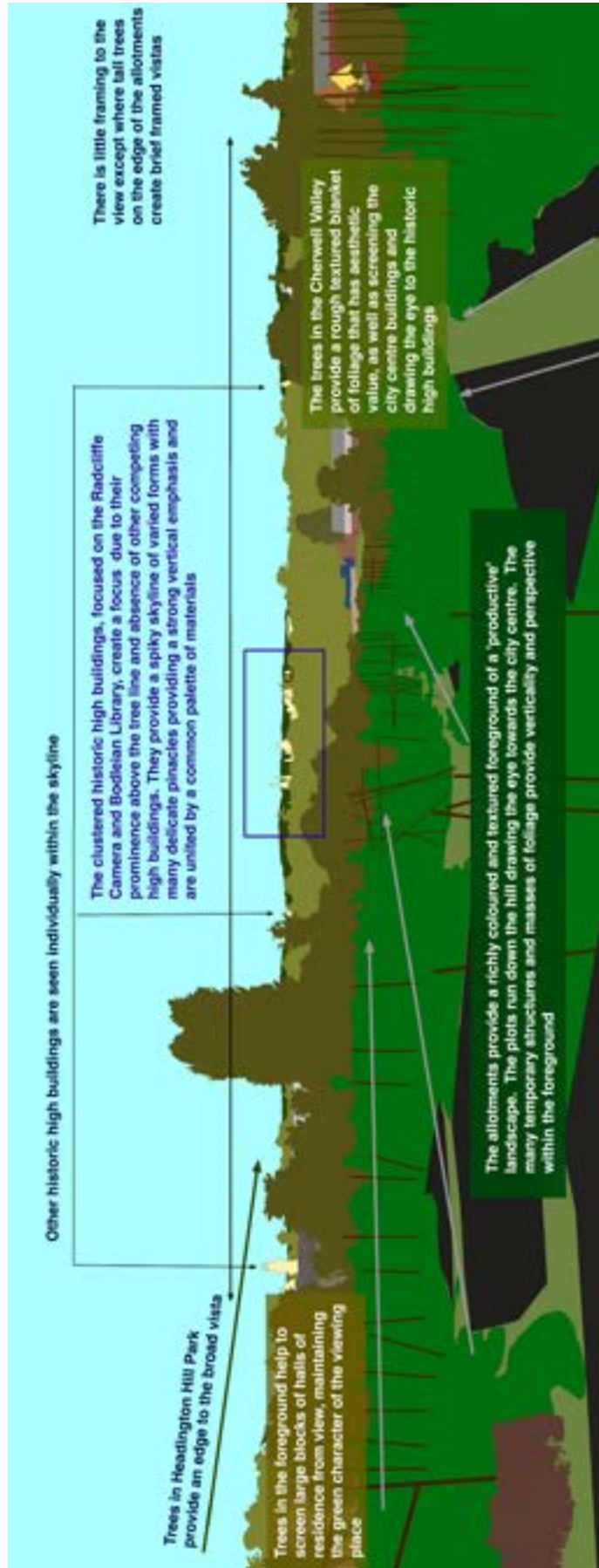


Figure 5.2.3
 Annotated render
 of the view from
 the John Game Way
 Allotments





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5.3 South Park View Analysis Summary

5.3.1 Introduction

The South Park view exemplifies the views of Oxford City Centre from Headington Hill; a series of views from high ground east of the City Centre that have been admired since, at least, the late 16th century. This is a 'close-up' view of the city that allows appreciation of the architecture of the city's landmark buildings from an attractive historic parkland setting. Belts of mature trees in the Cherwell Valley provide a green fringe that cushions the City Centre buildings and separates them from the historic low-rise suburbs of St Clements and East Oxford. The wooded masses and fields of Wytham Hill and Hinksey Hill, including the garden suburb of South Hinksey, provide a green backdrop with a prominent dip between the hills that draws the eye down to the City's spires and domes. This is a highly democratic viewing place, enjoyed by many and photographed and reproduced in all seasons. It often forms the backdrop to public events held in the park.

5.3.2 The Viewers

Experiencing this view provides a connection with past viewers, including the artists who have portrayed it, the landowners who developed the parkland for private viewing and the 20th



J.M.W. Turner's view of Oxford from Headington Hill (1803-4)
© Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

century activists who campaigned to protect it for the people of the City. How past viewers have recorded or depicted the view can reveal features that have historically been considered significant about it and that continue to have significance today. The view from South Park is the oldest view for which there is evidence of artistic appreciation and is one of the most frequently reproduced including its use by modern artists and photographers as the iconic view of Oxford (this is given further consideration below under Landscape in the View).





George Hoefnagel's view of Oxford published in 1575

5.3.3 Present Viewers

Residents and students	The view from South Park is enjoyed by many local people as part of their daily recreation or on everyday journeys through the park as part of footpath routes. For these viewers the view is an uplifting element that contributes to the more general amenity of the park as a valued green open space away from the busy traffic of surrounding roads or densely developed urban environments of East Oxford and New Headington. The users of the view are swelled by the many students from Oxford Brookes for whom the park is a convenient open space to relax and socialise in whilst enjoying the special views of the city. The park is also a place for more active recreation including running, casual 'kick-about' football and fitness coaching.
Inspiring Artists	The view of the city from South Park is used by many artists as inspiration for their work. Due to the ease of access, beautiful views of the city against the backdrop of Wytham Hill and parkland foreground with additional interest provided by groups of trees or overhanging foliage it is one of the most reproduced images of the city from its green setting.
Audiences of big events	The Park is used by the City for large events such as the Olympics torch ceremony in 2012 or the Cowley Road Carnival. The view over the city provides a spectacular and unique setting for such events enjoyed by large audiences.

5.3.4 Viewers in the Past

The earliest recorders of Oxford's views	Evidence of viewing from the hill in the 16th and 17th centuries. View of Oxford by George Hoefnagel used to symbolise the city in Braun and Hogenburg's map of Oxford c. 1570. The construction of the raised walkway up Headington Hill c. 1700 by Oxford University responded to the use of the walk onto the hill by scholars accessing the city's landscape setting.
People arriving in Oxford	The experience of viewing from the hill has been part of the arrival into Oxford along the medieval road to London (Cheney Lane) and the later Stokenchurch Turnpike on the north side of the park.
18th century painters	1777 View of Oxford from Headington Hall by J. B. Malchair ("foremost Drawing Master of Oxford").
A famous view painted by Turner (and others)	Painted by J. M. W. Turner (sketched 1799, painted 1803-4 "A view of Oxford from the South Side of Headington Hill"; see Tate Collection) and others, including William Turner of Oxford (View of Oxford from Headington, Ashmolean Collection) and Peter de Wint ("View near Oxford, Tate Collection).

The Morrells – a designed view	Protected from suburban housing development by the Morrells in 1877 to preserve the green setting of Morrell Hall and landscaped as parkland with carriage drives allowing views down onto the city (but nevertheless maintained in agricultural use).
The early 20th century conservation movement	<p>Early 20th century struggle to protect from development. The Morrells tried to resist attempts to purchase the land to build affordable housing in the years after the First World War. Eventually just 20 % of the land was given up to build the Morrell Avenue estate.</p> <p>Purchased by Oxford Preservation Trust in 1939 to protect the green setting of the city.</p> <p>Given to the City with conditions to prevent its development and preserve the ability to see the view.</p>



5.3.5 The Viewing Place

The viewing place will contribute to what is seen in the view but may also have historical, evidential or communal value as a place for viewing the city that adds to the significance of the view. The Park provides the southern end of

the Headington Hill (or eastern) group of viewing places with links via footpaths to a series of viewing places along the west facing slopes of the hill that have been influential to the area's development in the past 150 years.

Aesthetic value of the foreground	South Park is a large urban park with parkland landscaping creating a green viewing place that forms an attractive Arcadian foreground to the view.
Historical value of the rural setting	The park retains evidence of the former agricultural environs of Oxford up to the late 19th century in its green open spaces and the ridge-and-furrow earthworks of ploughing. Trees within the park also provide remnants of former hedgerows. This illustrates the development of Oxford and its early post-medieval suburb of St Clement's into the rural setting and preserved the coherence of the historic city core
Historical and aesthetic value of the parkland landscape	The park retains evidence of the landscaping undertaken by the Morrells and, subsequently, the City Council, to turn the agricultural land into a picturesque landscape. This includes the openness of the space and the boundary tree planting and tree groups.
A number of ever-changing views	The mix of large open space and densely planted tree groups changes the focus of the view between different groups of City Centre landmarks as the viewer moves through the space.
Archaeological value of the Civil War view	The park has potential for the survival of remains of the encampment made by the Parliamentarian army during the siege of Oxford in 1646. Studying how the encampment utilised the views over the city could reveal more about the siege and the history of Oxford during this significant period in the city's history.



5.3.6 The Landscape in the View

What is seen in the view has been admired for centuries for both its designed and fortuitous aesthetic quality – that is, the high quality of features in the view that were intended to be beautiful and the development of groups of features by chance that we consider to be beautiful because of our taste and cultural associations. The characteristic features in the view; the green foreground, compact medieval City Centre, high buildings of architectural quality rising above the general roofscape and Magdalen Tower in a position of primacy, as well as the green backcloth of the hills beyond, have essentially remained unchanged since the 16th century providing a connection with those who have seen and portrayed this view before. Seeing the City Centre in its green setting, with St Clement's suburb in the foreground, provides understanding of its development as a medieval urban centre at the junction of two river valleys. The high buildings of the colleges and University, with strong Gothic styling, reflect the influence of the church on the development of Oxford as a centre of medieval and early modern religion and learning. Later buildings, including the domes of the Sheldonian and Radcliffe Camera, reflect the

development of classical taste in the University in the 17th and 18th centuries. The growth of St Clement's suburb, seen in this view as the gateway to the city, reflects the importance of the roads from the city up Headington Hill as the route to London, with which Oxford has held a strong connection, occasionally replacing the capital as the country's centre of government and often providing the seat of learning from which governance has sprung.

The view from the hillside looks down on the city with extensive parkland, including traces of an agricultural past in the foreground, leading the eye down to the suburb of St Clement's, indicated by Georgian town houses at London Place. From this frontage the eye passes easily over the low-level rooftops to the City Centre, wrapped in a mantle of mature trees in the Cherwell Valley parklands. The City Centre provides a fine grain roofscape with the appearance of a consistent height, broken occasionally by the mounds of foliage of mature trees. Only the traditional towers, spires and domes of great aesthetic worth and architectural quality, signifying high status buildings of the University and colleges, rise above the



The city skyline in silhouette at dusk in September

general level of the rooftops and so stand out and these are limited to the carefully designed prestigious features of towers, spires and domes. Occasionally, the lower portions of college buildings are glimpsed between the Cherwell Valley trees. The city's position on a gravel island holds it up above the surrounding valleys and screens the buildings of West Oxford in this view such that the City Centre is seen against the green backdrop of Hinksey Hill and Wytham Hill. A dip between the hills draws the eye down to the City Centre. Magdalen College Tower (originally located just outside the city) stands

forward amongst the high buildings and has primacy. A group of high buildings centred on Christ Church (the Christ Church Group) stand to the left and indicate the former sites of St Frideswide's Abbey and Cardinal College on the historic route into the city from the south. A second group of high buildings; including St Mary the Virgin Church, the Radcliffe Camera and the Sheldonian Theatre (the University Group) stand to the left and are seen to a greater or lesser extent as the viewer moves around the park, becoming screened by trees and the shoulder of Headington Hill in the east of the park.

5.3.7 Topography and layout of the view:

<p>The City Centre sits prominently in the middle ground with a green backcloth of hills and a mixed foreground of green parkland, historic St Clement's Suburb and the Green Belt of trees in the Cherwell Valley.</p>	<p>The park provides a large foreground area and a range of different elevations with views down onto the City Centre. Houses outside the park and trees lines within it provide a well-defined edge to the green foreground.</p> <p>The dip into the valley of the River Cherwell reduces the prominence of the buildings in St Clement's suburb and of the open spaces on the valley floor, which reduces the apparent depth of these areas in the view and allows the eye to pass easily over the buildings to the greenery and City Centre beyond.</p> <p>The City Centre's slight elevation above the floodplain adds to its prominence in the mid-ground, making it seem closer and hiding the townscape of west Oxford beyond.</p> <p>The high buildings in the middle ground rise from a fine grain roofscape in the historic City Centre but appear as a row of towers, spires and domes rising in spread across the city.</p> <p>The dip between the two hills in the background draws the eye down to the city centre as the focus of the view.</p>
<p>Changing elevation and perspectives with a progression from silhouette skyline, to roofscape and finally a breathtaking panorama.</p>	<p>The topography, with the rise in ground level increasing distance from the City Centre from west to east, means that moving around the park provides an ever-changing view.</p> <p>From the west of the park: the towers are seen in silhouette against the sky above the roofline of buildings at London Place, Morrell Avenue and Glebe Street.</p> <p>As the viewer moves eastward: the city's towers and spires are seen standing within the context of the wider city roofscape, with the western hills providing a green backcloth indicating the city's green setting.</p> <p>From the eastern extremity of the park: the skyline buildings recede into the distance becoming less easily identified individually, whilst the general extent of the southern part of the City Centre can be appreciated within its green setting, although the northern half (including The University Group) are increasingly screened from view.</p> <p>The view to the north is confined by the topography of the hill and tree planting. The view to the south west is more open (there is a secondary view over East Oxford towards Boars Hill including the spire of Ss Edmund and Frideswide and the rooftop chapel of St Stephen's House as landmarks).</p>



5.3.8 Green Characteristics:

Green foreground	The green parkland foreground is aesthetically pleasing and illustrates both the earlier agricultural use and the picturesque landscaped parkland of the Morrell's country estate, adding historical value.
Trees in the park frame the views	Groups of trees frame views screening some areas of the skyline that are revealed and disappear as the viewer moves through the space. Trees on the park's boundaries lead the eye down to the City Centre.
Trees in the Cherwell floodplain	The trees running alongside the River Cherwell and in the green spaces in its floodplain (including the grounds of Magdalen College and School, St Hilda's College and Merton and Christ Church Meadows beyond), form a green mantle of foliage that defines the limits of the historic City Centre and provides soft green masses that complement harder forms of towers, spires and domes.
Trees in the City Centre	Occasional taller trees rise amongst the spires, towers and domes and over the lower level roofscape (indicating the locations of green spaces of college gardens in the City Centre) and provide greenery and softening in the skyline.

5.3.9 Architectural Characteristics:

Historical value of St Clement's buildings as a gateway to the City Centre	Terraces of Georgian and Victorian townhouses at London Place and Glebe Street illustrate the 18th and 19th century gateway to the city (reflected in the naming of London Place) creating an edge to the historic urban area. This is the entrance to the historic St Clement's suburb, established in the Middle Ages and rebuilt after the Civil War as a distinct community.
Low rise suburbs between fore and middle ground	The low rise suburbs of East Oxford (mostly two-storey) and St Clements' (mostly three-storey) provide an introduction to the middle ground with no distracting high points that would compete with the City Centre spires for precedence. The rooftop and horse-shoe plan of Sir James Sterling's Florey Building can be identified in the St Clement's suburb by the distinctive Lancashire red brick walls that make it stand out from other buildings in Oxford.
Intricate City Centre roofscape of small pitched roofs	The City Centre roofscape is formed of a compact area with a densely developed pattern of generally uniform height and predominantly pitched roofs with some larger roofs representing historic college buildings. The large red brick gable end of Oxford Town Hall stands above the roofscape, giving this important civic building a presence in the skyline. The compact area of roofscape seen illustrates the confined nature of the medieval city within its circuit of walls. The main materials of the rooftop bed of the City Centre are natural slate and plain clay tile, which are dark, essentially recessive and provide a strong contrast to the limestone of the high buildings which, therefore, stand out. Occasionally the more intricate detailing of medieval college roofs can be seen including highly ornamented spirelets rising from parapets.
Glimpsed views of larger college buildings	From the south of the park some views include the intricate detailing of spirelets on the roofs of buildings at New College Larger buildings of Magdalen College are glimpsed through a screen of foliage running along the River Cherwell and surrounding the Deer Park and Meadow providing both historic and architectural interest.

The historic high buildings	<p>Magdalen College Tower stands forward of the main groups of high buildings and is the first skyline building seen from the west of the park. Its prominence reflects its position outside the historic city walls, greeting the traveller from the east.</p> <p>The Christ Church group of buildings (with the spire of St Aldate's Church) is seen as an uninterrupted row identifying the location of St Aldate's as one of the oldest routes into the city. They also represent the site of St Frideswide's Priory (probably Oxford's oldest Christian community) and Cardinal College before the establishment of Henry VIII's Christ Church. As a group they rise from either side to the short spire of Christ Church Cathedral. The shape of Tom Tower stands out as having particular aesthetic value as well as its historical connection with Sir Christopher Wren.</p> <p>Merton College Tower stands between Magdalen and the Christ Church group (both horizontally and in depth) and helps to lead the eye into the view.</p> <p>The University buildings group appear as dispersed with buildings occasionally screened by trees in the park. They stand to the right of Magdalen Tower, with St Mary the Virgin still seen as the tallest point on the skyline. They illustrate both the long history and development of the University's institutions from its religious origins and practices to more secular concerns and the establishment of the Bodleian as a repository of learning. In this view the dome of the Radcliffe Camera has a high aesthetic value and is one of the most immediately recognisable 'Oxford' buildings and so is often the focus of depictions.</p> <p>Nuffield College spire stands at the rear of the focus of the view, marking the western edge of the City Centre, beyond which West Oxford is mainly hidden from view.</p> <p>The materials of the city's high buildings (and their colours) are predominantly limestone, lead and slate with, occasionally, green copper, which helps to create a group value amongst these structures despite their variety in form and design. They also stand out against the rooftop 'bed' of the City Centre and the greenery of the hills behind.</p>
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5.3.10 Infrastructure:

Headington Road leading the eye towards the City Centre	<p>Headington Road – St Clements Road provides a key area of movement with traffic into and out of the City Centre.</p>
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5.3.11 The Influence of light and the Seasons:

Optimum Viewing	<p>The view is seen to great effect at mid-morning, with the sun in the south east and clouds emerging over the hills to the west pushed by the prevailing wind adding a dramatic skyscape whilst bright sunlight is reflected by the limestone of the high buildings.</p> <p>The quality of light at sunset provides an attractive silhouette of the city. Often this is accompanied by a blanket of mist that lies in the floor of the valley through which the historic high buildings rise gaining greater prominence above the indistinct rooftops of the City Centre. This effect is often reproduced in painting and photography, and contrasts with the daytime view.</p> <p>Spring and summer provide the most green and verdant setting to the city buildings. During the winter months the London Place and Magdalen College buildings become more evident as the screening effect of the trees is reduced. The parkland in snow or a heavy frost provides an alternative white image that also contrasts the white foreground with the grey and limestone buildings.</p>
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5.3.12 Detractors:

Pylons	The line of Pylons and high level electric power lines running between the hills directly behind the City Centre is a jarring feature that distracts from the historic interest of the City Centre. They have an engineered and industrial character and scale as large structures of loose steel frames that contrast with the compact stone structures and rural greenery of the city and its setting. They are particularly prominent in this view as they break above the skyline of the hills in the background.
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5.3.13 Sensitivity to change:

Change in the park	<p>The management of the park makes an important contribution to the quality of the view. This includes the protection of the historic 'ridge and furrow earthworks' that provide evidence of the area's agricultural past, and although extensive could easily be harmed by overuse of the park by vehicles supporting large events.</p> <p>Maintaining and adding to the tree stock of the park is part of the City Council's ongoing management of the area as a public amenity. However, in managing this tree stock, maintaining visibility of the views over the City Centre will need to be considered as a priority to preserve the park's special historic interest and character.</p>
Change in the suburbs	Development that rises above the general roof surface of the suburbs of St Clement's and East Oxford that is conspicuous and draws attention away from the historic high buildings of the city centre would result in harm to the view. Some isolated examples of higher buildings of particular significance to the local area, such as the tower of St Edmund and St Frideswide's Church and the rooftop chapel of St Stephen's House are not considered to detract but would not be considered as a precedent for high scale development.
In the Cherwell Valley	Development that detracts from the character of the Cherwell Valley as a zone of mature trees wrapping around the City Centre would result in harm to both the attractiveness of the view and its historic interest as a city rising from its 'ancient groves'.
Change in the City Centre	Change that disturbs the characteristics of the City Centre roofscape of dense short, steeply pitched roofs above which only the historic high buildings rise is likely to result in harm to the view. This is due to the thinly spread nature of the historic high buildings, each easily discerned rising above the lower level roof surface.
Change in the background	<p>There is an opportunity to enhance the view by removing the pylons and overhead wires in the background of this view through 'undergrounding' the power lines.</p> <p>Development that introduces tall building that stand out as bulky structures in the background to the historic high buildings would result in harm. Seacourt Tower in Botley is seen as a background feature in some angles from the park, creating a high skyline feature in an area that is otherwise characterised as the green background. Similar development that pushes the apparent city spread into the green backdrop would be regarded as harmful to the view.</p> <p>The hills in the background include the suburban areas of Botley. These long established suburbs now have a canopy of trees that breaks up the mass of buildings and sustains the green characteristic of the background. Nevertheless, further development that increased the spread of housing along the hills in the background would detract from the characteristic of seeing the City Centre against the backdrop of the green hills that represent the city's rural hinterland and would be regarded as harmful to the view.</p>

Figure 5.3.1



Photograph of the view from South Park

Figure 5.3.2



Illustration 1: Simplified render of the view from South Park

Figure 5.3.3
 Illustration 2:
 Annotated render
 of the view from
 South Park

