



Conservation Area Appraisal
Bartlemas

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Introduction

Bartlemas is one of the hidden treasures of Oxford, described by the Planning Inspector in 1986 as a ‘rare and beautiful enclave which must be preserved’¹. A small stone built hamlet originally constructed as a leper complex in the outlying fields of east Oxford, far away from the everyday life of the city. This appraisal seeks to define the characteristics of the conservation area that make the place so special and worthy of designation. The conservation area benefits from a number of different uses: residential, religious, gardening/recreational and sporting. It is vital that any future management of this area maintains the established balances of uses, links to its historical past and sense of rural retreat in a busy residential suburb.



FIG. 1

FIG.1 Aerial view of Bartlemas Conservation Area



Bartlemas Conservation Area map

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¹ Planning Inspector's Report, May 1986 regarding an application for a detached vicarage and associated works on land adjacent to Bartlemas Cottage.

FIG. 2 'Rural' setting to Bartlemas - view across Oriel College Sports Field

Reason for appraisal

Oxford City Council is required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 s.69 to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve, as conservation areas. The Act further states that the Council is to review its conservation areas from time to time to ensure that the original designation was correct and where necessary, to designate additional areas.

S.71 of the Act further requires that all local planning authorities are to formulate and publish proposals for the further enhancement and preservation of their conservation areas and this Appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Act. It should be read in conjunction with the policies for the Historic Environment as set out in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001 – 2016 and will be used to inform decisions on planning, listed building and conservation area applications.

Further guidance regarding conservation areas and their management can be found in PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

The Appraisal cannot make mention of every building, feature or space within the conservation area. Omission of any feature should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Local Community Involvement

In recognition of English Heritage guidance ² the local community and stakeholders (ie. Oriel College, the Church, Links Allotment Association and Oxford City Council) have participated in the production of the appraisal.

The draft document was issued for public comment in April 2006 and a local meeting held in May 2006 to discuss any issues arising from consultation. A further draft was prepared July 2006, which involved only minor changes and circulated for further comment. The Appraisal was presented to East Area Parliament December 2006 (a copy of the appraisal and accompanying report were available on the Council's web site as a part of the Agenda papers). Following the Council meeting the appraisal has been amended again to take account of the comments raised by the committee members. This too has been circulated for comment. The Appraisal was taken back



FIG. 2

to East Area Committee on 20 June 2007 where the Councillors requested a further meeting with all interested parties to agree the Appraisal. The meeting was held on 16 July 2007. The key relevant issues raised from consultation of the draft appraisal and at the meeting:

- a. Bringing the bowling green and nursery school sites back into active use.
- b. Retaining the historic sense of seclusion and setting of the historic buildings.
- c. Maintaining the open character within the conservation area as well as the remaining open space around it.
- d. Through the implementation of an appropriate landscape management plan, it may be possible to increase the views of the chapel from the public realm whilst ensuring that the conservation area's overall sense of isolation is retained.
- e. Balancing the desirability of preservation and enhancement between public and private interests.
- f. Retaining the essential rural nature of the conservation area.

Other matters were raised, such as the history of planning decisions, compliance with planning conditions and land ownership. It is clear that these



FIG. 3

FIG. 3 The unassuming entrance to Bartlemas

topics are of some importance to the residents, and for some are current issues of dispute, but they are matters that are not appropriate to debate or adjudicate on as a part of this appraisal work.

Summary of significance

1. The chapel, former almshouse, farmhouse and cottage together with the masonry walls form the historic core of the conservation area.
2. The conservation area is predominantly rural in character, adjacent to open land to the north and north-east whilst containing a sizeable area of green space within its boundaries.
3. The cluster of historic buildings is otherwise surrounded by the suburban residential development which dominates the character of this part of Oxford and accentuates the sense of historic isolation and 'quarantine'.
4. The trees throughout the site are recognised as adding to the rural character of the area. The oak at the foot of the lane adjacent to the garden of 271 Cowley Road and the varying trees lining the access track to the Bartlemas hamlet, and within the grounds of the nursery school, all make positive contributions to the verdant and rural

character and appearance of the area.

5. The Links Allotments enclose and shield the historic hamlet from the urban nature of Cowley Road. The character of the allotments is reminiscent of medieval strip farming and provides an appropriate setting to the hamlet.
6. The stone wall bordering the lane to the hamlet is an important feature of the area, strengthening the rural nature of the conservation area and marking the boundaries between the public and private realm.
7. The green verges and lack of pavement along the access lane also reinforced the rural nature of both the lane and conservation area as a whole and softens the appearance of the unsympathetic tarmac surface of the lane.

Vulnerability

8. The rural 'undeveloped' character of Bartlemas is paramount to the area's significance.
9. The historic elements of seclusion and isolation should be preserved and their characteristics enhanced.

² Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals – English Heritage August 2005

- 10. Oriel College Playing fields to the north of the hamlet create a positive and open setting to the conservation area. Sinnet Court has been built partly within the boundaries of the conservation area and partly on the sports field encroaching upon the open nature of the wider setting, gradually bringing the surrounding urbanisation closer to the boundaries of the historic settlement.
- 11. The Links Allotments provide an important community amenity and are reminiscent of the area's historic past. The open character of the allotments ensures they are an integral element of the conservation area.
- 12. The former nursery school site forms an important part of the conservation area. Originally forming part of the farmhouse orchard/garden, the site has retained many of the rural elements that characterise the rest of the conservation area. Today it is no longer a part of the farmhouse garden and is accessed separately via Cowley Road. The present single storey buildings stand empty and unused. The site is vulnerable and future proposals will need to positively respond to the character and

constraints of the site and its context.

- 13. Views into and out of the conservation area are limited. Prior to the 19th century development of east Oxford, the leper hospital and associated buildings sat in open countryside with far reaching views. Development has curtailed these and eroded the rural nature of the area over time, resulting in the setting to the hamlet being altered beyond recognition. Whilst it is important to have views into the conservation area, these have to be balanced with retaining the area's retained sense of seclusion.

Opportunities for enhancement

- 14. The buildings on the vacant former nursery school site have no visual appeal and, although they are mostly screened by trees and hedgerows detract from the character of the conservation area. Set in a detached location from the main cluster of buildings, the site lacks any visual and physical connection with the rest of the conservation area. This degree of separation does not diminish the significance of the site and

any proposals for the future of the site should be informed by this appraisal and should seek to enhance the established characteristics of the conservation area, strengthening the green and open nature of Bartlemas rather than adding to the suburban development that forms the wider context for the conservation area.

- 15. The bowling green site is important both in terms of creating a setting for the conservation area and as an area of green open space. Currently disused and abandoned, the site would benefit from being brought back into active use, providing added benefit to both the conservation area and this section of Cowley Road. The enclosing hedge shields Bartlemas from the main road but limits the views into the conservation area. Whilst the hedge is important in strengthening the rural character and sense of seclusion, there are opportunities for creating longer public views into the conservation area at the two gated access points on the Cowley Road frontage.
- 16. The surrounding hedgerows require regular maintenance to improve their appearance and quality. Appropriate hedge laying in places, incorporating traditional hedgerow species together with the implementation of a comprehensive landscape management regime, would enhance the rural character of the area.
- 17. Additional landscaping in the north-west corner of the conservation area would help soften the impact of Sinnet Court.
- 18. The private access lanes to both the hamlet and nursery school, together with the stretch of pavement along Cowley Road are all in need of resurfacing. They have become worn and patched and begin to detract from the appearance of the conservation area. Consideration in the long term should be given to possible resurfacing of these elements whilst retaining their important country lane characteristics.

Location

Bartlemas Conservation Area forms part of the Parish of Cowley and St John and is located approximately 1.5 miles east of Oxford city centre.

The main section of the conservation area is accessed via a narrow lane off Cowley Road to the right of 271

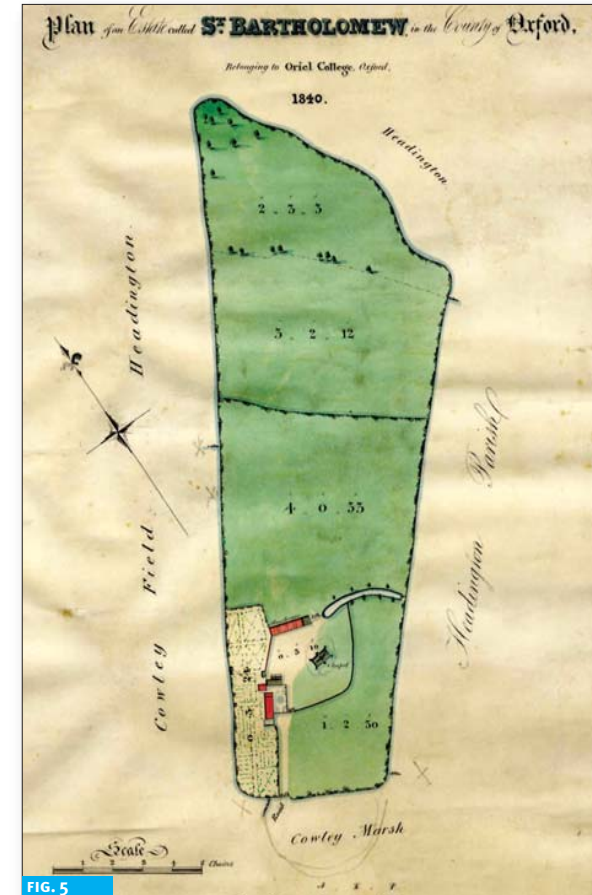


FIG. 5 Badcock plan of Bartlemas, 1840

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Cowley Road whilst the nursery school site is accessed via a separate lane to the left of the vicarage.

The hamlet is situated on the edge of the East Oxford river terrace leading up to the southern slopes of the Southfield Ridge towards Headington.

Boundaries and designation

Bartlemas Conservation Area is the smallest of the conservation areas within the city. Its boundaries were tightly drawn to encompass the historic elements of the hamlet together with the open land to the south of the chapel. The boundaries extend from the southern section of the Oriel College playing fields reaching southwards to Cowley Road and Bartlemas Close to the east. Its western boundary runs up a narrow lane off Cowley Road between 267 and 271 Cowley Road and continues north westwards along the boundary of the former nursery school and the gardens of the houses of Southfield Road. Oxford City Council designated the area as a conservation area on 16 July 1976 in recognition of the historical value of the hamlet with its listed buildings, rural character, its sense of isolation and its value to the community.

FIG. 4 The rural charm of Bartlemas - view of Bartlemas chapel



FIG. 4

Historic development of Bartlemas

The hospital and chapel of St Bartholomew were founded c.1126 by Henry I. The hospital complex was originally intended to take 12 lepers plus a warden/chaplain and was situated in ‘quarantine’ outside the eastern walls of the city. The land belonged to the Manor of Headington and provided a ‘lofty grove, rich in pasture and watered with springs’³. The complex contained a chapel, the hospital and warden’s house. The residents were known as brethren who lived, ate and prayed together. It was a self-sufficient community, with the brethren working in the surrounding gardens. St Bartholomew’s hospital was the name of the charitable foundation for lepers but the abridged ‘Bartlemas’ is more commonly used to describe the area generally.

The administration of the foundation was besieged by problems, principally caused by the lack of integrity of the wardens. Until 1326 there had been a succession

of wardens who reportedly mismanaged the hospital, Adam de Weston being one of the worst perpetrators. He was accused of selling vital provisions, retaining the money for his own benefit, dismissing the chaplain and allowing the buildings and land to fall into a run down condition. Edward II intervened in 1316 by imposing tighter restrictions on the wardens and the management of the hospital but again were overlooked by subsequent wardens, to the detriment of the hospital and its brethren.

1326 saw an important change in the management structure of the estate. The wardenship was granted to Adam de Brome for life. Already Rector of St Mary the Virgin Church on High Street (the University Church), de Brome had been granted authorisation by Edward II to found a new college, Oriel and was appointed its first provost. St Bartholomew’s was transferred to the College in 1329 and, although the houses are now in private ownership and the chapel belongs to the parish of Cowley St John, the bowling green, nursery school site and allotments still form part of the College estate. The charter of transfer stated that the hospital was granted to the College so that its scholars could enjoy the ‘the use of wholesome air in times of pestilential sickness’.⁴

Whilst the long term future of St Bartholomew’s seemed to have been secured through its transfer to Oriel, its resulting lack of independence meant that new problems arose and became embroiled in the town v gown conflict that had emerged within the city. Successive Mayors of Oxford refused to pay their rents to the college as they were receiving no benefit from the hospital. Short-lived solutions were found but it was not until almost 200 years after the conflict began the college finally reached an agreement with the City following the intervention of Henry VIII in 1536. In return for a reduced yearly rent, the City could nominate freemen to fill any vacancies in the brethren, turning the hospital building into a city almshouse.

One of the conditions of transferring the hospital to Oriel stated that they were to ensure that the buildings be kept in good repair at all times. At the time of transfer, the original 12th century chapel, believed to have been constructed of timber, had fallen into a serious state of disrepair and in accordance with the terms, the College built the present stone chapel as its replacement.

Despite the terms of transfer and the construction of the stone chapel, the buildings were in need of further

repair in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Works were carried out only for the buildings to suffer greatly during the Civil War. The Parliamentary troops stopped the well and destroyed the hospital building. Cromwell’s own soldiers occupied the chapel as a stable, removed the bell and stripped the lead from the roof for use as shot. A grove of over 500 elms surrounding the site was lost after their destruction was ordered to prevent the rebels from hiding out.

Following the end of the war, Oriel rebuilt the hospital as four tenements, the previous structure having been destroyed. The chapel was restored in 1651 including the installation of the steep pitched roof and the oak chancel. Works of restoration and expansion were carried out to the farmhouse and was let in 1645, serving as an alehouse. In 1758, in a rundown condition, Dr Samuel Glass leased the house for use as a laboratory for his ‘famed’⁵ magnesia. In the 19th century the house and the 15 acres were let to a family of farmers named Pether, Richard Pether being the grandfather of William Morris, Lord Nuffield, the founder of the car company established in East Oxford. The almshouse returned to medical use as a convalescent home during the cholera outbreak of 1833.

By the mid-19th century, there were no longer any resident freemen in the almshouse. The annual stipend had not been increased by Oriel since the 14th century causing the residents to move out to the city to find cheaper accommodation. Services in the chapel had been steadily reduced from the 17th century onwards and by the 19th century, no services were being held at all and the chapel was being used as an ancillary farm building. Bartlemas Cottage was constructed in the early 19th century for the Oriel College Gardener.

Complaints were made against the College regarding their management of the foundation and the increased value in the landholdings. Initial investigations by the Charity Commissioners found in the College’s favour and dismissed the complaints. A thorough investigation was held at the instigation of the city council in the 1890s and as a result, the charity was to be placed under the Municipal Charity Trustees with Oriel paying £2,500 in 2.5% annuities in return for absolute title to the Bartlemas estate. Bartlemas House was renovated and occupied as a private dwelling house by a College Fellow. The former farmland to the rear of Bartlemas House was retained by Oriel and laid out as their own sports ground with two other areas of paddock to the south of the chapel

FIG. 6 St. Bartholomew



FIG. 6

³ Pershall, ‘History of England’

⁴ The Oriel Record – The Treasurer’s Report – Bartlemas (undated)

FIG. 7 Bartlemas brethren, Taunt

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FIG. 7

FIG. 8 Bartlemas, Taunt, 1904

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FIG. 8

FIG. 9 Bartlemas, Taunt, 1908

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FIG. 9

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FIG. 10 1878 OS Map

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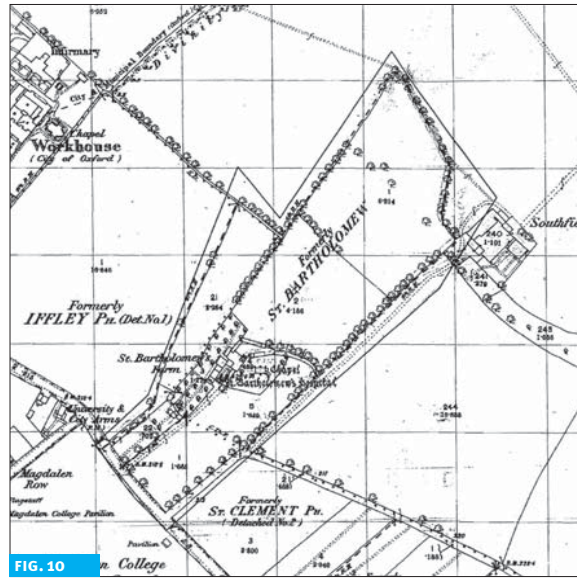


FIG. 10

FIG. 11 1899 OS Map

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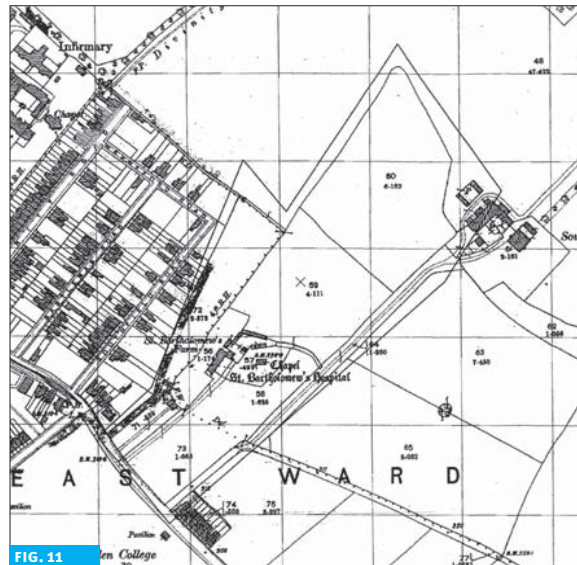


FIG. 11

House, Bartlemas Farmhouse and Bartlemas Cottage are now in private ownership.

Development of the area

At the time of the foundation, St Bartholomew's was set in a position of isolation, surrounded only by open fields. The complex itself was set in six acres of land⁶ being increased under Oriel's ownership to approximately 13 acres and put into active farm use.

The earliest surviving plan dates back to 1605 and is a 'description of certeine landes, leases and medowe groundes lienge in Cowley' belonging to Corpus Christi College. St Bartholomew's was accessed via the 'waye from Oxforde to Bartholomewes' (this may also have been the same road as Berrye Lane leading to Temple Cowley). The causeway crossed the marsh, passing St Bartholomew's and continued onto East Bridge (Magdalen Bridge). By 1793 this route was no longer used and the way to St Bartholomew's was over Headington Field via Mud Lane/Cowley Marsh Footway (now Barracks Lane).

The 1777 plan depicting the estate of Christ Church College in Cowley clearly shows the access road as being 'Cowley Road' which ran through the strip farms, including Bartholomew Field, passing over Cowley Marsh.

The Davis Map of 1797 demonstrates a pattern of routeways to Headington, Cowley and Iffley that emulate today's routes. The Cowley Marsh Footway (Barracks Lane) is marked leaving Cowley Road, passing through St Bartholomew's and on to Bullington Green and Horspath. The surrounding land was still rural in character.

The 1824 map depicts the St Bartholomew's estate, again being accessed by a lane off Cowley Road and hedgerows define the field boundaries. Cowley Marsh had been renamed Cowley Common.

The 1878 OS First Edition 1:2500 map identifies the boundaries of the St Bartholomew estate – stretching from Cowley Road in the south to the Southfield Ridge in the north. The historic cluster of buildings is marked together with an orchard/garden to the rear of St Bartholomew's Farm. Development is gradually taking place in the nearby vicinity with the workhouse to the northwest and church, public house and terraced housing to the south-west (Magdalen Road). The land on the south side of Cowley Road had been

laid out as Magdalen College Cricket Ground. Barracks Lane (Mud Lane) no longer ran through the site but terminated at the lane leading to Southfield Farm.

The 1899 Second Edition OS 1:2500 map illustrates how quickly the surrounding area was being developed. The land was well drained suitable for building and was also able to accommodate trams. Southfield Road abutting the estate boundary to the west had been laid out in 1891 with some development having taken place. Divinity Road, previously known as Divinity Walk, was laid out in 1891 and Bartlemas Road had been laid out and built upon. Development was also taking place along the northern side of Cowley Road to the east of Southfield Road and to the east of what is now Bartlemas Close. The Bartlemas hamlet still extends to Cowley Road separating the two aforementioned housing ranges.

The 1921 OS map demonstrates how the surrounding area rapidly became developed. The Bartlemas estate/Oriel's land remained intact. There had been more dense housing development to the west and north of the complex with Hill Top Road being laid out and developed with larger houses on the northern boundary. To the south, Magdalen's cricket ground had been converted to allotments. The northern side of Cowley Road had become more intensely developed. Jesus College and Lincoln College both laid out cricket grounds to the east of the lane to Southfield Farm with allotments to the south of Barracks Lane.

By the time of the 1937 publication of the 1:2500 OS map, the rural nature of the surrounding land had completely given way to suburban development. The west and north are densely developed with tightly packed terraced housing on a grid pattern. To the south the allotments on Cowley Road have been developed with more housing and the former Regal Cinema building in 1936–1937. Both the north and south sides of Cowley Road have been taken over by dense housing development. Oriel's cricket ground to the north of Bartlemas has been labelled. Jesus and Lincoln's cricket grounds still exists to the east but the allotments to the south of Barracks Lane have been built upon. The lane to Southfield Farm had now been named Bartlemas Close.

The 1956 OS map shows the allotments to the south of the chapel and the bowling green being labelled as such. The nursery school has been constructed,

FIG. 12 1937 OS Map

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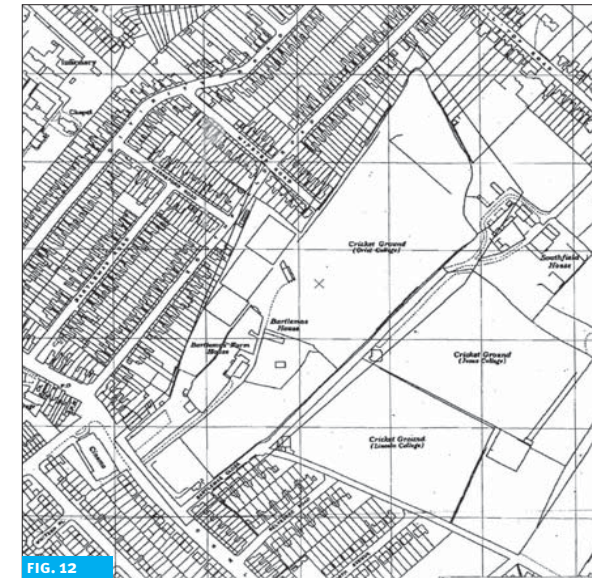


FIG. 12

FIG. 13 1956 OS Map

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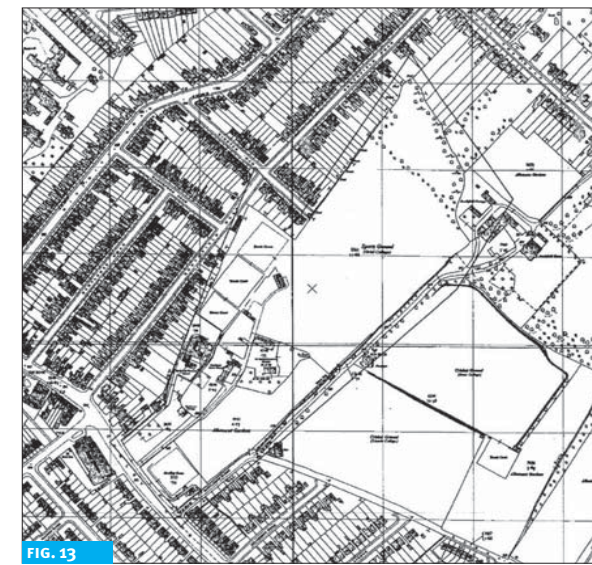


FIG. 13

being rented by the City Council for use as allotments and a bowling green. Some of the farmland/orchard to the west of Bartlemas Farmhouse was leased to the County Council and a prefabricated single storey nursery school was erected. The three houses were sold by Oriel in the early 1980s whilst the College retains ownership of the open land to the north, south and east and the nursery school site to the west of the historic hamlet.











The chapel ceased to be College property by the early 20th century and, having previously been an extra-parochial area, became part of the Parish of Cowley St John, and is now annexed to St Mary's and St John's church further up Cowley Road. Services are now held on the last Sunday of every month, the chapel is also used for special occasions and exhibitions. Bartlemas

accessed via a separate lane off Cowley Road, to the west of Bartlemas Cottage's garden. The orchard in the chapel grounds is also marked.

1961 the Southfield Golf course to the north-east has been developed.

Within the conservation area Cowley St John Vicarage at 271 Cowley Road was constructed on the lower section of Bartlemas Cottage's garden c.1990 having been allowed on appeal. To the north of the vicarage, a large detached dwelling known as Bartlemas Lodge, was built in 2002. Outside the conservation area 2004 saw the development of Evelyn Court on the lane to the nursery school and Sinnet Court student accommodation on the south-western section of Oriel's playing fields.

Bartlemas Conservation Area

-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II* Listed Building
-  Neutral Development
-  Negative Development
-  Enhanced Opportunity
-  Building of Local Interest
-  Important View
-  Enclosing Hedge
-  Wall Enclosing Chapel Yard
-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Landmark Tree

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Vicarage Red brick house contributing to the setting of Cowley Road whilst the surrounding planting contributes to the rural nature of Bartlemas.



Bartlemas Cottage Early 19th century rubble stone cottage forming part of the historic core of the hamlet.



Nursery School Disused buildings with own private access lane, potential enhancement opportunity and to reintegrate the site into the conservation area.



Bartlemas Farmhouse 14th and 15th century core with 17th, 18th and 19th century additions predominantly constructed from rubble stone.



Sinnet Court Development of student accommodation not in keeping with the rural character of the conservation area.



Bartlemas House 17th century stone house built on site of earlier almshouse/hospital.



Bartlemas Chapel 14th century stone chapel with 17th century slate roof, sited within own grounds with remnants of an orchard and other planting.



Bartlemas Lane Private access lane with strong rural character enhanced by rubble stone walls and planting.



Bowling Green Important area of green space that would benefit from enhancement.



Allotments Enclose and shield the historic hamlet from its suburban setting. Important local amenity and green space.



Telecommunications Mast Development beyond the boundary impacting on the views out of the conservation area

Character

The Bartlemas Conservation Area is now situated in an enclosed position amidst the densely built-up environs of Cowley Road and the surrounding streets although some of its rural isolation has been retained courtesy of the college playing fields and the nearby golf course. The hamlet has retained its integrity and sense of rural retreat and now consists of chapel, five houses, nursery school, allotments and the bowling green.

The hamlet is still accessed via the narrow ‘country’ lane off the busy Cowley Road, opposite the grade II listed former Regal Cinema building. Fronting onto Cowley Road is an unkempt hedge which does not really encourage a second glance. The lane leading up to the hamlet looks unassuming, terminating at Oriel’s sporting facilities, its entrance flanked by 271 Cowley Road (the vicarage) on the left hand side and the bowling green to the right. There is no real indication of what lies beyond this hedge and there are no clues as to the historical importance of the site from this point on Cowley Road. The hedge requires regular attention to improve its appearance; the utilitarian bus shelter in front of the hedge facing on to Cowley Road is covered in graffiti, whilst the pavement is patched and uneven. The overall impression when looking at this section of Cowley Road is one of neglect and unimportance.

FIG. 14 *Densely built environs of Cowley Road*



FIG. 15 *The hedges which enclose Bartlemas*



FIG. 15

FIG. 16 *Bartlemas, a rural retreat*



FIG. 16

FIG. 17 *The view into Bartlemas from Oriel College Sports Field*



FIG. 17



FIG. 18



FIG. 19



FIG. 20

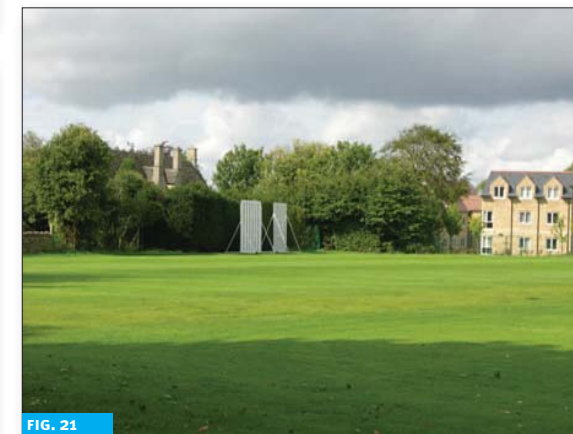


FIG. 21

FIG. 18 *Secrecy of Bartlemas created by the enclosing hedgerows*

FIG. 19 *View across Lincoln playing fields*

FIG. 20 *Sinnet Court*

FIG. 21 *Relationship of Sinnet Court to Bartlemas*

1. Setting

Since the time of its original construction in the 12th century, the landscape surrounding Bartlemas has significantly altered. Replacing the large expanses of open countryside, which originally afforded long interrupted views of the hospital complex, is dense suburban development and College playing fields. To the north and north-east of the conservation area there is still quite a large amount of open green space in the form of college playing fields and a golf course. Although these areas have limited public access, they do create a green and open setting to the conservation area and are indicative of how the area may have looked prior to the dense residential development that has taken place around the rest of the hamlet.

One of the area’s main features is its secrecy. The surrounding land was rapidly developed from the mid-19th century, with tightly packed streets replacing the open countryside, gradually eroding the open and isolated setting of Bartlemas. During the late 20th century, hedges were planted around the hamlet resulting in containing the site and limiting views into the conservation area, creating its ‘secrecy’ as well as reinforcing the sense of isolation.

The residential developments surrounding Bartlemas

have no connection with the historic hamlet and due to the high nature of the hedging, do not overly impact on the integrity and character of the conservation area. However, there are two aspects of the setting to the hamlet that have impacted negatively on the conservation area in recent years: Sinnet Court and the telecommunications mast on Bartlemas Close.

Sinnet Court student accommodation, to the north-west of the historic elements, was allowed on appeal in December 2000. The development was partly built within the conservation area boundary on the old tennis courts and extending northwards into Oriel’s sports fields. The development incorporating 3 storey accommodation blocks, has encroached upon the open nature of the playing field, impacted upon views into and out of the conservation area and brought dense urban development closer to the hamlet, impacting on its isolation. Some landscaping treatment has been laid out on the playing field frontage but as yet does not provide any adequate screening, the planting will take a number of years to become fully established and effective.

This development enforces the importance of design, scale and choice of materials when planning developments within and adjacent to conservation areas.

The telecommunications mast situated in Lincoln College's playing fields to the east of Bartlemas Close has had an equally negative impact on the setting of Bartlemas. The 18m tall mast has been unsuccessfully disguised as a cypress tree and is clearly visible above the roof of the chapel. As the photographs illustrate, the mast can be seen from both Cowley Road and various vantage points along the access lane as well as from the houses in the hamlet. Although its disguise as a tree aims to minimise any impact a mast has on a landscape by helping it to blend into its surrounding, its siting, height and unnatural colour only serve to accentuate its existence rather than minimise it. The telecommunications mast has recently been the subject of a planning appeal.⁷ In reaching its decision to dismiss the appeal, the

Planning Inspectorate concluded that the mast is detrimental to the rural character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and should be re-sited in its original and permitted location to reduce its negative impact. In April 2007, the mast was relocated to its permitted site.

2. Architectural character

The present stone chapel dates from the 14th century, built of roughly coursed rubble stone with ashlar dressings, incorporating a 17th century steep pitched slate roof. It is a simple but striking construction and is now Graded I listed. The chapel is sited within its own grounds, separated from Bartlemas House to the north by shrubs and to the south, the remaining orchard can still be seen. It is further divided from the adjoining allotments by a low stone boundary wall and dense planting. Originally views from the chapel would have been far reaching but have now been significantly curtailed and do not stretch beyond its grounds. The limited views and the dense tree cover both enhance the setting of the chapel and contribute to its confinement, continuing the hamlet's tradition of isolation. Conversely, the lack of views can also be regarded as being a negative feature as the hamlet has become totally divorced from the wider setting and is not encouraging access to the site. The positives of its isolation and secrecy should be carefully balanced against the lack of physical and visual access to the site as it forms an essential element of the area's character.

Bartlemas House, to the north of the chapel, was constructed in 1649 following the end of the Civil War. It was built on the site of the earlier almshouse/hospital that had been destroyed by fire with a new long rectangular plan building, providing a total of four tenements. The house today is a single dwelling over two storeys with attics, and adjoins the grounds of the chapel. The stone wall in the rear garden forms part of the northern boundary of the conservation area. The garden to the east of the house contains a well, a feature which has historically been associated with the site. The house is Grade II* listed, built from coursed rubble stone with a steep stone pitched slate roof.

To the west of the chapel is Bartlemas Farmhouse. The core of the house dates from the 14th and 15th centuries, the medieval survival of the chaplain's dwelling (Warden's House), with later additions dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The house



FIG. 24



FIG. 26



FIG. 25



FIG. 27



FIG. 28

is predominantly constructed from rubble stone with red brick chimney-stacks and rendered and limewashed end sections. It is characterised by its stepped roof heights and benefits from sitting in a large plot with mature gardens and is Grade II* listed. The rambling rural form of the house, which sits behind an ivy clad brick wall, is enhanced by an area of cobbled paving to the front while to the north stands a stone and pantile roofed outbuilding set gable end to the lane. The large garden extends to the south, enclosed by a stone wall and hedging alongside the lane.

Bartlemas Cottage is the last of the historic buildings with its gardens originally extending to Cowley Road. It is a three bay early 19th century rubble stone house with a shallow pitched slate roof and is set gable end to the lane from where it is visible above a rubble stone boundary wall defining its garden. The mature trees in the verge make a positive contribution to the character of the lane. There is an attractive rubble stone and slate roofed outbuilding in the garden of the cottage which is also visible from the lane.

Bartlemas Lodge, next to Cottage, was constructed c.2002. A large stone built detached property in a modern style. Set back from the lane behind a low

wall, the house does not sit easily within its plot and can be regarded as a neutral element. The paved parking area and front garden are featureless, lacking character and colour and would benefit from enhancement ie. planting to soften the appearance and integrate the house with its wider setting, adding to the leafy and rural nature of the conservation area. Whilst the choice of material was an attempt to be in keeping with the traditional elements of the hamlet, the house is still new and the stone has not fully weathered or blended into the surroundings. The dark timber framed windows and bright red roof are also out of keeping with the general tone of the area, white windows frames would work better with the character and appearance of the area.

FIG. 22 View of mast across Bartlemas



FIG. 22

FIG. 23 Close-up of mast



FIG. 23

⁷ Date of appeal decision: 30 January 2007. Oxford City Council reference: 05/00013/ENF; appeal reference: APP/G3110/C/05/2003 329.

The construction of the new vicarage at 271 Cowley Road was allowed on appeal in 1986. The house bears no resemblance to, or connection with, the rest of the buildings within the conservation area. Constructed from dark red brick with a decorative banding of yellow brick, the large detached building does not integrate with the historic character of the Bartlemas hamlet. The choice of material is more in keeping with the terraces of Cowley Road rather than the stone built houses further up the lane. However, it is far removed from the historic buildings at the top of the lane and therefore does not overly detract from the integrity of the hamlet.

The vicarage garden benefits from mature trees and planting to help the house blend in with its rural surroundings to the north, whilst the more open front garden facing on to the main road adds to the continuity of the open frontages of Cowley Road. The oak tree in the corner position at the gateway to the lane is a significant tree both in terms of landmarks on

FIG. 29 Bartlemas Vicarage



FIG. 30 Landmark tree



FIG. 31 Glimpsed view from Bartlemas Close

Cowley Road and contribution to the green leafy nature of the conservation area. The Planning Inspector of the earlier dismissed appeal in 1984 identified the need to retain the oak tree considering it “to be very important to the street scene and to the conservation area”. In the appeal of 1986, the Planning Inspector also stressed the importance of the trees and hedging along Cowley Road to the streetscene.

3. Spacing

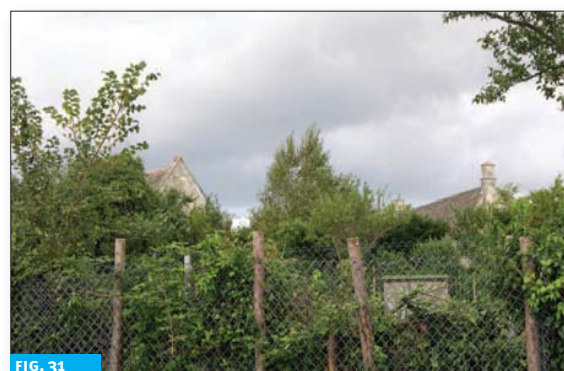
Only limited development has taken place within the conservation area with any infill being restricted to the two houses built in front of Bartlemas Cottage ie the vicarage and Bartlemas Lodge and one block of the Sinnet Court development. Due to the lack of development, the gaps between the historic buildings has been retained, with each property sitting in its own generous plot. The conservation area map on page 5 illustrates how the open nature of the conservation area has been preserved, an element of its character that should be further retained and was highlighted in the Planning Inspector’s report of 1984.

4. Building materials

The predominant materials of the conservation area include stone, slate, stone slate and timber framed windows.

5. Views

Views into and out of a conservation area usually play an important role in the overall character of an area, the public’s appreciation of it and illustrate how the conservation area relates to its wider setting. Because the access lanes are privately owned and the area has good tree cover the views into Bartlemas are severely limited. Rather than detracting from the area’s special character, it adds



to the sense of intrigue and isolation.

Long reaching views from the public realm into the conservation area do not exist. As the early photographs show this is a more recent condition as there were more open views before the planting of hedges around the bowling green and allotments. There are opportunities to offer tantalising glimpses, without prejudicing the secluded nature or privacy of the residents, in response to the earlier, more natural, landscaping that would allow wider appreciation and experience of this heritage asset. From Southfield Park, to the north of Oriel’s playing fields, it is possible to see the roofs of the hamlet nestling amongst the trees and beyond to the higher land of Cumnor and Boars Hill. Other glimpses of the historic buildings can be obtained from various places along Bartlemas Close, but only the rooftops can be seen. Due to the dense hedging of along Cowley Road and Bartlemas Close, clear views of the conservation area are not possible.

The views from within the private realm provide a stark contrast to those from the public realm and are much more open in character. The open expanse of the allotments provides views of the historic buildings to the north and west, whilst to the south it is possible to see the roofs of the terraces of Cowley Road. The private houses within the boundary also benefit from more open views across the conservation area and its setting.

The access to the hamlet creates a typical image of a country lane, enclosed by dense green verges. Due to the curving nature of the lane, the top of the lane and the historic buildings cannot be seen from Cowley Road, again adding to the mystery of Bartlemas.

6. Rural character

The allotments are both an intrinsic element of the rural character of the area and an important recreational amenity for the local community. They provide a much needed area of open green space within the locality, they are also a reminder of the hospital’s historic setting in the days when the brethren worked in the gardens of the hospital growing their own produce. They are well tended with a waiting list for any vacant plots.

7. Trees

The trees make a significant contribution to the green



FIG. 32

FIG. 32 Bartlemas from roof of Regal, 1984

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FIG. 33

FIG. 33 View across allotments



FIG. 34

FIG. 34 View across Bartlemas to setting of Oxford



FIG. 35

FIG. 35 Allotments in winter

and rural character of the area. Orchards have been historically linked with the gardens of the farmhouse and the chapel. The nursery school, built on part of the farmhouse gardens has retained the orchard. The small orchard to the south of the chapel still remains.

FIG. 36 Bowling green

The trees in the gardens and along the access lane all add to the leafy nature of the conservation area. The impressive oak and ash trees as identified by the Planning Inspector as being important to the character of the area, create a landmark along this section of Cowley Road as well as marking the entrance to the conservation area. Appendix 1 lists the tree species characteristic of the conservation area.

FIG. 37 Nursery School

The nursery school site is a redundant plot on the western edge of the conservation area, abutting the full length of Bartlemas Farmhouse garden. The access to the school is via a narrow lane and the prefabricated buildings are no longer used and are boarded up. This is an area that requires attention to bring the site back into active use and to make a positive contribution to the overall character of the conservation area, either by adapting the existing buildings or possibly through the construction of new and appropriately designed structures. There is no physical access from the nursery school site to the main body of the conservation area and only limited visual access due to the dense planting between the two sections. Owing to its access up a separate lane between 267 and 271 Cowley Road, this site does suffer from a physical detachment from the rest of the conservation area. The proximity to the historic buildings means that the nursery school site does

FIG. 38 Nursery Lane

8. Negative elements and enhancement opportunities

The two main negative aspects of the conservation area are the bowling green site fronting onto Cowley Road and the former nursery school site in the north-western corner. With regard to the bowling green, neither the actual green nor the pavilion are being used, and have been left to fall into a state of disrepair. The pavilion is boarded up, with its roof and verandah in a dilapidated condition.⁸ At present, the site is surrounded by hedgerows on all sides, the green has been laid out for tennis courts (unused) and the remaining fencing posts add to the abandonment of the site. As the most immediately visible part of the conservation area the sense of decay and dereliction do no favours for one's perception of the area and detracts from the overall appearance of the conservation area. It is an important element of open space as well as helping to keep the urban sprawl of Cowley Road at bay providing a visual and psychological buffer for the more historic elements of the settlement. With appropriate landscape management and continued maintenance, it will not only add to the appearance but will also maintain the green and open character of the conservation area, improving the quality of the streetscene along Cowley Road. It is an important area of open space and despite its condition plays an important role in providing protection for the historic buildings to the north of the site.



FIG. 37



FIG. 38



FIG. 36

⁸ Since the Appraisal was adopted by the City Council in July 2007, the bowling green pavillion has been destroyed by fire and subsequently removed from the site.

play an important role in the setting of the hamlet. It provides a green buffer along the western section of the conservation area, maintaining the important sense of seclusion and isolation that has traditionally been associated with the historic core of Bartlemas but as it stands at present, the air of neglect dominates and reduces its contribution to the character of the conservation area. Any reuse or redevelopment of this site must take full account of the proximity of the listed and historic buildings, the relationship between each of the buildings and the special character of the conservation area as a whole.

The sense of isolation is an important element of the conservation area's charm and its history. The form of its isolation has changed over the centuries, where once open fields surrounded St Bartholomew's Hospital, it is now enclosed by dense residential development, its seclusion now being created by high hedgerows and private college playing fields. As a result of the changing land uses, the views of the hamlet have become curtailed to the extent that Bartlemas can no longer be clearly seen from Cowley Road, an element which may be seen as a both a negative and positive characteristic. There is no longer a strong relationship between the historic hamlet and its wider setting. The 19th and 20th century developments along Cowley Road and surrounding streets do not have anything in common with Bartlemas and therefore, the physical separation caused by the dense hedging and lack of visual access into the conservation area may be seen as being a positive element of its character. However, it may also be regarded as being a negative element as the historic environment is valued by all and Bartlemas' secrecy and isolation do not encourage wider visual access. It is therefore extremely important that, if additional views into the conservation area were to be created, they should be carefully balanced with the retention of the essential elements of the conservation area i.e. its rural nature and important sense of isolation that has always been linked with the hospital.

Further enhancements can be achieved by implementing a thorough maintenance regime for the hedging with the possible long-term aim of relaying the hedge with more appropriate hedgerow species. An additional long-term aim would be the appropriate resurfacing of the private access lanes to both the nursery school site and the hamlet itself. They are currently patched and uneven and visually detract from the appearance of the area.



FIG. 39

FIG. 39 Boundary wall of Bartlemas

Conclusion

Within the conservation area, Bartlemas House, Bartlemas Farmhouse, Bartlemas Cottage, the vicarage and Bartlemas Lodge are all in active residential use. The prefabricated nursery school is rundown and unused and is surrounded by an overgrown orchard. The allotments are fully cultivated and provide amenity for the surrounding community as well as being a reminder of the medieval strip farming that once dominated the immediate landscape. The bowling green, marking the southern boundary, is now disused and untidy and in serious need of attention but provides an important area of green open space. Each element of the settlement combines to create a distinctly rural retreat in the heart of one of Oxford's busiest suburbs.

There is a prevalent air of tranquillity within the settlement despite its proximity to Cowley Road. This in part has been achieved through the retention of the rural elements that contribute significantly to the overall character of the area: the profusion of trees, the enclosing hedges with their attendant wildlife activity and sounds i.e. bird song, and the playing fields to the north contribute in shielding modern-day life from the historic hamlet, even managing to keep the constant vehicular noise on Cowley Road to a distant hum.

There is no high density occupation of the

FIG. 40 The rural character of Bartlemas

conservation area, its varying uses do not overly impact on the peacefulness of the area. The chapel is regularly used for services, festivals, private prayer, concerts and exhibitions; the allotments have their own access from Bartlemas Close and there is no commercial activity within the hamlet. Only residents and students accessing Oriel's sporting facilities use the lane, there is no means of vehicular access through the site for the general public, although the public are permitted to walk up to the chapel and its grounds. The lack of through-flowing traffic adds to the tranquil atmosphere that is such an important element of the character of this small area of Oxford.

The hamlet can be regarded as a 'secret', there is little to give its existence away from Cowley Road. Limited visual and physical access to the site may be seen as a negative element in the area's overall character. However, Bartlemas' surroundings are now so far divorced from the character of the hamlet that its isolation and limited access actually strengthen the area's significance and character, rather than detracting from it. The surrounding townscape consists of dense urban housing in small plots on a tight grid-like pattern. Originally, the complex was surrounded by open fields with only a smattering of development to the west. The surrounding hedgerows help shield the historic hamlet from the urbanisation of Cowley Road.

The bowling green site is a transitional area, marking the change from the hard suburban form of Cowley Road to the rural nature of the allotments and the tranquillity of the chapel grounds. Though in need of some attention, the bowling green is suffering from a lack of active use but the significance of this site and its contribution to the conservation area cannot be underestimated.

Leper hospitals were once a familiar sight on the outskirts of medieval towns and cities. Through city expansion and suburbanisation, many of these 'lazar houses' have been lost to development. Bartlemas has not only survived the pressures of development, it has managed to retain its integrity and sense of isolation throughout the ages. It provides a much needed element of green space in what is otherwise a hard, urban streetscene. The open character within the conservation area has been retained, each dwelling sitting in its own grounds, the allotments and bowling green adding to the sense of space whilst being reminiscent of its more historic setting.

To retain the character of this area, it is vital that the established balance of uses is maintained and where possible, the vibrancy increased through the upgrading of the redundant and rundown elements. Although the surrounding area has been densely developed, Bartlemas has only been sparsely developed. The spacing of the historic buildings has been retained, the only infilling being in the former garden of Bartlemas Cottage. Whilst the development of the vicarage and Bartlemas Lodge has curtailed the views into the conservation area even further, the overall sense of spaciousness has not been overly damaged. The spaces between the buildings should be retained in order to maintain this important sense of openness. Likewise, the playing fields to the north of the conservation area are a reminder of the area's open and rural historic past. Three sides of the conservation area have been densely developed whilst the northern side still benefits from an open, green and peaceful setting.

Bartlemas Conservation Area was described by the Planning Inspector as a 'rare and beautiful enclave which must be preserved'. As a result of its designation as a conservation area and the willingness of its residents to retain its special character, Bartlemas still remains one of Oxford's hidden treasures creating an air of tranquillity in a densely built up suburb.



FIG. 40

Listed Buildings

Buildings are listed for their special architectural or historical interest, for close historical interest or for group value. They are classified by grades to show their relative importance:

Grade I	(A) Exceptional interest.
Grade II*	(B) Particular importance with perhaps outstanding features.
Grade II	(C) Buildings of special interest which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

(Grades A to C refer to ecclesiastical buildings only.)

Appendix 1

Tree species characteristic of Bartlemas Conservation Area

Common Oak on the Cowley Road, a veteran pollard, c.300 years old.

Common Ash immediately behind the Oak, taller but younger.

Horse Chestnut by Bartlemas Cottage is the tallest tree in the lane.

Purple Leaved Plum in Farmhouse Garden.

Walnut in Farmhouse garden with a characteristic large domed canopy.

Around the chapel there is a 9m tall Lime, 8m Ash and 7m Birch. There are a number of orchard Apples, Pear, Elder and hedges of Blackthorn. The hedge flanking the lane is Hawthorn, Myrobalan Plum, Elm and Walnut, at the upper end it is Beech. The hedge forming part of the northern boundary of the conservation area is yew.

The English Elm regrowth is notable and in the past it is likely that this area was dominated by Elm not Oak. The landscape character is rural and native and early 'traditional' introductions suit the character best.

Appendix 2

List Descriptions

St Bartholomew's Farmhouse (Bartlemas Farmhouse) – Grade II*

The 16th century main block is 2-storied roughcast rubble of 3 varying heights with a stone slate roof in which is an attic dormer. There are cellars and a stone based eaved stack with modern brick stacks. Casement windows. There is an early 19th century trellis porch, above

which and on the south side is a 17th century 3-light wood mullioned window. The back has two modern dormers and a modern porch.

History: The building, with the house to the north of St Bartholomew's Chapel, probably formed part of St Bartholomew's Hospital, originally founded by Henry I.

Bartlemas House – Grade II*

To the north of St Bartholomew's Chapel. Part of St Bartholomew's Hospital, rebuilt by Oriel College in 1649. 2-storeyed rubble in a long rectangular plan originally giving 4 tenements, now one house, facing south. Stone slate roof and 2 moulded stone end stacks with moulded stone shafts. At the back are two projecting stone stacks with moulded stone shafts. The south elevation has two plain stone doorways with 4-centred heads and 4-light partly renewed stone mullioned windows. The elevation has two similar doorways and single light windows. In the east elevation are some stone mullioned windows.

Interior: Includes some stone fireplaces and some original and some modern (1922) wood doorframes having initials and dates in the spandrels, for the College Provosts and Fellows, two being 'I.S.P' for John Saunders Provost, 1644-53. The roof timbers appear to be mostly renewed.

Chapel of St Bartholomew – Grade I

Chapel of the hospital for lepers founded by Henry I it was rebuilt early in 14th century by Oriel College who received it from their founder Adam de Brome. The West doorway is of late 14th century date. The low pitched roof-timbers, 1524-5 by Robert Carow, carpenter. Restored in 17th century (circa 1651) when the screen was erected. For its state in 1820, see two drawings by JC Buckler in Bodl. MS. Don. A 3 11 122, 123.