

**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 38:
HOLYWELL AND NORTHEAST EXPANSION - MANSFIELD ROAD**

The HUCA is located within broad character Zone H: Holywell and northeast expansion.

The broad character zone encompasses part of the former medieval suburb of Holywell and its subsequent expansion resulting from the development of new colleges and the University Science Area in the 19th and 20th century.

Summary characteristics

- Dominant period: 19th-20th century, 21st century.
- Designations: Two Grade II*, eleven Grade II listings. Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Interest: High except where already excavated. Extensive archaeological investigations on land north of Mansfield College area have shown the potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Civil War remains.
- Character: 19th century villas now faculty buildings. 19th century colleges; Early 20th century school. 20th century college accommodation and University faculty buildings.
- Spaces: Extensive enclosed green space within colleges and University grounds.
- Road morphology: modern streets although based on earlier lanes.
- Plot morphology: large, rectangular plots.
- The character area lies on the central ridge of the Summertown-Radley Second Terrace at a height of around 61-62m OD.
- Survival of townscape elements:
 - Extant Royalist Civil War earthwork in Mansfield College.
 - Listed buildings of 19th-20th century date.
 - New College School- (built 1904-5) Elizabethan style stone built school, Saville Road



■ The modern colleges and the edge of the Science Area (Zone H)

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HUCA 38 OAP Characterisation	
	Schools & Colleges pre 1945
	University Halls
	Post Medieval Colleges
	19th Century Colleges
	20th century Colleges
	University of Oxford Science Buildings
	Universities post 1800
	Historic Parkland
	Medieval medium distance route
	Modern Roads

Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

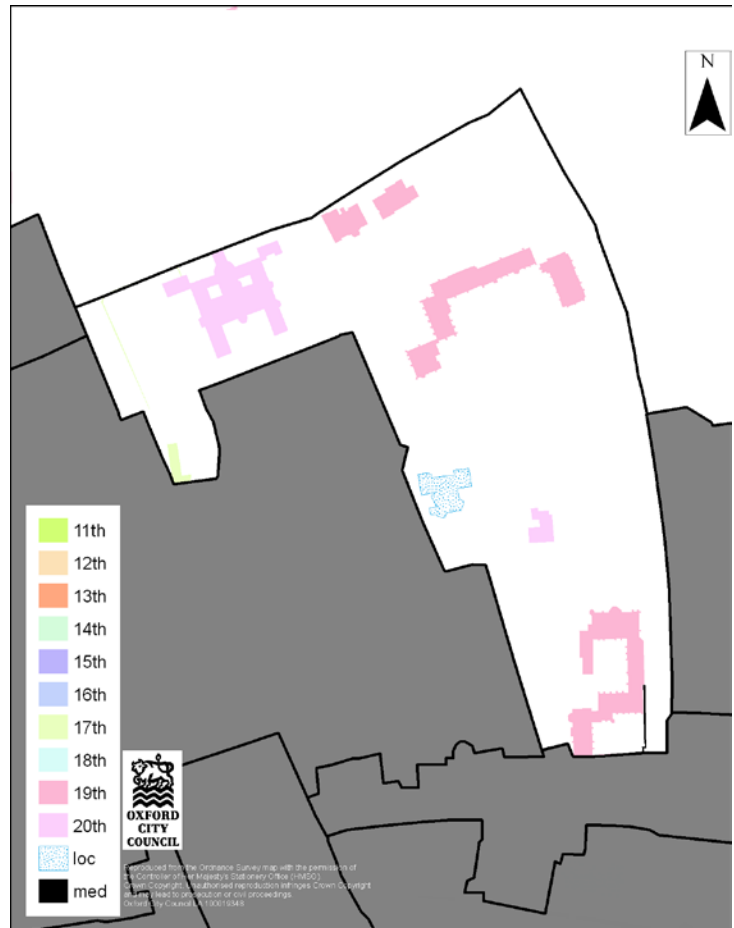
Description

The Mansfield Road character area lies to the south of the University of Oxford Science and Museum Area and to the north-east of the historic colleges. This area of the northern suburb was established in the 2nd half of the 19th century over land formerly occupied by college grounds and market gardening plots. It comprises of two purpose built late 19th century colleges Mansfield and Harris Manchester, the 1920s Rhodes House and its garden, the early 20th century New College School also two detached villas, Wareham and Saville House, used as student accommodation by New College. On the corner of Mansfield Road and Parks Road is the large multi storey rectangular glass fronted New Chemistry Laboratory, further west are two urban villas used by University faculties. Behind these, set back from the roads is the three storey modern Rothermere American Institute. On Parks Road the 17th century warden's house of Wadham College and adjacent gardens and car park have been included in this character area.

The character area contains mixed building styles with small and large late Victorian Colleges employing traditional two and three storey quadrangles and Tudor Gothic design, a number of detached villas and houses with surrounding lawns and tree belts, the monumental three storey Rhodes Building with its mix of classical and Cotswolds Manor House style and large modern buildings on the edge of the science area. The bulk of the area has a low density of development with extensive lawns and notable mature tree cover. Building density is higher in the north-east corner where large University buildings and car parks have been established.

Historical value- means of connecting with the past

This area of suburb to the north west of the city is a 19th century development occupying land previously used for open field agriculture and later college garden, sports fields and market gardens. During the Civil War Oxford became for a time the Royalist capital and saw the creation of two phases of Royalist defensive earthworks across the area between St Giles and the River Cherwell. Loggan's map of 1675 illustrates the remains of both phases of the defences with some open field furlongs shown to the south over what is now the Harris Manchester College. Extant sections of the Civil War bank survive in Mansfield College grounds. In the 19th century much of the area was given over the recreation and sports grounds for the colleges, market gardens. The start of the late 19th century saw the extension of the road network creating more uniform urban blocks. Both Mansfield College (1887-9) and Harris Manchester College (1891-3) are non Anglican religious foundations, established after the lifting of the Anglican monopoly over colleges in 1871. The character area is illustrative of a number of historical processes; the formation of non Anglican college in the late 19th century and their use of traditional styles and forms, the late colonial 'legacy' architecture of Rhodes House with its aspiration to represent 'the authentic Rhodes spirit'.



Listed buildings by date of earliest identified fabric (based on listing description)

Also the surviving stretches of Civil War earthwork, although not publicly accessible, are one of the last visible remnants of an extensive defensive system for the temporary royal capital.

Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence

This area has high archaeological potential for prehistoric, Roman and Civil War remains. The Urban Archaeological Database records nineteen archaeological events for this character area comprising one building survey of the Civil War defences by the RCHME in 1939, four chance finds and one salvage recording in the 19th century. The remaining thirteen events comprise archaeological investigations including two pre-1945 records of evidence during construction. Previous investigations have recorded Neolithic and Bronze Age features, Iron Age rural settlement and subsequent expansive Roman rural settlement in this area. The Civil War defences have also been recorded in a number of locations.

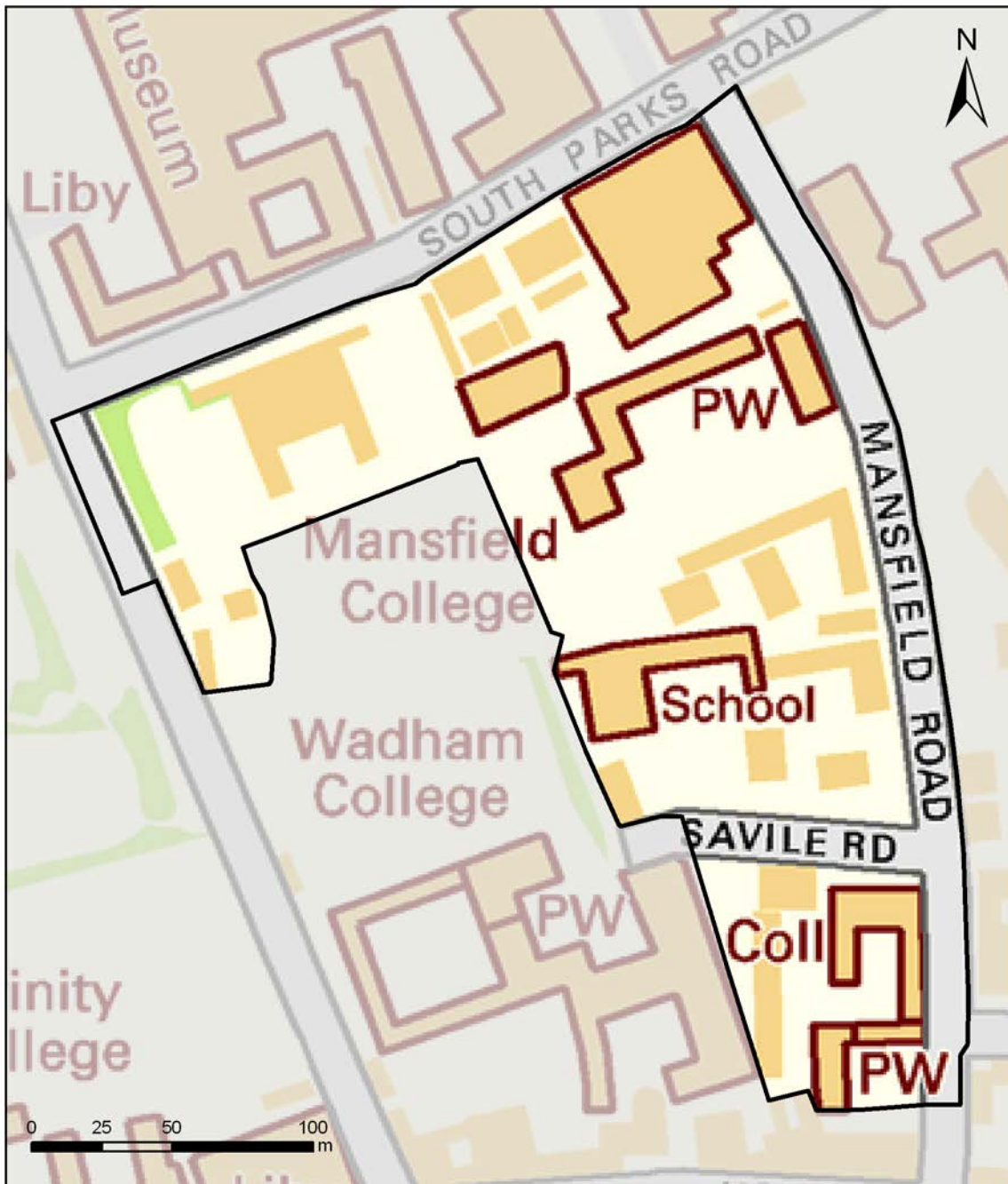
Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation

This character area contains attractive 19th century college precincts and detached 19th-20th century villas and houses and that retain landscaped lawns and mature tree cover. Notable buildings include the stone built Mansfield College complex erected 1887-9 to a design by Basil Champneys and Manchester College (Now Harris-Manchester) built 1891-3 in Tudor Gothic style with stone and brick by architect Thomas Worthington. Another notable structure is Rhodes House designed by Herbert Baker, built in 1926 with Bladon rubble stone and Clipsham stone dressing, employing vernacular architecture of the Cotswold Manor House, interior Arts and Crafts motifs, and classical elements of axial plan and Pantheon like rotunda with miniature Ionic portico.

Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

The character area is comprised mainly of enclosed college space and areas of restricted access although the Rhodes House façade is a dominant structure along Parks Road and is viewed by passing visitors to the University Museums and vehicular traffic bypassing the city centre. The communal value of the area is largely restricted to the experiences of students and staff.

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HUCA 38 Orientation map

