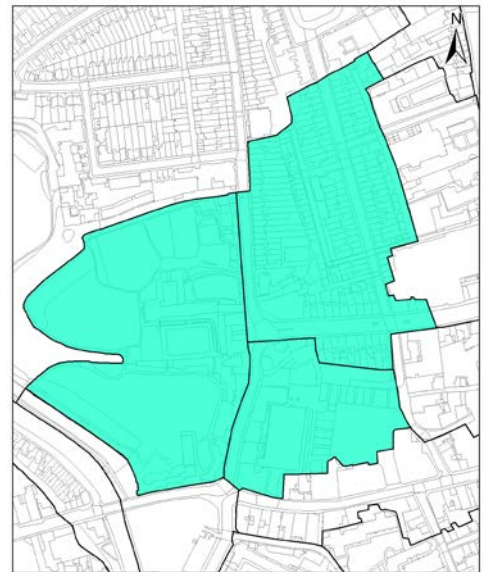


**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 25:  
WORCESTER COLLEGE AND GLOUCESTER GREEN -  
ST JOHN STREET**

**The HUCA is located within broad character Zone F: Worcester Street and Broken Hayes.**

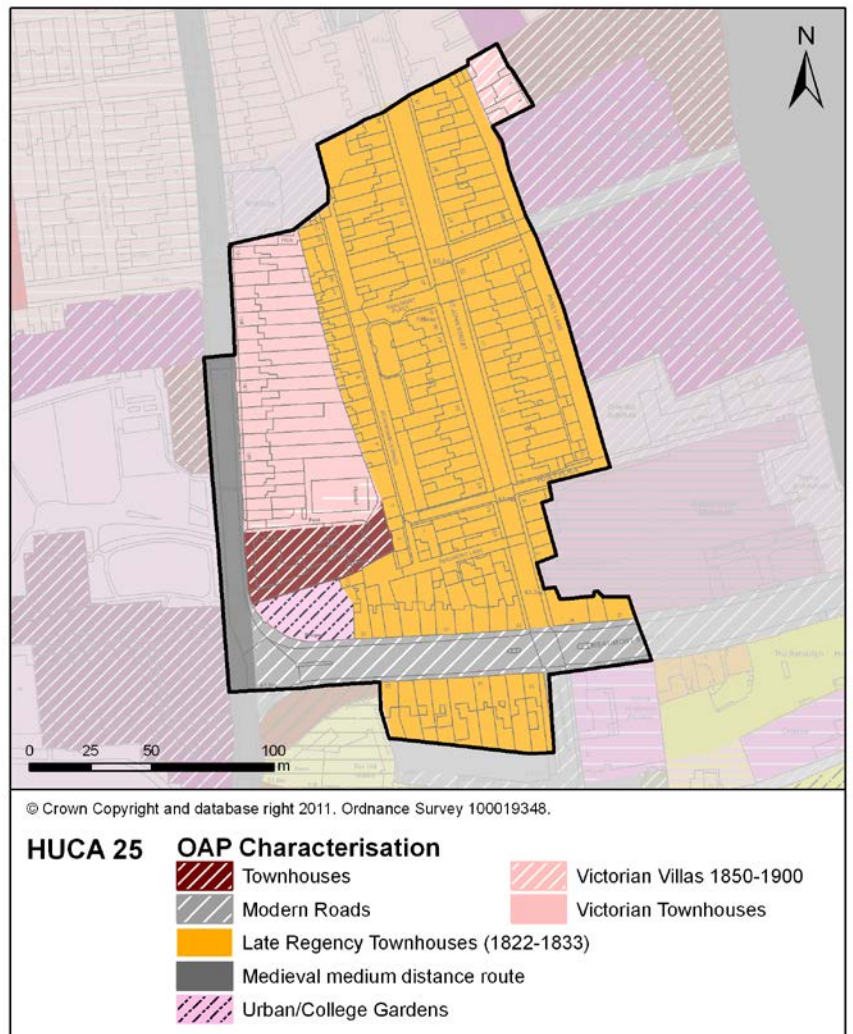
*The broad character zone comprises of the north-western suburb located around the former medieval open space of Broken Hayes, the route to Walton Village along Worcester Street, the site of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Royal Beaumont Palace and former monastic Gloucester College. Now comprised of the bus station, market space and shops at Gloucester Green, early modern development on Beaumont Street and Worcester College.*



Worcester College and Gloucester Green (Zone F)  
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**Summary characteristics**

- Dominant period: Early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Designations: One Grade I and six Grade II listings (these include multiple buildings covered by a single listing). Central Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Interest: Potential for Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age, Saxon and medieval remains. Possible area of 8<sup>th</sup> century activity. Site of 12<sup>th</sup> century Royal Palace and later Carmelite Friary. The projected line of the Royalist Civil War defences also cross through this area.
- Character: Three-four storey late early 19<sup>th</sup> century Regency style townhouses and Victorian terraces.
- Spaces: Beaumont Street is wide with spacious pavements and notable views. Green space is limited to short narrow private gardens with an area of enclosed private lawn and semi-mature trees on corner of Beaumont Street and Walton Street. There is no public open space
- Road morphology: Medieval linear route-way along Walton



**Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.**

Street. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century (1820s) rectilinear grid pattern with wide principal streets and smaller lanes to the rear.

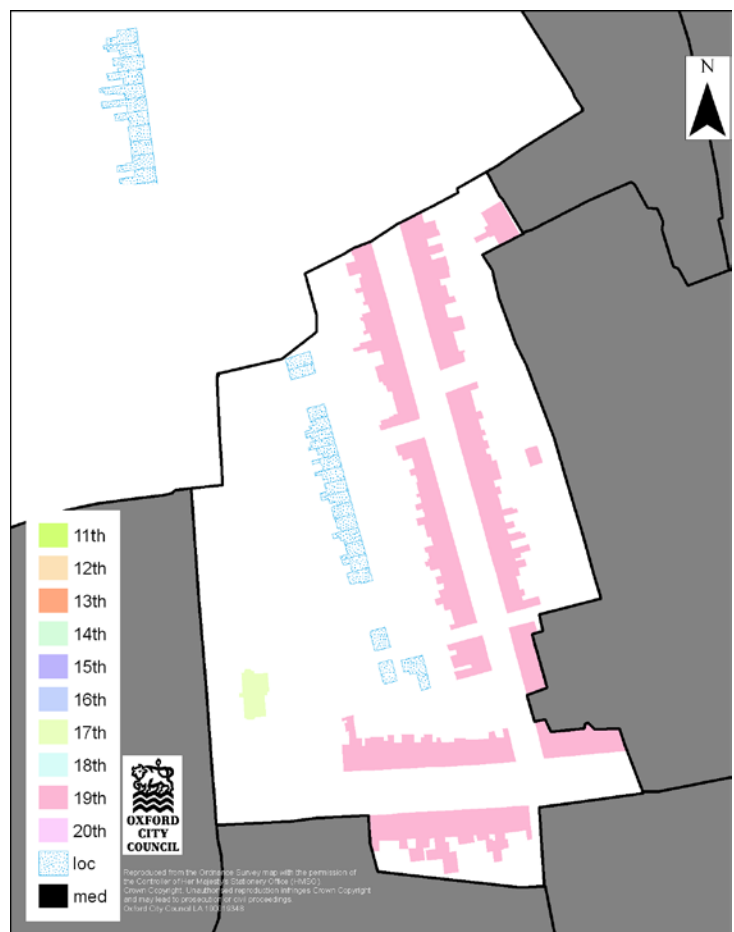
- Plot morphology: Narrow regular plots on planned 1820s estate. Smaller later Victorian terraces in long narrow plots on Walton Street.
- The natural topography is Summertown-Radley Second Terrace at a height of around 62-64m OD.
- Survival of townscape elements:
  - Walton Street is a route-way of at least medieval date
  - 'The Beaumont's' an early 19<sup>th</sup> century designed suburban estate. Design features include balconies, railings and cellar grills.
  - Re-used stone in some garden and house walls in the estate may be from medieval structures (including the former Royal Palace and Carmelite Friary).
  - A brick built structure of light industrial character survives on Pusey Lane.

## Description

This character area is comprised of a row of rendered brick Victorian terraces and a 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage on Walton Street, a row of modern flats and garages on Pusey Lane, a terrace of early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick townhouses known as the Beaumont Buildings and a coherent area of early 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced townhouses built in Regency Style on Beaumont Street and St John Street.

The Regency buildings are imposing three and four storey structures with dormers, built of brick and faced with Bath stone. They front directly onto the pavement and are notable for their consistency of design, with large sash windows, cellar grates and cast iron balconies on some of the larger Beaumont Street houses. The Beaumont Buildings are three storey brick town houses, some with Flemish bond with grey (or cream) headers in a chequerboard pattern. The Pusey Street flats and two storey brick and concrete with rooms over garages accessed by period stairwells. The terraced houses on Walton Street are narrow four storey buildings with smaller windows and street front light wells enclosed by cast iron railings. A small number of utilitarian modern structures have infilled plots to the rear of St John Street and Walton Street. As well as a small number of modern garages and flats to the rear of St John Street there are also rare survivals of original cart sheds.

Walton Street is a historic routeway from the western part of the town north to the hamlet at Walton, the remaining street pattern is 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. Most of the streets in this character area have tarmac surfaces with the exception of Pusey Lane which has a surface of stone setts.



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

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Beaumont Street and St John Street have generous pavements with York Paving. Beaumont Buildings has a narrow flagstone pavement with cellar grates. Wide streets and pavements retain notable views along Beaumont Street.

Short narrow private gardens with some more generous gardens belonging to properties fronting onto Walton Street retain a significant number of mature and semi-mature trees. An area of lawn and semi-mature trees is located on the corner of Beaumont Street and Walton Street belongs to the garden of a 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage owned by Worcester College.

### **Historical value- means of connecting with the past**

The character area is located between the historic town and the hamlet of Walton to the north. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Royal Beaumont Palace was established here by Henry 1<sup>st</sup>, denoting a period when the town enjoyed Royal patronage as a stop of point between Windsor and the Royal hunting lodge at Woodstock. The 'Kings Houses' or the Beaumont Palace is notable for being the birthplace of Richard the Lion Heart and King John. The precinct was located on the north side of the present Beaumont Street and comprised a hall, a great chamber, two chapels, a cloister, the residence of the king and his retinue and the functional offices of the palace and royal court. Although it retained its status as a royal residence in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, royal visits became increasingly rare and the site was granted to the Carmelite White friars in 1318. At the Dissolution the friary surrendered to the Crown and in 1541 the land was granted to Edmund Powell. Surviving structures of the precinct at the time included the house, a tenement and garden adjoining the gate, the church, a stable, a timber yard and two further closes. The ruins survived until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when they were painted by local artist John Malchair. Beaumont Street and St John Street were laid out between 1822 and 1837 on land that had been acquired by St John's College. The plots were sold off to speculative developers who submitted their plans for approval to the college ensuring the visual conformity of the street frontage in contrast to the rear of the properties that demonstrate a variety of forms. The character area provides excellent illustration of a planned early 19<sup>th</sup> century suburb in the Regency style.



**Beaumont Street looking east.**

### **Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence**

The character has good potential for archaeological remains relating to Bronze Age funerary activity, Saxon settlement and the medieval Royal Palace and Carmelite friary. The Urban Archaeological Database records seventeen archaeological events in the character. Previous notable investigations include the excavation of two Early Bronze age barrows on the site of the Sackler Library on Beaumont Street. Small amounts of 8<sup>th</sup> century pottery from the Sackler Site and from the Ashmolean Museum further east may indicate that this area was an early focus of activity before the creation of a defended burh at Oxford by the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. The extent of the medieval Royal Beaumont Palace has not been firmly established although post-medieval maps show the redundant Carmelite precinct and indicate that this extended from Rewley House on Wellington Square to the north at least as far as the Oxford Playhouse on Beaumont Street to the south. Excavations at the Sackler Library noted stone foundations and a series of medieval tree-planting pits that probably relate to garden landscaping for the palace as. A number of burials recorded in the vicinity of the junction of Beaumont Street and Gloucester Street indicate the location of the Carmelite cemetery. To the north of the character area an 18<sup>th</sup> century workhouse

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was located at Wellington Square and burials probably related to the workhouse have been previously been recorded.

The buildings of Beaumont Street and St John Street provide strong evidence for the operation of building trades in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, complemented by documentary evidence for some of the builders and initial owners.

### **Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation**

This character area has strong aesthetic qualities, being comprised of notable arrangements of Bath stone Regency town houses orientated on monumental structures located to the east and west along Beaumont Street. The more modest brick and rendered terraces also make an attractive contribution to the character area. Beaumont Street was constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century orientated on the 18<sup>th</sup> century frontage of Worcester College, which provides the focus for views to the west. Nikolaus Pevsner described Beaumont Street as ‘the finest Street ensemble in Oxford’.



**Beaumont Buildings looking north.**

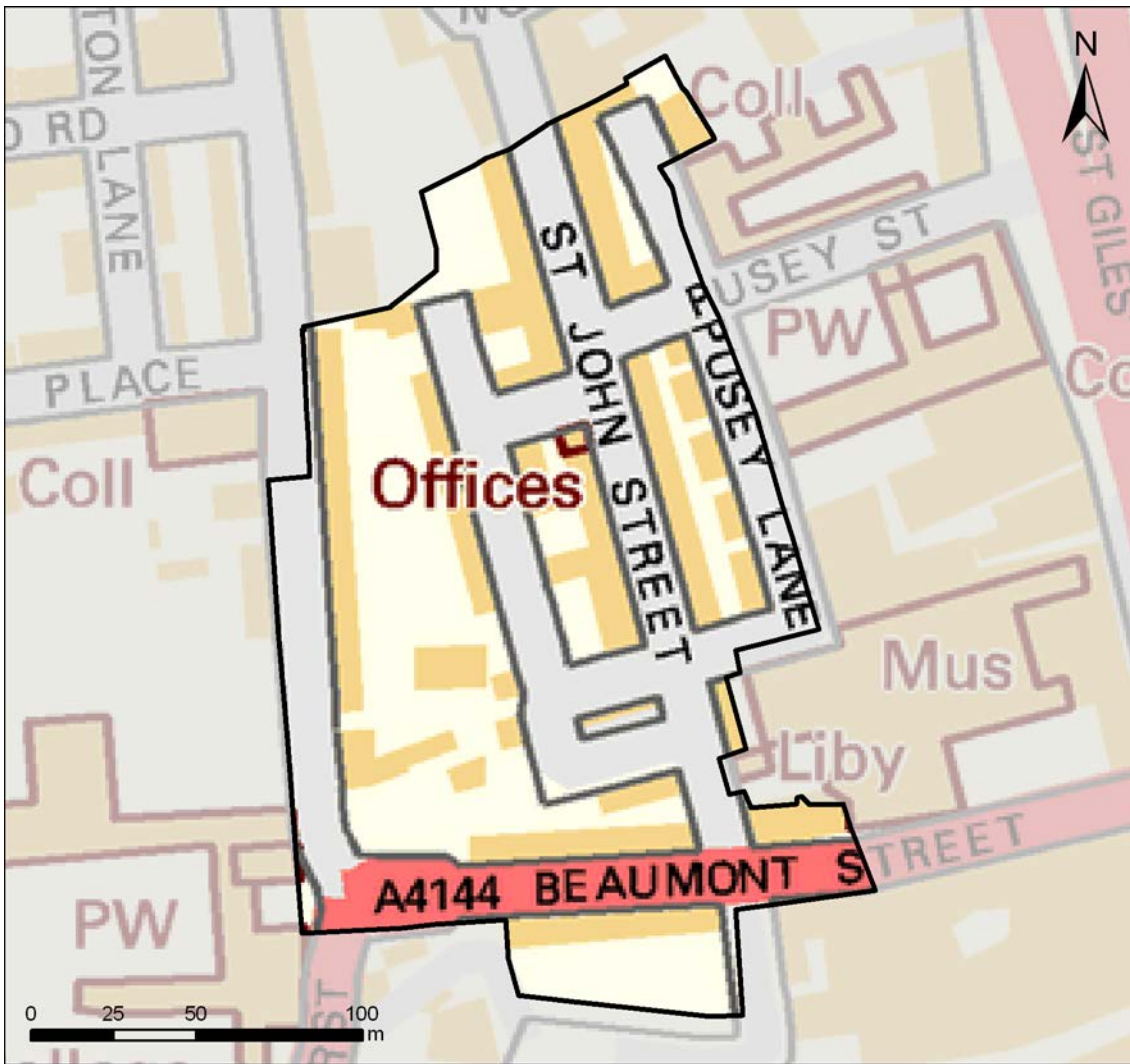
### **Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory**

The character area has communal value as an attractive residential suburb linking the city with Jericho and Walton to the North. The character is distinct within the central and northern part of historic core for being a coherent residential community, illustrated by the photograph of the Queen’s Jubilee street party below. The larger streets form a notable part of the visitor experience for those approaching the Ashmolean Museum and theatres further east.



**St John St Area Residents' Association Jubilee Street party.**

**Version: 8/2/2013**



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**HUCA 25 Orientation map**