

Law and Governance

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To Members of the West Area Planning
Committee

04 March 2013
Our ref:
Your ref:

Dear Councillors

WEST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2013

I attach the report for Item 12: Oxford Archaeological Action

Oxford Archaeological Action Plan

The Head of City Development has submitted a report which describes the work involved in the completion of the Oxford Archaeological Plan (OAP) project and the production of an Oxford Archaeological Action Plan.

Officer Recommendation:

1. That the Committee NOTE the completion of the Oxford Archaeological Plan and the production of the Oxford Archaeological Action Plan.
2. To recognise the challenges highlighted in the report and endorse the council's commitment to 1) developing a high quality evidence base on the historic environment and 2) providing effective archaeological development control advice.
3. The Committee made the following comments on the proposed action plan

Yours sincerely

Sarah Claridge, Democratic Services Officer



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



Encs

To: West Area Planning Committee

Date: 13 March 2013

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Oxford Archaeological Action Plan 2013-18

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of Report:

To describe the work involved in the completion of the Oxford Archaeological Plan (OAP) project and the production of an Oxford Archaeological Action Plan.

Key Decision: No

Report approved by: Michael Crofton-Briggs

Finance: David Watt

Legal: Michael Morgan

Policy Framework: (NPPF) National Planning Policy Framework
Oxford Core Strategy 2006 – 2026
Adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001 – 2016

Recommendation(s):

1. To note the completion of the Oxford Archaeological Plan and the production of the Oxford Archaeological Action Plan.
2. To recognise the challenges highlighted in the report and endorse the council's commitment to 1) developing a high quality evidence base on the historic environment and 2) providing effective archaeological development control advice.
3. The Committee's comments on the proposed action plan are invited.

Summary

1. The City Council Archaeologist, David Radford, will provide a short powerpoint presentation highlighting some recent exciting archaeological discoveries and explaining the purpose of the action plan.
2. The City Council's Heritage and Specialist Services Team have completed a three year English Heritage funded project to produce a number of evidence base studies for Oxford:

- An archaeological resource assessment (a summary of archaeological work undertaken by period).
 - An archaeological research agenda (questions we would like to ask of surviving archaeological remains).
 - Historic landscape characterisation mapping for the local authority area.
 - Historic urban characterisation mapping for the historic core.
 - The production of 44 historic urban character statements for the historic core.
 - The production of an Archaeological Action Plan.
3. The culmination of the OAP project has been the production of a six year Archaeological Action Plan for Oxford. The function of the archaeological action plan is:
- To signpost the online results of the assessment, research agenda and characterisation projects which are available for download on the archaeological pages of the City Council web site: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordArchaeologicalPlan.htm>.
 - To provide a short overview of the city's historical development and highlight some exciting recent discoveries in order to provide a context for these reports.
 - To flag up some strategic issues regarding long term archaeological asset management and provide a 'framework of encouragement' for larger developers and land owners aimed at promoting cost effective and sustainable outcomes through the development control process.
 - To provide an action plan for archaeological development control service delivery. Having undertaken a synthesis of previously accumulated archaeological information the focus of the plan is the improvement of the quality and scope of the Urban Archaeological Database, seeking to improve public access to this data and encouraging community participation and engagement in the process of archaeological investigation.
4. The Oxford Archaeological Action Plan Document is attached (Appendix 1).
5. An example Historic Urban Character Statement is attached (Appendix 2).

Background

6. Oxford has an exceptional archaeological heritage. For example over the last ten years excavations have revealed a Neolithic mortuary enclosure and henge, the remains of prehistoric burial mounds, a Viking mass grave, a likely medieval alchemy kit, previously unrecorded medieval cemeteries, the remains of medieval friaries, hospitals, University halls and colleges, evidence for the development of brewing and more. The pace of discovery opens up a series of opportunities and challenges that the Archaeological Action Plan addresses.
7. The archaeological investigations mentioned above have transformed our understanding of Oxford from the evolution of a 'sacred landscape' in prehistoric times through to the establishment of the Saxon fortress, the development of Norman infrastructure, the evolution of the commercial town, the college landscape, post-medieval re-building and subsequent industrial transformation. This information is brought together in the OAP project. A fuller overview is provided in the Archaeological Action Plan.
8. The OAP project brings together two national English Heritage initiatives, the Urban Archaeological Strategy programme and the Historic Characterisation Programme.
9. The Urban Archaeological Strategy (UAS) programme was established to improve the management of England's urban archaeological resource by supporting the creation of Urban Archaeological Databases, Resource Assessments and Strategies for over 30 historic towns and cities. English Heritage funded the establishment of an Urban Archaeological Database for Oxford in 2002.
10. The Historic Characterisation Programme involves the use of digital maps to record information about historic landscape character (including aspects of land use, building and plot form). Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) mapping has now been completed for the bulk of England at a County level. Oxfordshire County Council are currently undertaking a three year project to complete mapping for the remainder of the County, linking previous studies for adjacent counties (and also the completed studies for Oxford and the Oxfordshire Chilterns). The use of HLC studies is now referenced in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 170).
11. Historic Urban Character mapping is a more detailed level of study that seeks to allow the identification of broad character areas within towns. It represents one of a number of complimentary approaches to characterisation which include Conservation Area Appraisals and the use of the Character Assessment Toolkit. The 44 character area statements provide a brief description of each area, highlight key characteristics and

provide summary information about historical, evidential, aesthetic and communal value.

12. In January 2009 a project application was submitted to English Heritage for an Urban Archaeological Strategy project. Funding was obtained and a project officer was funded by English Heritage for a year from April 2010 to undertake data collection and report writing, managed by the City Council Archaeologist.
13. Subsequently the archaeological assessments and agendas have been through a programme of referee review and public consultation. Detailed comments were obtained from period referees and via a research agenda seminar. No public comments were received, perhaps reflecting the size and complexity of the documents. No other assessment project has attempt a comparable consultation exercise.
14. The Historic Urban Character Assessment statements have been through closed and public consultation. 145 people joined as consultees and twelve responses were received. Comments ranges from specific factual corrections to comments on the report layout, use of maps and images and the level of detail achieved within different sections of the reports. A number of the comments focused on the level of detail in the reports and raised issues that may be more properly addressed by other studies. As a result of the consultation corrections have been made to the text and character mapping.
15. The Action Plan document has been subject to a closed consultation of stakeholders and specialists. Comments were received from several local specialists and the chair of the Estates Bursar Committee. The responses to the document have been positive.
16. The intention is to produce a limited print run of the action plan for libraries, councillors and key land owners and to make a web based version available through the City Council archaeological web pages.
17. The OAP project forms part of the evidence base for the Oxford Heritage Plan which will facilitate the further development of heritage policy for the city.

Financial implications of the Action Plan

18. There are no specific financial implications.

The requirements of The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equalities Act 2010

19. The requirements of The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equalities Act 2010, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations has been taken into account and it is

considered that the design, delivery and evaluation of this project and the associated consultation did not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. To note the completion of the Oxford Archaeological Plan and the production of the Oxford Archaeological Action Plan**
- 2. To recognise the challenges highlighted in the report and endorse the council's commitment to 1) developing a high quality evidence base on the historic environment and 2) providing effective archaeological development control advice.**
- 3. The Committee's comments on the proposed action plan are invited.**

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Background papers:

English Heritage, 1992, Managing the Urban Archaeological Resource

English Heritage, 1996, Frameworks for our past.

English Heritage, 2000, Power of place.

English Heritage, 2005, Discovering the past shaping the future Research Strategy

English Heritage, 2005, English Heritage Research Agenda.

OCC Heritage and Specialist Services Team 2009 Oxford Archaeological Plan: archaeological and historic characterisation, assessment and strategy.

Project Design

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Oxford Archaeological Action Plan 2013–2018

Building a world-class city for everyone



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This report highlights the exciting recent discoveries and conservation challenges resulting from development driven archaeological investigation in Oxford. It sets out a 'framework of encouragement' for institutional landowners and major developers and identifies a number of strategic considerations for the effective long term management of Oxford's exceptional above and below ground archaeology.

The document includes an action plan for archaeological development control service delivery with the aim of facilitating the provision of rapid and effective heritage advice within the planning system. The plan focuses on the need to enhance public access to information about the historic environment and to improve the quality and scope of this information.

The report also provides a short historical overview of the city's evolution. Links are provided to an online information resource developed by the council's Heritage and Specialist Services Team, comprising summaries of recent archaeological work, research questions for future investigation and historic landscape and urban character studies. This information forms part of a wider evidence base for the historic environment being developed as part of the Oxford Heritage Plan.

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Oxford Archaeological Action Plan 2013–2018



Councillor Colin Cook
Board Member City Development

Oxford is a city where the seemingly timeless continuity of the historic core and an underlying dynamic of change and renewal combine to create an internationally recognisable urban environment. The city continues to attract increasing numbers of residents and visitors, in turn driving demand for affordable housing, improved infrastructure, sustainable economic growth, green energy provision, the renewal and rationalisation of existing facilities and for green space and leisure facilities.

At the same time there is an expectation that Oxford should retain and conserve a historic environment of the highest quality. This expectation has been true of the world famous historic core since it was popularised by writers and artists of the Enlightenment. However interest and appreciation of the rich historic environment to be found across the modern city is developing rapidly. This interest has been demonstrated by the level of community involvement in the development of a Local Heritage Asset Register¹ and the large numbers of people attracted to participate in the East Oxford Community Archaeology Project.²

Oxford's historic environment is a resource that enables us to advance our understanding of the past. It is also an asset that we need to steward and conserve for future generations if we are to achieve the desired outcome of sustainable development. Achieving an appropriate balance between conservation and investigation (and therefore removal of historic remains) is difficult and requires accessible high quality information about the historic environment and a clear vision of what is important.

With this objective in mind this document represents an important point-in-time review of Oxford's archaeological heritage and provides a framework for archaeological heritage management in the planning process over the next six years.

Archaeology and the government's vision for sustainable development.

The National Planning Policy Framework³ states that purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. It is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment. Sustainable development is about positive growth: making economic, environmental and social progress.

The presence of the physical remains of the past around us and beneath our feet is an essential element of a thriving spirit of place. The ministerial foreword to the National Planning Policy Framework states that our historic environment: buildings, landscapes, towns and villages can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.

Above and below ground archaeology can provide inspiration for design and enhance our sense of connection with the past. The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning must be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live.

¹ www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/HeritageAssetRegister.htm

² www.archeox.net/

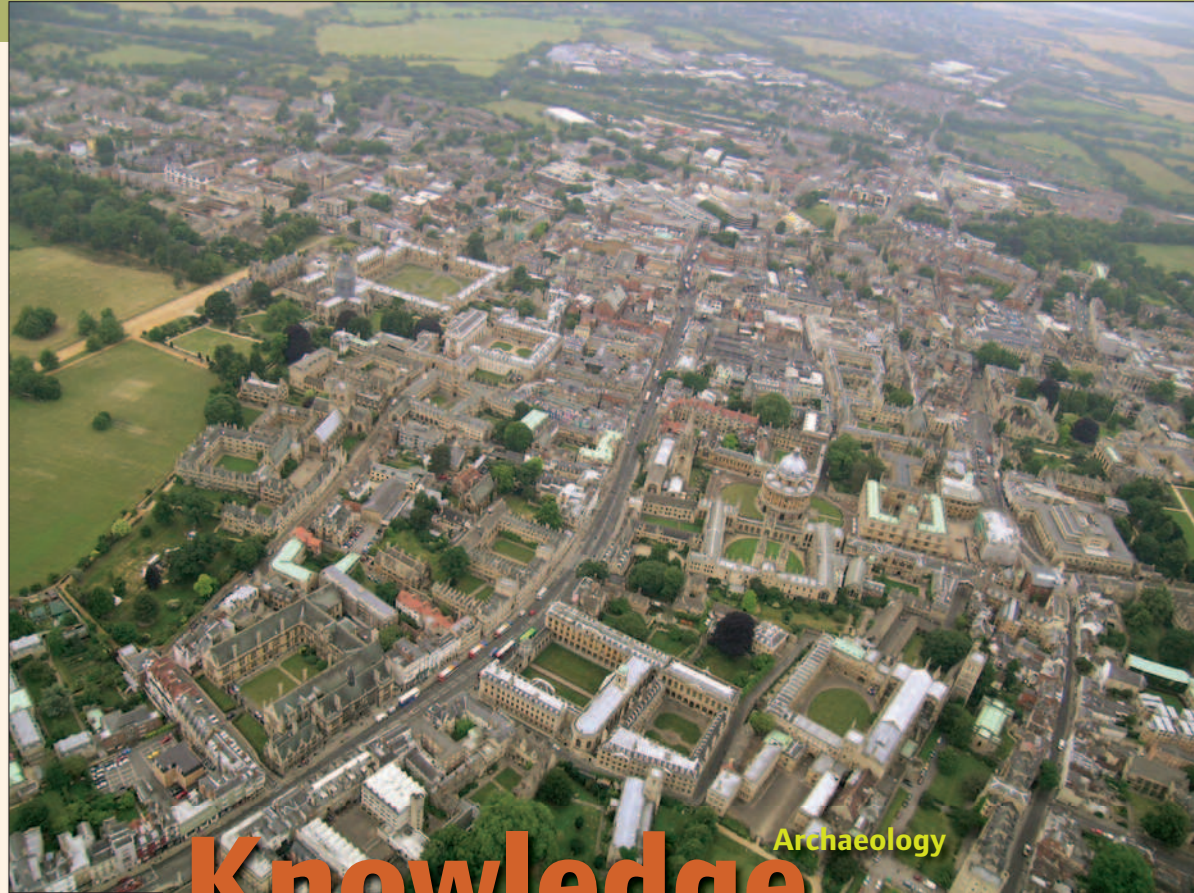
³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2

Oxford is a world famous university city well known for its historic buildings and landscapes. The city also preserves a rich archaeological heritage. Buried and standing archaeological remains are a source of new knowledge, an educational resource and a tangible link to the past for both visitors and residents. These remains also have the potential to make a positive contribution to the evolution of a dynamic modern city by generating public interest, inspiring and informing creative design and enhancing the quality of experience described by the government as 'spirit of place'.

Archaeological remains can be seen as a finite and non-renewable 'assets' that have evidential, aesthetic, historic, communal and economic value. Defining these values at any given time presents a considerable challenge. Oxford's archaeological remains are extensive and complex. If they are to be effectively managed and an appropriate balance struck between investigation and conservation then an ongoing process of information gathering and review is required. There is a recognised need to bring together the growing body of information that is being collected about the local historic environment and make this accessible to a wide range of users, from interested residents and visitors through to architects, developers and heritage managers.

As part of this process the City Council's Heritage and Specialist Services Team has produced a series of documents aimed at synthesising and summarising information on the historic environment of Oxford:

- An archaeological resource assessment. This summarises the archaeological investigations in the city to-date.
- An archaeological research agenda. This sets out the questions that might be answered by investigating the city's remaining archaeology.
- A Historic Landscape and Urban Characterisation study. These map the built environment from the Victorian period to the present by looking at changes in land-use and built-form.



Knowledge Education
Leisure and tourism
Health and well being Community
Design excellence
Sense of place

The production of an archaeological resource assessment, research agenda and the completion of historic landscape characterisation mapping for the Oxford Local Authority Area are the results of two long running national English Heritage projects.

- The Urban Archaeological Strategy (UAS) project was initiated because of a recognition that the historic towns in England preserve complex archaeological remains and that the collation and synthesis of the information accumulated about these assets was necessary to ensure effective future management.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project, which uses digital maps to pick out broad spatial patterns in the landscape and built environment, evolved out of a recognition by archaeologists that the historic environment needs to be understood in a holistic way rather than as a series of individual sites, buildings or monuments.

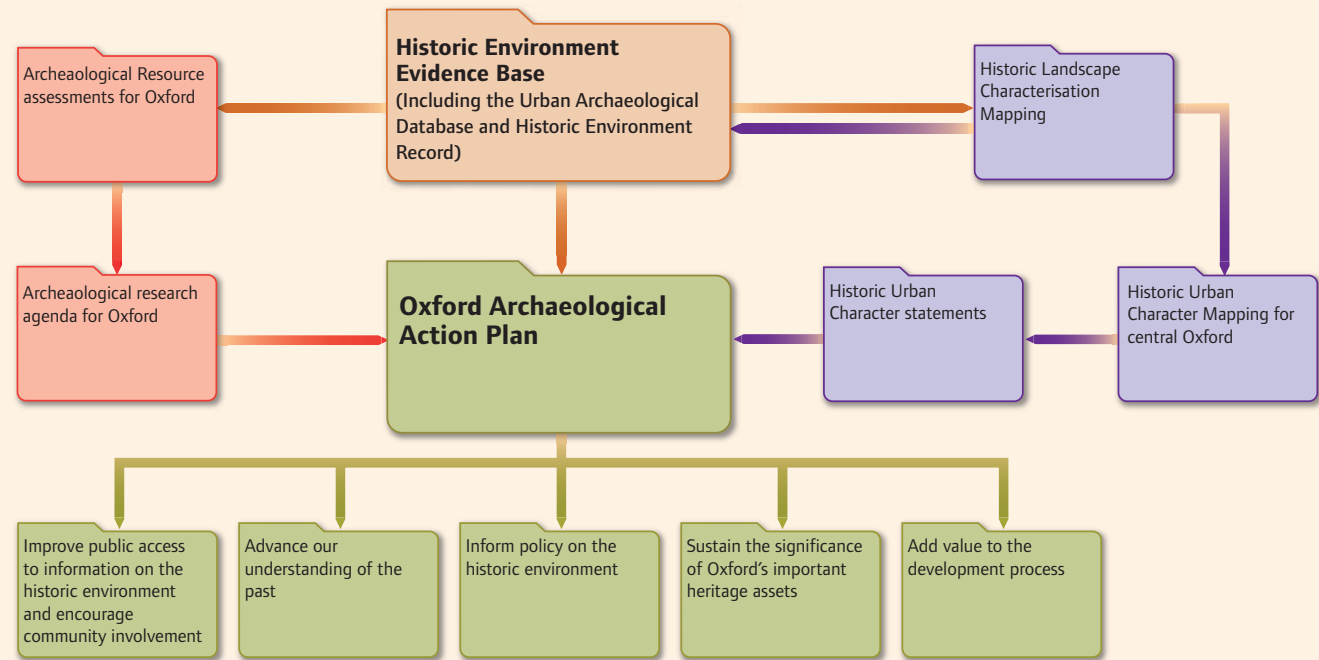


Fig. 1 Flow chart showing the components of the Oxford Archaeological Action Plan.

1990	2002	2010	2011	2011	2012	2013
The Government introduced Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 which made archaeological remains a material consideration in the planning process. The result was a significant increase in the production of archaeological information.	English Heritage fund and the creation of an Urban Archaeological Database for Oxford.	A review of archaeological reports, journals and database evidence was undertaken to produce a summary of archaeological knowledge by period (archaeological resource assessments).	An archaeological research agenda for the city was produced.	Historic landscape and urban characterisation mapping was completed.	Period of sector and public consultation.	Production of Archaeological Action Plan

Fig. 2 The process of data collection and review leading up to the production of the plan.

The heritage management sector has developed a range of methodologies for capturing information about the natural and built environment which compliment the approaches of urban archaeological assessment and historic landscape characterisation. These approaches can be combined to allow us to build up an evidence base of synthesised information that more closely reflects the complexity of the historic environment in all its dimensions (See fig 3).

The use of this document

This document provides a short introduction to the city's rich history and archaeology and signposts the information about Oxford's heritage that can now be accessed online (See page 32). The document also sets out a 'framework of encouragement' for institutional landowners and major developers which is mindful of the current challenging economic climate and seeks ways to add value to the development process. An action plan is provided (page 31) setting out a pro-active agenda for improved service delivery and promoting greater public access and engagement with Oxford's outstanding heritage.

What is a heritage asset?

The National Planning Policy Framework Heritage describes a heritage asset as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

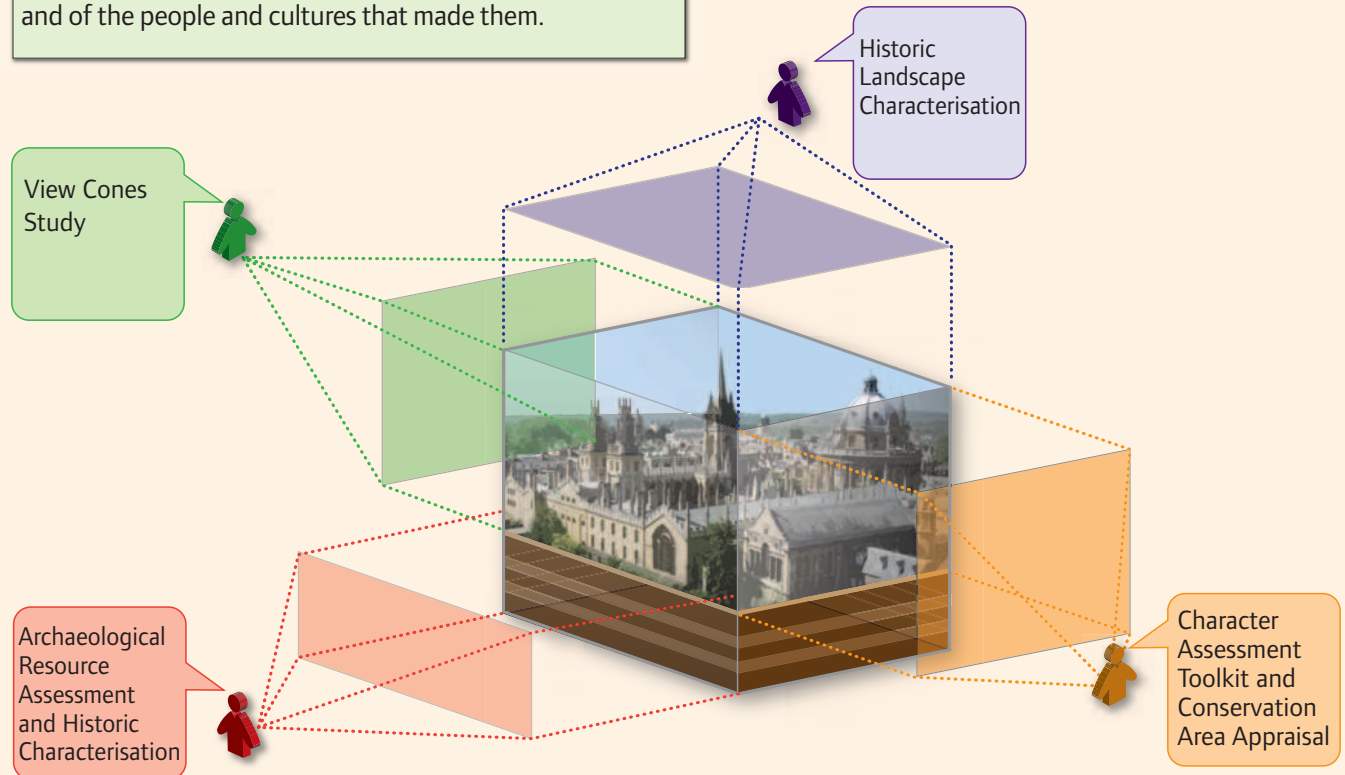


Fig. 3 A number of studies have been produced or are ongoing that provide information about the historic environment for property and heritage managers, developers, architects, urban designers, and interested members of the public. The diagram right illustrates the holistic approach being developed.

Oxford Heritage Plan relationship diagram

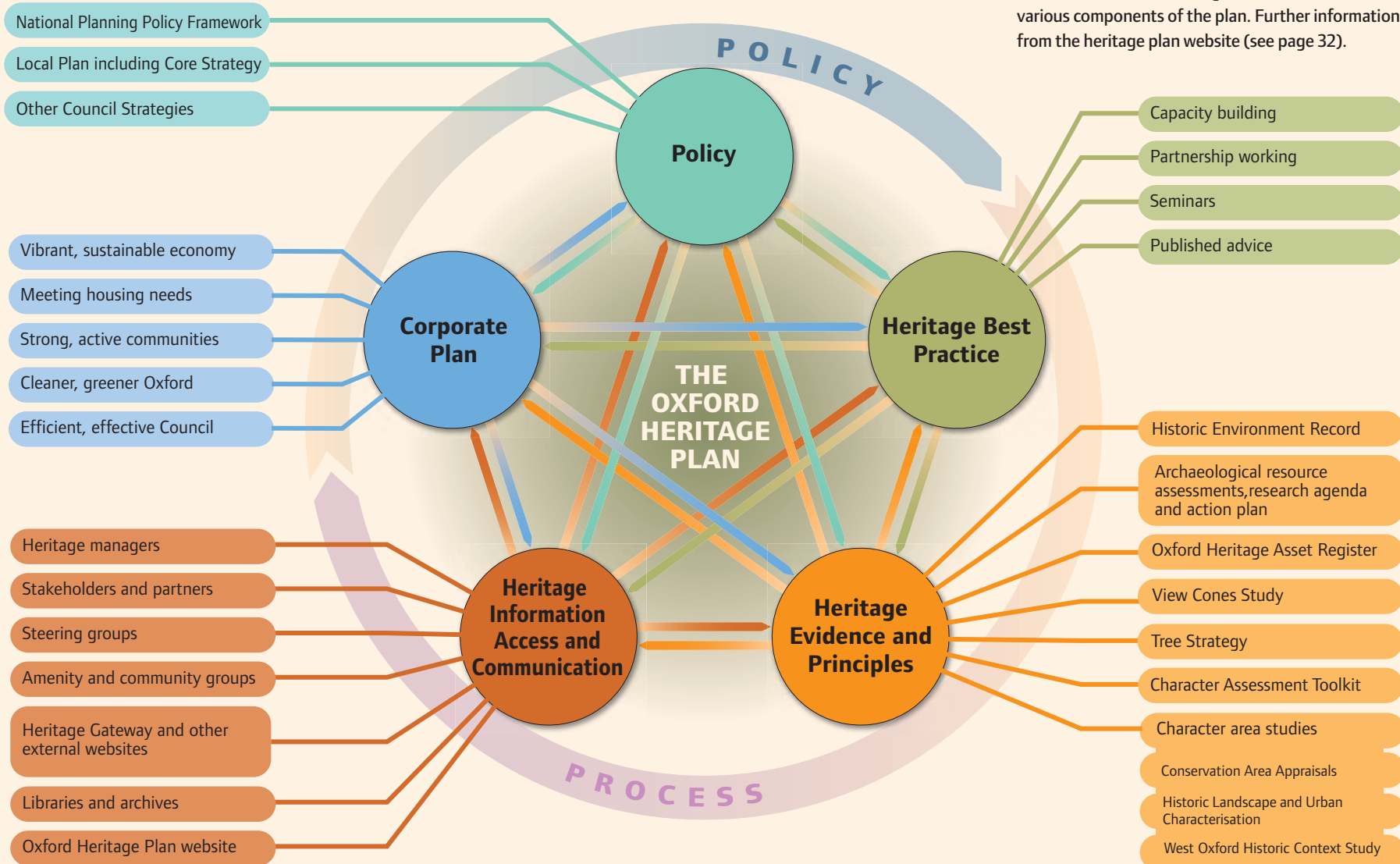


Fig. 4 The studies undertaken in order to produce the archaeological action plan form part of the evidence base for a broader heritage plan for the city. This is being developed by the City Council and Oxford Preservation Trust. This diagram sets out the relationship between various components of the plan. Further information can be obtained from the heritage plan website (see page 32).

What makes Oxford special?

Antiquarian interest in Oxford's historic environment dates back to the 17th century, with much detailed information being recovered as the town has grown, especially over the last 200 years. Early Oxford archaeologists pioneered the study of medieval (and post-medieval) urban archaeology in relation to both below ground remains and standing buildings. More than a century of excavations and exploration have uncovered structures, artefacts, and environmental remains that have provided evidence for the changing patterns of human life and death in the town. This process continues with some remarkable recent finds demonstrating there is much of interest that remains to be uncovered. This page provides a short summary of Oxford's evolution and its rich archaeological heritage.

Stone axes and the remains of cold and warm climate animals from before the end of the last Ice Age have been recovered from important Lower Palaeolithic sites in Oxford at Magdalen Grove, The Wolvercote Channel and from Cornish's Pit in Iffley. As the climate changed after the last Ice Age hunter gatherer groups utilised the resources of the Thames and Cherwell river valleys. As an Upper Thames gravel peninsular site, Oxford later attracted a 'sacred landscape' of large earthwork monuments which were in use from the 4th through to the 2nd millennium BC. In the Iron Age and Roman periods the landscape remained rural in character, although a major regional pottery industry comprising of work compounds and kilns spread across eastern and southern parts of the modern city.

The origins of Saxon Oxford are not yet fully understood. The appearance of a settlement by the river crossing at St Aldate's (perhaps the original Ox-ford) made it a site worth defending in the late-Saxon period. A trading settlement and early religious centre (or minster) may have been established here by the late 7th or 8th century. The regular street plan of central Oxford was laid out in the late 9th or early 10th century when a fortified town (or 'burh')



Fig. 5 Pottery from the 18th century Radcliffe Infirmary, excavated by Museum of London Archaeology in 2008.

was established. The town was bounded by the floodplain and served by other river crossings at Magdalen Bridge and Ferry Hinksey (another candidate for the original 'Ox-ford'). Beyond were a ring of Anglo-Saxon and medieval villages with their fields, pastures and woodlands, a royal vill at Headington and Royal Forest at Shotover.

The subsequent growth of the town, and the appearance of shops, houses, castle, numerous churches, monastic sites, hospitals, a royal palace and then the university with its halls and colleges, has added to the rich diversity of the archaeological record. The impact of institutional land-ownership has contributed to Oxford's unusual urban morphology, and has had the effect of preserving much of the archaeology of the medieval town under college quadrangles and gardens. Oxford is also exceptional for the quality of its medieval documentary archives, which were kept by the colleges and other significant landowners.

The rapid pace of development in recent decades has been matched by a vigorous archaeological response to recover information about Oxford's early history, with increasing interest now being shown in the city's later industrial heritage as we progress into the 21st century.

Oxford's archaeology is recorded on the City Council's Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) and the County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER); it is protected by national and local policy, and includes twelve Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including Port Meadow.

Over a thousand years of urban change

Patterns of change: a selective history of development trends

Prehistoric

- Monumental earthworks influence later routeways.
- Communal farmsteads and field systems are established.

Roman

- Roman Roads and pottery manufacturing compounds.

Saxon

- Religious and trading centre established by a crossing point over the Thames.
- Oxford established as a planned defended settlement (or burh) with an orthogonal street grid centred on Carfax.

Norman

- 1066 The Norman invasion leads to the construction of a motte and bailey castle over the western part of the town.
- The 1086 Domesday survey records large areas of waste ground within the town.
- Subsequent growth leads to the division of existing tenements, the creation of new streets and big infrastructure projects like the Grandpont causeway over the floodplain, new religious buildings and hospitals.
- Oxford enjoys Royal patronage with the construction of the Royal Beaumont Palace north of the town.

Medieval

- Monastic houses and friaries are attracted to Oxford and establish precincts outside the walled town, some on land reclaimed from the floodplain.
- The town wall is rebuilt in the 13th century with bastions and unusual double (concentric) line along the north-east part of the circuit.
- Oxford's economy falters in the 14th century with increasing areas of the town recorded as waste.
- The 13th and 14th centuries see the growth of academic halls and colleges associated with the University.

Post Medieval

- The Dissolution of the Monasteries leads to the closure of the friaries and abbeys leaving the west and south-western suburbs of Oxford economically disadvantaged.
- Oxford becomes a city with a Cathedral established first at the former Osney Abbey church then at Christ Church.
- During the Civil War Oxford is chosen by Charles I as his temporary capital and consequently defensive and siege earthworks are built around the town, clearing part of St Clements.
- In 1644 a major fire destroys many properties between George Street and Queen Street.
- The 17th century sees the expansion and rebuilding of the town, with land inside the town wall and the in-filled town ditch newly developed.
- The canal reaches Oxford in 1790.
- A major clearance of obstructions was undertaken by the 1771 Paving Commission including the demolition of remaining gates. New drains were laid and an indoor market replaced the historic street market.

Modern

- The railway arrives in Oxford in 1844.
- The 19th century sees the reform and expansion of the University and its colleges and the rapid expansion of the suburbs to cater for wealthy trades people, academics and those in domestic service.
- In the early 20th century the development of the Morris Motors and Pressed Steel Plants transformed east Oxford.
- After the first world war the city authorities reluctantly engage in slum clearance and a programme of council house building which continued until the 1980s.
- Between 1938–1966 the outer ring road is completed. Major plans for inner ring road and city redevelopment were subsequently abandoned.
- Between 1957–74 a major project was undertaken to replace decayed stonework on historic buildings.
- In the 1960s and early 1970s the 19th century suburb in St Ebbe's was demolished and the Westgate Shopping Centre was constructed.

21st Century

- The late 20th–early 21st century has seen the expansion and renewal of college and University facilities.
- There is pressure to redevelop and infill urban space in order to meet housing needs.

Oxford's exceptional heritage is not just confined to its historic core. To the north of Oxford the Wolvercote Channel has produced nationally important Lower Palaeolithic remains. The expanse of grazing land at Port Meadow protects extensive prehistoric and later remains including extant Bronze Age and Iron Age earthworks. The site is also an exceptional example of an Upper Thames grazing meadow that has been in near continuous use since at least the Late Saxon period.

The river floodplains either side of Oxford have demonstrated the potential to preserve the remains of early human activity under later alluvium and on gravel islands between former channels. Peat deposits survive along the stream valleys and river floodplains with the potential to preserve earlier structures and organic remains. Furthermore the gravel terrace north of Oxford preserves an extensive monumental landscape of Middle Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date, the full extent of which has yet to be established.

Oxford also contains a range of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon settlement and burial areas. Of particular note are the remains of a nationally important Roman pottery manufacturing industry, with kiln sites located across the eastern and southern parts of the local authority area.

Several historic village of Late Saxon origin are located within the city boundary (Upper and Lower Wolvercote, Binsey, Walton, Marston, Barton, Headington, Temple Cowley, Church Cowley, Littlemore, Iffley and the deserted village of Seacourt). Also the sites of medieval Rewley and Osney abbeys, Godstow and Littlemore Nunneries, St Bartholomew's Leper Hospital and a Templar preceptory at Temple Cowley. The remains of Oxford's distinctive industrial past and later medical, civic, educational and religious buildings are also of notable interest.

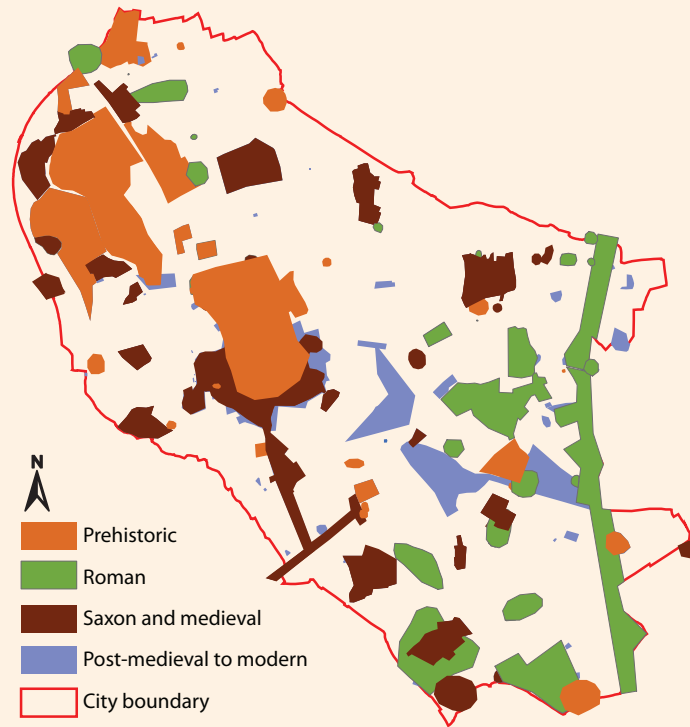


Fig. 6 Zones of known archaeological interest by period.

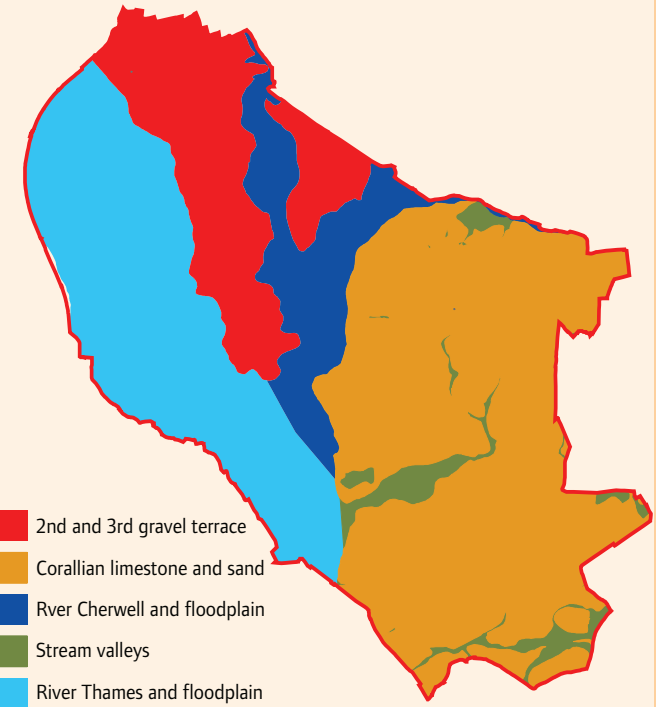


Fig. 7 A simplified geology map. This shows broad zones of potential where different types of sites may be present. For example prehistoric monuments may be present on the gravels, prehistoric occupation sites may be located beneath the floodplain alluvium, prehistoric and Roman occupation sites (including Roman kilns) may be present on the limestone, sand and nearby clays.



Fig. 8 A small Roman kiln (with collapsed stoke hole visible on the right hand side). Recorded at Rose Hill in 2010.

A large complex of monumental earthworks was constructed at Oxford on the gravel terrace between the Thames and Cherwell rivers between the Middle Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age (approximately between 3600–1800BC). The complex was comprised of alignments of enclosures and mounds (and probably trackways and post built structures although the evidence for these have yet to be found). The earthworks appear to have been used as ceremonial meeting places and for selected burials. A debate continues as to whether the builders of these earthworks were semi-nomadic herders or more established agriculturalists. These earthworks required a considerable investment in time and labour to build and form part of a distinctive pattern of complexes located at intervals along the Upper Thames.

Exciting new evidence for the scale and layout of Oxford's prehistoric monument complex was discovered at St John's College in 2008 when part of a Neolithic henge was excavated. Subsequently excavations at the former Radcliffe Infirmary site on Woodstock Road in 2009 revealed a sub-rectangular enclosure that may have been used for laying out the dead for natural decomposition (excarnation). A radio-carbon date from a bone recovered from the enclosure ditch suggests that this earthwork is Middle-Neolithic in date, the earliest yet found in the complex. The Infirmary site also revealed cremation burials and four Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age burial mounds. Three of these formed part of a linear barrow cemetery known to extend eastwards under the University Parks.

Limited evidence for Neolithic and Bronze Age domestic activity has been recovered from central Oxford, this tends to respect the 'sacred landscape'. By the Middle Iron Age (c.400-100BC) rural settlement is recorded on the fringes of the monument complex and by the 2nd century AD fields had been extended over parts of it. Roman Roads are likely to have converged on crossing points over the Thames at Oxford although archaeological evidence for these has not yet been recovered.

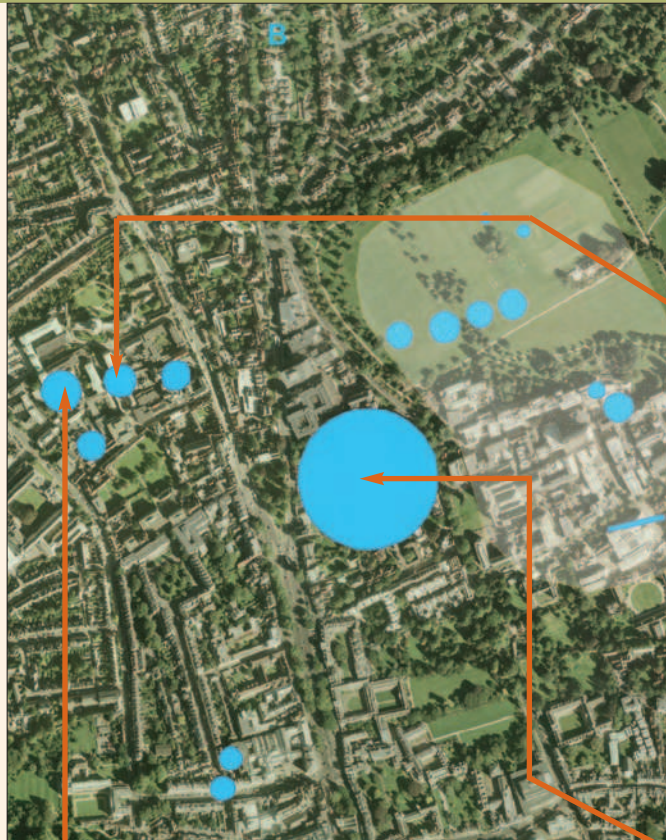


Fig. 9 An aerial photograph of north Oxford showing known Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age Monuments (in blue). The B represents a burial, more of which are recorded further north. These may yet prove to be related to further barrows or simpler flat graves. The shaded area represents a known concentration of Roman farmsteads, fields, enclosures and burials.



Fig. 10 A Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age barrow being excavated at the Radcliffe Infirmary Site in 2009.



Fig. 11 Middle Neolithic enclosure, perhaps a funerary enclosure for laying out the dead. Discovered at the Radcliffe Infirmary site.



Fig. 12 A Neolithic henge discovered at the St John's College Kendrew Quad in 2008.

The Saxon and Viking town

In the post-Roman period Saxon migrants established new settlements along the Thames Valley. Evidence for short lived rural settlement of late 5th–6th century date has been recorded from east and north Oxford. A more substantial settlement may have existed at Thornbury, near Binsey on the floodplain to the west, where the remains of a contemporary enclosure have been identified.

The precise origins of Oxford itself remain unclear. A settlement emerged in the middle Saxon period, strategically located next to a crossing point over the Thames floodplain. The name 'Oxnaforda', recorded in the 10th century Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, denotes its role as a fording point for cattle which can be contrasted to other specialised crossing points along the Thames, like Swinford (swine ford) and Shifford (sheep-ford) upstream.

A 7th century radio-carbon date from a burial at Christ Church is a rare clue to the town's early origins. Oxford may have been established as a trading centre and or a minster (religious centre) by the 8th century, with the minster located on the site of the later St Frideswides Priory, now the site of Christ Church Cathedral.

The town passed between Mercian and Wessex overlords and by the late 9th or early 10th century a defended settlement (called a burh) had been established with a street grid orientated on the crossroads at Carfax.

In the 10th and 11th century the town attracted Danish settlers and experienced short periods of Viking rule. Settlers of Scandinavian origin mixed with Anglo-Saxon residents and in 1002 a massacre of Danish residents is documented on St Brice's Day. A remarkable and gruesome mass grave excavated at St John's College in 2008 may be evidence of this massacre.



Fig. 13 A mass grave discovered in 2008 at St John's College on St Giles may be related to the St Brice's Day massacre of the local Danish community in 1002.



Fig. 14 A sherd of 6th century pottery from an early Saxon rural settlement at the former Radcliffe Infirmary site on Walton Street.



Fig. 15 The excavation of a lift pit at Jesus College in 2008 shows the depth of archaeological deposits in the city centre. The dark amorphous shape at its base is a rubbish pit cut into the natural gravel. To the right are a line of stake holes representing the remains of a Late Saxon building fronting onto Market Street.

The Norman town

Although Oxford was not directly involved in the military campaigns of the Norman Conquest the Domesday Survey records an unusually high level of waste property here by 1086. The reason for this remains unclear. In 1071 the Norman overlord Robert d'Oilly constructed a motte and bailey castle over part of the western street grid, clearly intending to dominate and intimidate the Saxon townspeople. D'Oilly also undertook another great building project in the form of a stone causeway across the Thames floodplain known as the Grandpont (The Great Bridge). His son and namesake along with fellow noble Robert d'Ivry were subsequently responsible for establishing the oldest recorded institution for higher education in Oxford, the Collegiate Chapel of St George at the Castle, in the late 1090s. In the early 12th century the collegiate chapel attracted notable scholars like Geoffrey of Monmouth to teach. At this point Oxford was one of several towns in England developing a tradition of local teaching, it later emerged as one of the most successful of these centres.

The 12th century was notable for the expansion of civic and religious institutions in the town, for example the important religious houses of Osney Abbey and St Frideswide's were founded and re-founded respectively. New hospitals were established, notably the Leper Hospital of St Bartlemas at Cowley Marsh and the town's principal hospital of St John the Baptist, located next to the River Cherwell on the current site of Magdalen College. The Norman period also saw several principal streets re-aligned, new streets laid out and the emergence of a central stone lined street drain known as 'The Kennel'.

At least three substantial fires are known to have devastated the town in this period; two during the period of unrest known as The Anarchy (1135–1154) during which Oxford Castle was besieged and one at St Frideswide's in 1190. Despite these events the town appears to have economically prospered in the 12th century, successfully trading in



Fig. 16 A mitred arch belonging to the Norman Grandpont Causeway exposed in Abingdon Road in 2004.

commodities such as wool, cloth and leather. A merchant guild was in existence at Oxford by 1100 and the first known Royal Charter was granted in c.1155 confirming existing privileges. Oxford obtained the oldest known municipal seal in Britain in 1191 and the town was formally granted to its citizens by King John in 1199. Oxford became favoured by the Royal family as a stopping point between Windsor and the Royal Hunting Lodge at Woodstock and a Royal Palace (known as the Royal Beaumont Palace or The Kings Houses) was constructed outside the Northgate by 1132.

Oxford gradually established itself as a minor centre for teaching in the later 12th century and it became an important clerical centre and favoured as a venue for ecclesiastical courts. Established European centres of learning like Paris remained the preferred destinations for scholars wishing to study Roman and Canon law until war with France in the 1190s made access to such universities difficult. This proved a stimulus to the development of a local scholastic tradition which eventually sought to protect its interests and the livelihoods of those involved, by forming a kind of guild, the University of Oxford.



Fig. 17 Repair works to the Norman motte in 2008.

The 13th-century town

By the early 13th century Oxford was well established as a commercial centre with an emerging University. The economic focus of the town remained the regular street market held on the roads leading off the central crossroads at Carfax. These principal streets attracted the highest property values and represented the commercial heart of the town, encouraging the creation of subdivided properties with shops in cellars and booths fronting the street and with workshops and living quarters behind and above.








In the western suburb Osney Abbey was joined by Rewley Abbey in 1281 and a number of the mendicant religious orders established precincts on the edges of the town in the 13th century (e.g. The Dominicans, Franciscans, Crutched Friars, Austin Friars, Carmelite Friars, Friars of the Sack and Trinitarian Friars) adding additional impetus to the development of learned study and teaching. The arrival of the friaries led to the further reclamation of land from the floodplain south and west of the town and was accompanied by an extension of settlement on reclaimed land southwards along St Aldates. This later area in particular has proved rich in archaeological material because of the survival of waterlogged conditions that preserve organic remains.

The town was also home to a sizable Jewish community that was concentrated along the 'Great Jury Street' (now St Aldates) and Jury Lane located near to the Synagogue (located roughly under the north tower of Christ Church). In the late 12th century a burial ground or 'Garden of the Jews' was established outside the east gate. This was later displaced by Henry III who granted the site to the Hospital of St John the Baptist. The burial ground then moved to the south of Bridge Street (now High Street). In 1290 the Jewish community was expelled from England by Royal decree. In Oxford many Jewish properties came into the hands of the emerging colleges.



Fig. 18 Map showing zones of activity in Oxford in the 13th century

0 0.5 1 km

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Bridge |  Jewish burial ground |
|  Castle |  Market |
|  Colleges |  Open/wasteground |
|  Defences |  Religious precinct |
|  Hospital |  Suburb |
|  Jewish quarter |  Urban settlement |

A symbol of the town's identity and wealth at this time was the town wall. A series of murage grants recorded in the 1230s provide evidence for the wholesale rebuilding of the wall with the subsequent addition of bastions and an unusual second (concentric) line of defence along the north eastern part of the circuit in the later 13th century.

By the end of the Norman period the original large Late Saxon plot divisions had been subdivided and rationalised to create a pattern of tenement boundaries fronting on to the main streets and side streets. Using the detailed documentary survey of 13th century and later records undertaken by the Rev. H. E. Salter in the 1930s it is possible to map the broad survival of these historic boundaries. Figure 20 to the right is an assessment of survival as part of the current townscape.

The expansion of the colleges since the 14th century, especially in the east end of the town, has had a dramatic impact on this pattern by amalgamating and removing boundaries. This is a process that has continued into the 21st century.

22

14

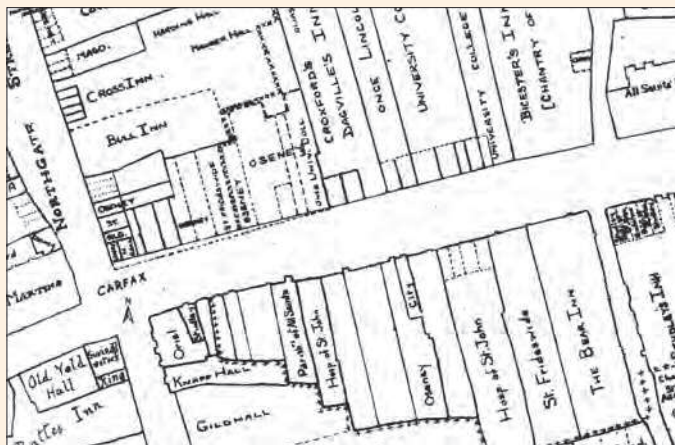


Fig. 19 Part of H. E. Salter's plan showing the division of the market frontage into small shops around Carfax.

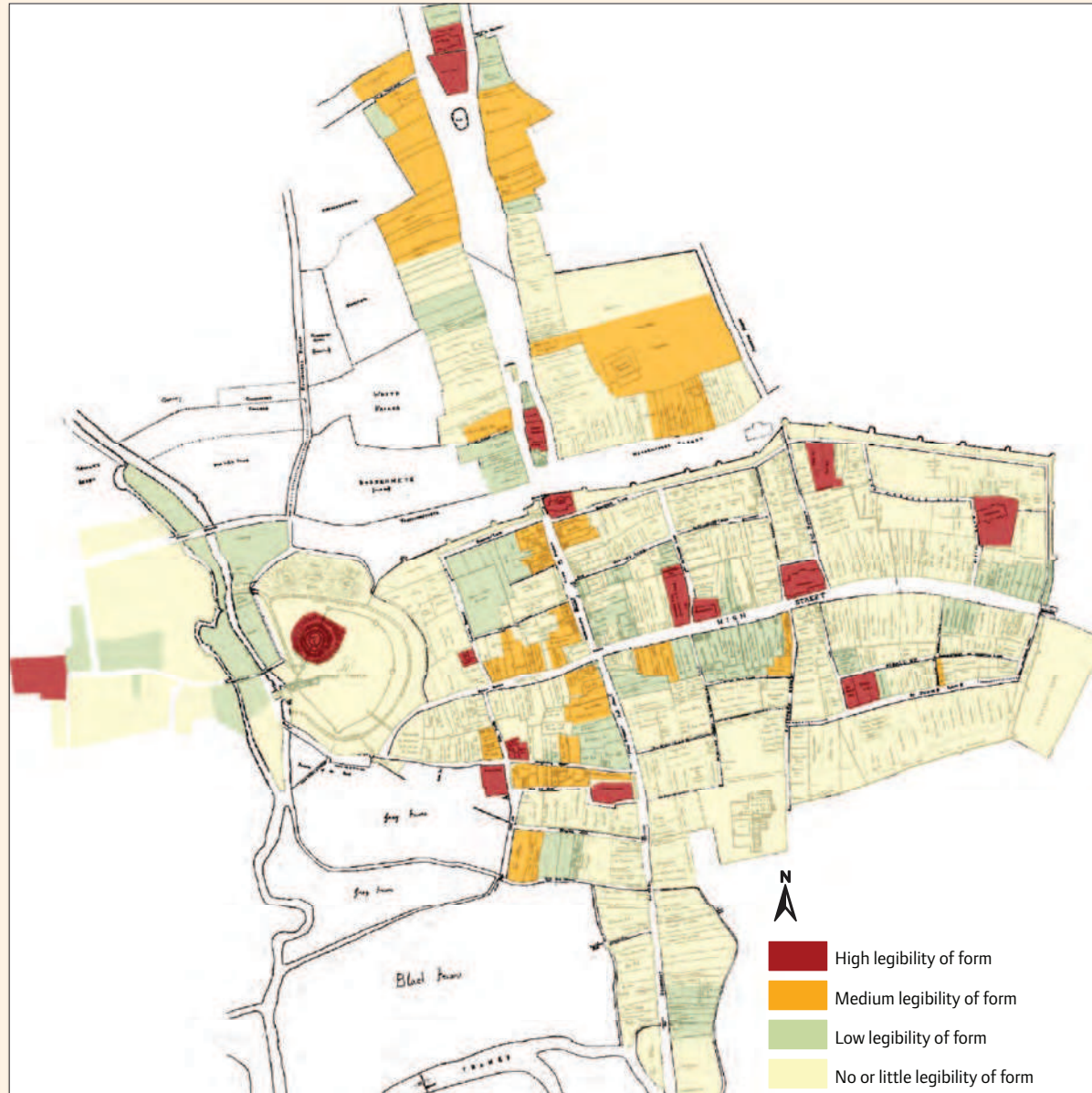


Fig. 20 Map showing areas of tenement boundary survival.

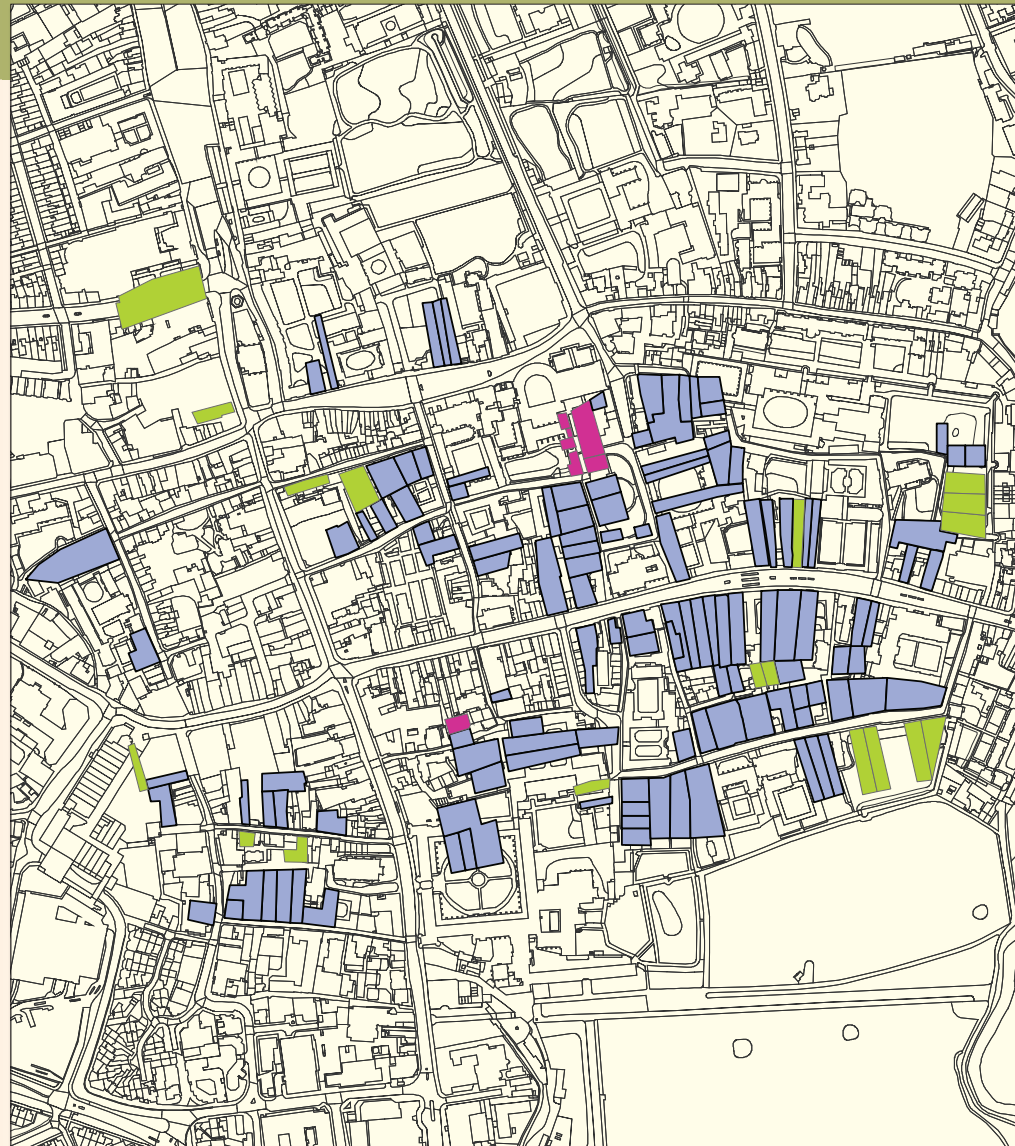
The medieval town: The University of Oxford and its academic halls

The medieval university emerged from a tradition of local schooling associated with the development of Oxford as an ecclesiastical centre attracting legal work in the 12th century. When conflict with France closed down the option of foreign study Oxford benefited and emerged as a scholastic centre with formal institutions emerging in the early 13th century.

Teaching was concentrated around a series of University 'schools', the main focus being in School Street, now part of Radcliffe Square. In the 14th century the first purpose built university structure, a Convocation House and first floor library, was built against the north side of St Mary's Church.

In the earliest period of the University students lived in private houses. By the middle of the 13th century, set against the backdrop of sporadic violence between students and townsfolk, they began to congregate in academic halls, often town houses owned by the local monasteries. Hall rooms could either be rented directly by students themselves or let from a Master of Arts who would take on the overall rent as a 'Principal' for the Hall and who made a profit from letting rooms and providing meals. Their purpose was primarily as a place of residence although instruction was often included. Eventually all the halls became licensed by the University.

At the highpoint of the academic halls in the 14th century there were over a hundred such establishments. Numbers declined as student numbers dropped in the later 14th century, but around seventy survived through the 15th centuries. Throughout the greater part of the medieval period, the academic halls, rather than the colleges, housed the bulk of students. The 16th century saw their rapid decline with only eight remaining in 1537. The reason for this rapid decline remains to be adequately explained.



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Fig. 21 Tackley's Inn, 107 High Street, built in 1320. One of the very few surviving examples of a medieval academic hall. It was re-fronted in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

- Fig. 22** Plan showing the location of recorded academic halls.
- Medieval academic halls (based on H. E. Salter survey)
 - Medieval academic halls (Catto additions)
 - Medieval schools (based on H. E. Salter survey)

Only fragmentary remains of academic halls now survive above ground, the notable exception being the 14th century former Tackley's Inn at 107 High Street. There is considerable potential for the further study of the material culture of these institutions through archaeological investigation.

The colleges

Enclosed arrangements of specialised buildings designed for communal student living and emerged in the later 13th century. These new institutions were distinct from academic halls in that they were established with an endowment that gave them greater economic stability and ultimately longevity.

Over time a distinctive arrangement of residential and study areas developed, usually encompassing a gatehouse, dining hall, kitchen, library and chapel, with support structures used for the management of food, drink and fuel. Colleges developed arrangements of staircases accessed from a quadrangle with residential rooms leading off. Of the new colleges Merton College was the first to develop a quadrangular form as a result of piecemeal additions to an initial more ad hoc arrangement of structures. In the 14th century New College became the first purpose-built college arranged around a quadrangle. This then became the standard arrangement adopted by later colleges and a defining characteristic of Oxford's urban layout. Magdalen College founded in 1474 represented a further stage of development in collegiate architecture, retaining the basic quadrangle format but also incorporating a cloister.

The colleges are notable for preserving both early college remains and earlier medieval structures beneath their extensive precincts. This rare survival of earlier medieval streets and buildings below later quads and college buildings is of even greater interest because of the exceptional level of documentary information that survives about the town from the medieval period

Fig. 25 (right) An early fourteenth century pottery assemblage from a stone lined garderobe associated with Vine Hall (Now under Christ Church Peckwater Quad). The garderobe assemblage included heated bottles, furnace fragments and glass distilling equipment that may have been used for chemical/alchemical experiments.



Fig. 23 (left) The distinctive pattern of college quadrangles in eastern part of the town.



Fig. 24 (above) A 14th or 15th century copper-alloy book clasp from Christ Church (front and back).



Fig. 26 (above) 14th–15th century drinking jugs found in Oxford and made at Brill of Boarstall in Buckinghamshire. College pottery assemblages demonstrate that above average alcohol consumption was taking place in these institutions, reflecting both the affluence of the scholars and students but also the presence of builders and artisans involved in construction work. © Copyright University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 2001, AN1935.636 and AN1891.7.

The 16th and 17th century town

The Dissolution of Rewley and Osney Abbeys in the 1530s had a long term effect on the western suburb. Having lost the patronage of the abbeys it became poorer and remained less developed until it later became a focus for industrial and communication infrastructure. The abbey church at Osney briefly became a cathedral as Oxford was elevated to the status of city in 1542. In 1546 Henry VIII transferred this role to the former priory church at Christ Church. The Dissolution of the friaries, notably the Black and Grey Friars, had a similar impact on the south-western part of the town. Their precincts becoming a source of building stone and then areas used for small scale gravel quarrying and as urban gardens.

Between the late 16th and the middle 18th century central Oxford was transformed by an intensive period of redevelopment and rebuilding. This was largely driven by the increasing affluence of the University and a revival in river trade. Previously open land within the medieval walls was further subdivided and developed and the former town ditch was in-filled and built on. Much of the medieval town vanished, to be replaced by three and four story town houses and the monumental architecture of the University and colleges. Tenements became more crowded with the addition of jettied frontages, the insertion of chimneys, and the extension of building ranges further backward along plots. The colleges took on their modern form, expanding sometimes outwards but mostly upwards with the insertion of attics and cock-lofts to house more students.

In the 1640s Oxford was adopted by King Charles I as his temporary capital during the English Civil War. Lines of Royalist defences earthworks and Parliamentarian siege works were constructed around the city. Parts of St Clement's were cleared to facilitate the defence of Oxford but in general the town did not suffer extensive damage during the war. Greater destruction was caused by a fire that spread from George Street to Queen Street in 1644 with perhaps 200 houses damaged.

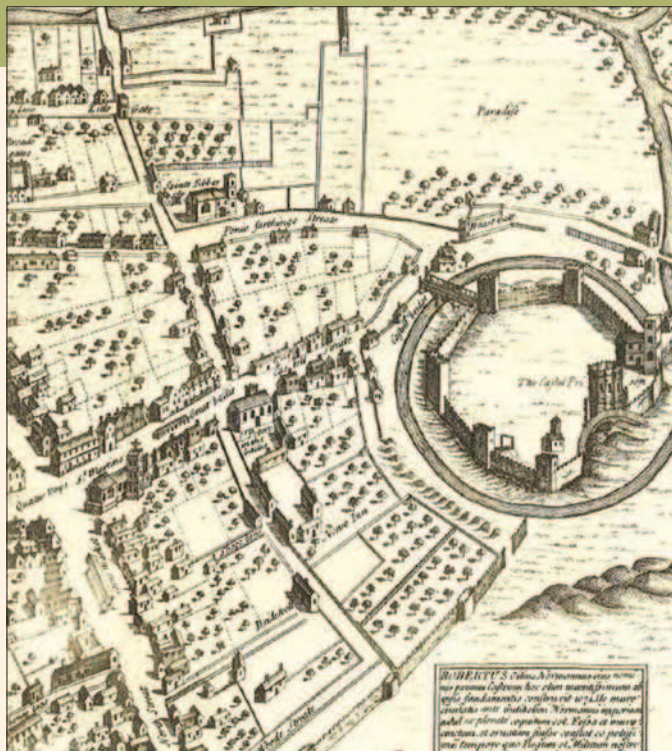


Fig. 27 Part of Agas 1578 map of Oxford looking from the north, showing the extent of open space at this time.



Fig. 29 Loggan's map of Oxford from 1675 showing the density of development by this time. The map is drawn viewed from the north.



Fig. 28 A vaulted cellar and entrance chamber discovered in 2009 during building works at The Queen's College. Dated to the 17th century but perhaps containing fabric of earlier origin.



Fig. 30 Painted panelling and a door from a previously unknown 17th or early 18th century student study exposed at Brasenose College during building work in 2010.

The creation of a Paving Commission in 1771 radically transformed the city, leading to the removal of the street market to an indoor location, the demolition of the surviving medieval gates and the removal of other street impediments. The Commission oversaw the wholesale removal of overhanging signs, stalls, pumps, porches and other projections along the main roads. The medieval central street drain or 'kennel' was superseded by cambered cobble streets and stone lined drains. The sewage system was improved again in 1873.

At the start of the 19th century Oxford had grown little from its medieval boundaries, with the exception of the construction of the Radcliffe Infirmary and Radcliffe Observatory to the north of the city in the 1770s. The 19th century however saw rapid suburban growth and in-filling. St Ebbe's, St Thomas's, St Clement's and St Giles parishes expanded to provide housing for small tradesmen, craftsmen and college servants. More spacious suburbs were created along the gravel terrace north of Oxford to house wealthier citizens and scholars. The University also began to expand its infrastructure of laboratories, libraries and centralised teaching facilities, particularly because of the growth of science based disciplines.

In the 18th and 19th centuries Oxford's industrial base remained quite small-scale, with tanneries, breweries and maltings located south, east and west of the historic town. The arrival of the canal in 1790 led to a surge of waterborne trade but the resistance of the University to the construction of a rail link delayed its arrival until 1844.



Fig. 31 An excavation at Brewer Street in 2011. Here excavators from Oxford Archaeology are examining the remains of walls, ovens and stone channels belonging to a building recorded on the 19th century Ordnance Survey map as a malthouse.



Fig. 32 Photograph of the Salters Steamers Boatyard at Donnington Bridge. Built in the 1930s and still in use as a boatyard.

Oxford remained a predominately service industry economy until the early 20th century with domestic service the biggest source of employment. The Oxford University Press was the biggest single employer. This situation changed rapidly and decisively with the establishment of Morris Motors in 1914. The subsequent growth of the car industry in Oxford led to rapid population growth and suburban expansion east and south of the historic town in the 1920s and 1930s.



Fig. 33 Community volunteers excavating at Minchery Farm in 2012.

Millions of people regularly watch archaeological programmes on television or visit excavated objects in local museums. The scale of local interest in the subject has been clearly demonstrated by the Archeox (East Oxford Community Archaeology and History Project) begun in 2010. This Heritage Lottery funded project initiated by the University of Oxford Continuing Education Department has attracted over 500 active participants from east Oxford and beyond. The project has undertaken a comprehensive study of the archaeology of east Oxford, involving extensive test-pitting, geophysical survey and archaeological excavations at St Bartholemews Leper hospital and Minchey Farm Nunnery.

Public interest has also been demonstrated by the success of open days held during developer funded archaeological investigations in the city. It is hoped that public engagement in the active process of investigation can be further encouraged in order to utilise the educational potential of such work and get greater value out of the process for the developer.



Fig. 34 An aerial shot of the community excavation at Minchery Farm, Littlemore, the site of a 12th century nunnery. This community dig has greatly improved our understanding of the nunnery and its occupants and helped generate information that should help us to manage the site more effectively in the future. ©2012 Adam Stanford/Aerial Com



Fig. 35 Visitors examine an excavated artefact during a site tour at the Clarendon Centre excavation in central Oxford in 2012.

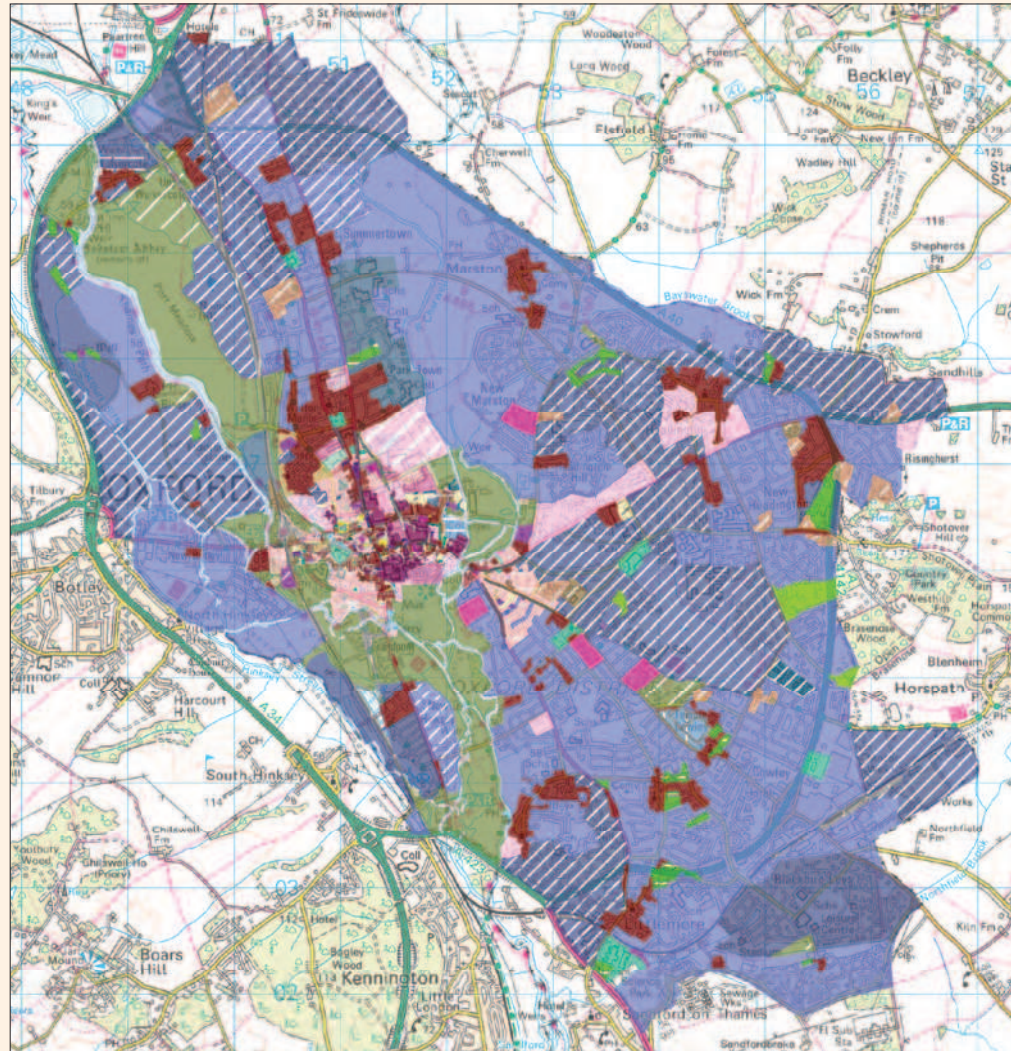
Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) studies are designed to enable analysis of change and continuity in the landscape since the development of accurate Ordnance Survey maps in the later 19th century. The studies record spatial relationships in the built environment and also aspects of the natural environment that have been shaped by human activity. They are designed to allow the identification and quantification of change across large areas of landscape.¹

Most of England is now covered by this kind of mapping. The HLC mapping for Oxford is currently being extended to cover the remainder of the county by Oxfordshire County Council. This will in turn link with studies undertaken by neighbouring counties.

Landscape characterisation reflects a transition in thinking in the discipline of archaeology away from the consideration of isolated finds and sites towards a more holistic understanding of the evidential qualities of the landscape as a whole. The significance of landscape characterisation projects is highlighted by the National Planning Policy Framework which cites this type of study as an important part of the evidence base for informing and assessing the impact of development on the historic environment.

In addition to the HLC mapping for Oxford a more detailed urban characterisation study has been undertaken for the historic core of the city. This covers an area defined by the 17th century Civil War defences, which broadly define the extent of the town before the rapid expansion of its suburbs in the 19th century.

Urban characterisation involves making difficult choices about simplifying and mapping complex information about land-use, building type and plot forms. Its aim is to allow the identification and quantification of patterns of change and continuity, which in turn can inform decisions about the conservation and enhancement of the city's heritage.



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Selected character types

- N
-  Settlement pre-1880
 -  Early 19th century and Victorian terraces
 -  Enclosure pre-18th Century regular
 -  Enclosure pre-18th Century irregular
 -  Enclosure parliamentary
 -  University parks
 -  Commons and greens
 -  Meadows
 -  Woodland ancient semi natural
 -  Historic parkland
 -  Recreation
 -  Hospitals and schools

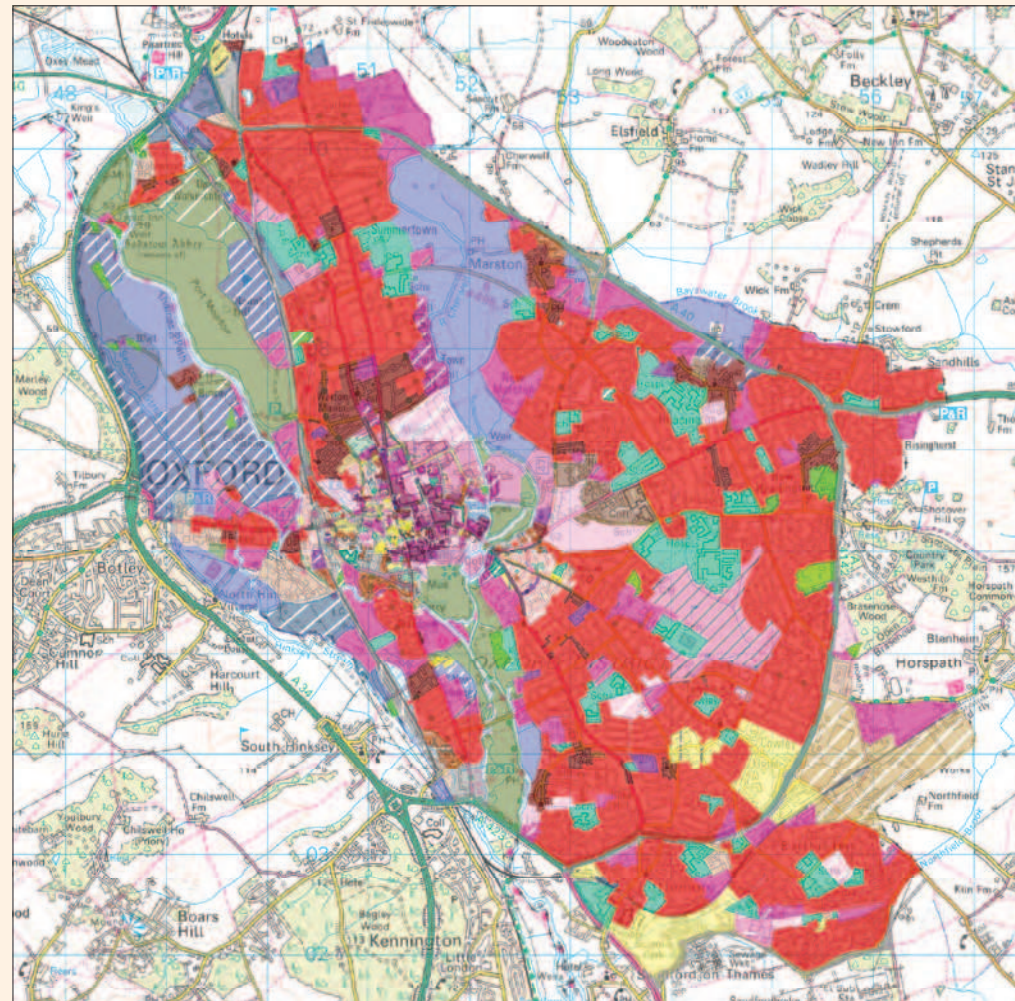
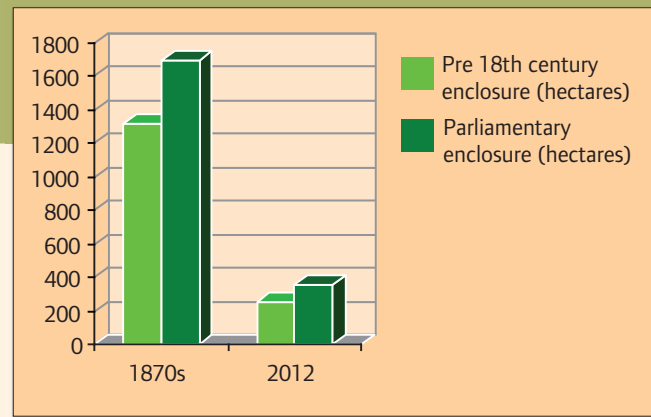
Fig. 36 Historic Landscape Characterisation for Oxford in the 1870s.

¹ www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/characterisation/historic-landscape-character/

Patterns of change and continuity in the Local Authority Area 1876–2012

- The 1870s map captures the pattern of early enclosure around the city instigated in the medieval and post-medieval period by religious institutions, colleges and other landowners.
- The eastern, southern, western and northern suburbs have spread infilling enclosure fields, leaving only fragments remaining.
- The spread of urban development (red) reflects a concerted programme of Council House building 1918–1985 and the piecemeal development of private residential estates.
- The Cowley Car and Pressed Steel plants have been established, expanded and contracted in this period, leaving behind the BMW plant and ring road business parks.
- The survival of the meadow land along the Thames around Binsey and Wolvercote is noticeable. The landscape between Botley Road and Wolvercote has changed little in this period.
- There is notable survival of meadow land and parliamentary enclosure along the Cherwell floodplain.
- College and University expansion has been centred on the historic core, the Oxford University science area and at Headington Hill.
- Changing leisure patterns are visible: from a small number of college cricket grounds in east Oxford in the 19th century to a diverse and dispersed pattern of allotments, parks, open space and golf courses in the 21st century.
- There has been a 90% increase in the amount of land used for hospital, school and University buildings.
- There has been a 400% increase in the amount of land used for industrial purposes, however this still accounts for only 4% of the local authority area

Fig 37 This shows the loss of parliamentary enclosure and pre-18th century enclosure as the Local Authority Area has urbanised.



Selected character types

-  Settlement pre-1880
-  Settlement post-1880
-  Car plant/factory
-  Industrial
-  Transport infrastructure
-  Business/retail parks
-  Offices/commercial
-  Allotments
-  Leisure
-  Commons and greens
-  Meadows
-  Enclosure pre-18th Century irregular
-  Enclosure pre-18th Century regular
-  Enclosure parliamentary
-  Enclosure parliamentary 19th Century
-  Woodland ancient semi-natural
-  Government and civic
-  University Parks
-  Hospitals and schools
-  Historic parkland
-  Golf courses
-  Universities post-1800

Fig. 38 Historic Landscape Characterisation for Oxford in the 21st century.

Oxford in the 1870s

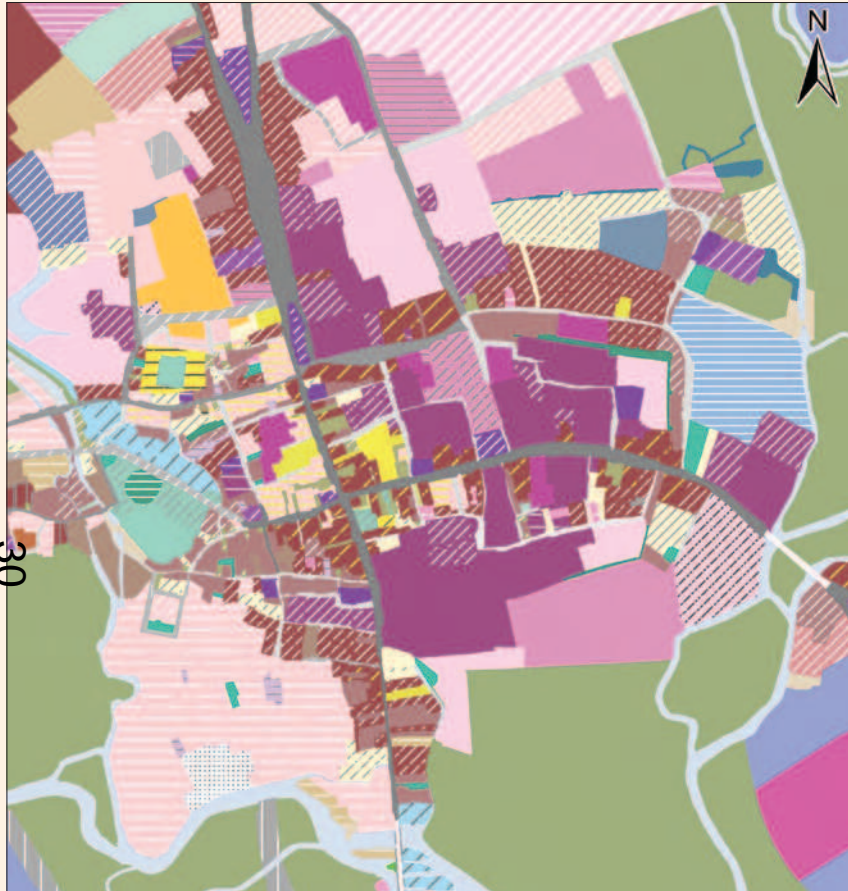


Fig. 39

Selected character types

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Mixed townhouses/shops (historic) | | University Parks |
| | Townhouses (historic) | | Medieval college precincts |
| | Mixed housing & shops (Victorian) | | Post-medieval college expansion |
| | Townhouses (Victorian) | | 19th Century college expansion |
| | Early 19th century and Victorian Terraces | | Post-medieval deer park |
| | Narrow plots | | Late Regency Townhouses (1822–1833) |
| | Legal | | Town Defences Civil War |
| | Meadows | | Urban/College Gardens |
| | University and College Sports Fields | | Gas works |

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21st Century Oxford

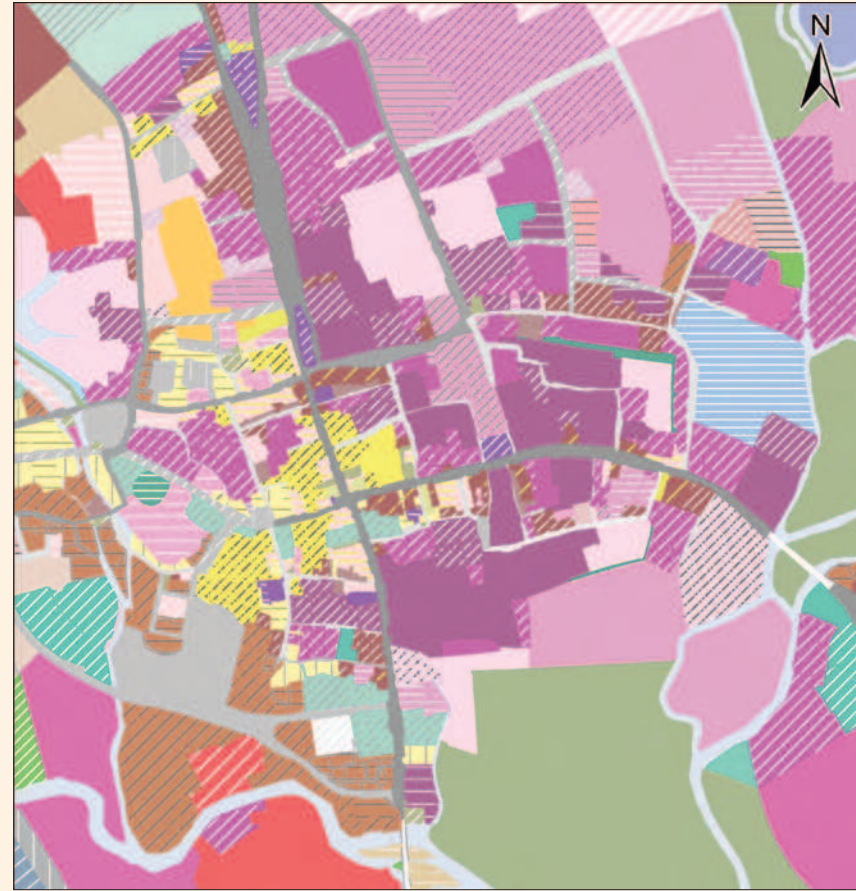


Fig. 40

Selected character types

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Private housing post-1980 | | Oxford Castle (Heritage and Leisure) |
| | Transport infrastructure/links | | 20th century Colleges |
| | Government & civic buildings | | University of Oxford Libraries |
| | Private housing (1945–1980) | | University science buildings |
| | Terraces & Cottages 1900–1919 | | Canal |
| | Schools & Colleges post-1945 | | Church pre-1800 |
| | Indoor market | | Church pre-1086 |
| | Modern shopping centre | | Canal infrastructure |
| | University of Oxford Structures | | University of Oxford Museums |

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Some patterns of change and continuity in the historic core 1876–2012

- The street grid remains essentially as established in the Late Saxon and Norman period, with a limited number of post- medieval and modern link roads.
- The retail core of the city remains focused on Cornmarket and Queen Street.
- The west end continues to reflect its former industrial character.
- College precincts have continued to expand and renew whilst retaining their underlying historic form.
- There is a clear contrast between the changing west end and stable east end of the city.
- Pembroke Street, Holywell Street and Ship Street are notable for their preservation of post-medieval town houses.
- Cornmarket Street has become a pedestrianised street of established retail chains.
- George Street retains a distinctive Victorian and inter-war character as area of former civic commercial and entertainment related buildings.
- Tenement yards, courtyards and alleyways, once a common feature of the town, have been extensively infilled or redeveloped with exceptions, for example areas at the south end of Cornmarket Street and along the west end of the High Street.
- The early 19th century and Victorian suburb of St Ebbes has been demolished. By plot area some 85% of the terraced housing in the historic core and 90% of low status tenements located in narrow plots have been demolished.
- The medieval Castle and former Oxford Prison have been renovated to incorporate a heritage and education centre, luxury hotel and restaurants.
- A number of historic churches have now been converted into college libraries and archive stores (All Saints, St Cross, St Peter in the East).
- The area covered by town house plots (including townhouses with shops and rear gardens) has reduced by over 60%. Nevertheless the pattern of townhouses interspersed with college precincts is still distinctive.

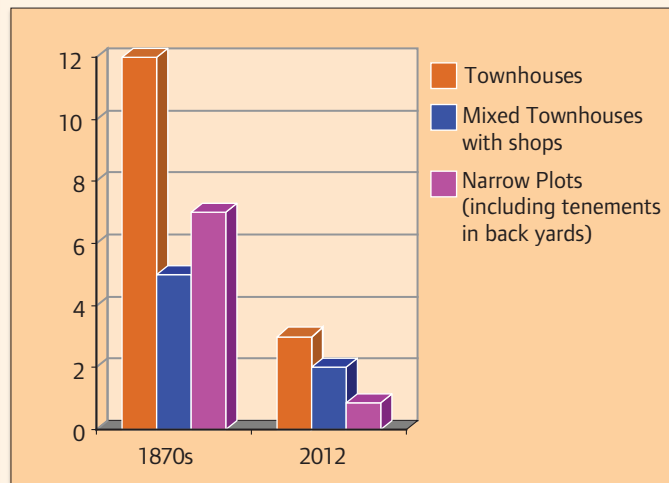


Fig. 41 This table shows the loss of distinctive building and plot forms since the 1870s (in hectares). In the case of narrow plots, including rows of low status tenements in back yards, these have been demolished. With townhouses the picture is more complex, for example some have been demolished, others have been converted to another use or had their gardens developed. The area figure therefore reflects the size of the townhouse plot not just the building itself.



Fig. 42 Broad Street
 All photographs © Oxfordshire History Centre



Fig. 43 Holywell Street

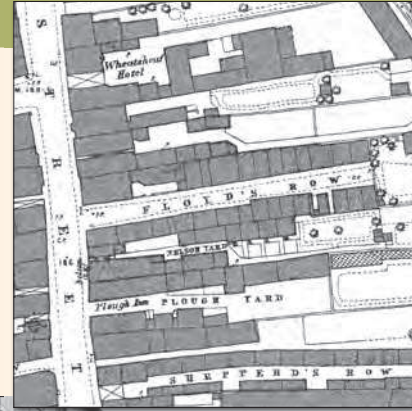


Fig. 44 Floyds Row, located off St Aldates



Fig. 45 George Street, St Clements.

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Townhouses with shops

In the medieval period the main streets of the town attracted frontages of small shops with larger halls, solars and kitchens located to the rear. As the town expanded in the late 16th and 17th centuries larger townhouses replaced much of the medieval building stock. These buildings often had multiple functions, as shops, inns, student accommodation and townhouses for the wealthier burgesses. The subsequent expansion of retail provision and of the University and its colleges has led to a significant reduction of these built forms, notably on the Cornmarket, along the north side of Broad Street and on the High Street.

Townhouses

The post-medieval expansion of the town saw the construction of townhouses along the side streets by wealthier burgesses, including brewers, butchers, and drapers. Many of these townhouses have now been demolished but notable groups survive along Holywell Street, Ship Street and Pembroke Street.

Narrow plots

Narrow plots is a term that has been used to describe the smaller lower status housing that in-filled side streets, back yards and marginal spaces in the post-medieval, Regency and Victorian periods. This term encompasses the smaller townhouses that colonised the in-filled city ditch and the spaces next to the city wall, also constrained plots fronting onto side streets and the rows of low status tenements, that became prevalent in the parishes of St Aldates, St Thomas and St Clements in the 19th century.

19th century terraces

Large numbers of brick terraces were built in low lying and poorer areas of the town during the 19th century to house the growing population, largely employed in brewing, printing and domestic service. The map on page 22 (bottom left) shows the extent of terraced housing in St Ebbes Parish. This housing was cleared in the 1960s to make way for the Westgate shopping centre and newer housing developments.

Over the last one hundred and fifty years Oxford has seen considerable change, a process that is perhaps not obvious given the impression of solidity and continuity provided by the monumental frontages of the colleges.

Unsurprisingly the colleges have historically been the focus of conservation efforts whilst the industrial and residential areas of the town have been transformed around them. There is now greater awareness that the character of the town is created by a subtle balance of University and college architecture and the less high profile remains of industrial, commercial and residential structures and related yards, routeways and boundaries. This page highlights just some of the varied aspects of the historic environment of Oxford.

Courtyard ranges



Fig. 46 Ranges of 15th century and later date around a courtyard at the Golden Cross, located on the north side of Cornmarket Street

Post-medieval town houses with shops



Fig. 47 Townhouses with shops on the High Street.

Stone built halls



Fig. 48 The 16th–17th century stone built Postmasters Hall, Merton Street.

Industrial buildings



Fig. 49 The Swan Brewery malthouse, located off Paradise Street.

Ancient grazing meadows



Fig. 50 Ancient grazing land at Port Meadow. This part of Oxford has seen little change over the last 1000 years.

Tenement yards and alleyways

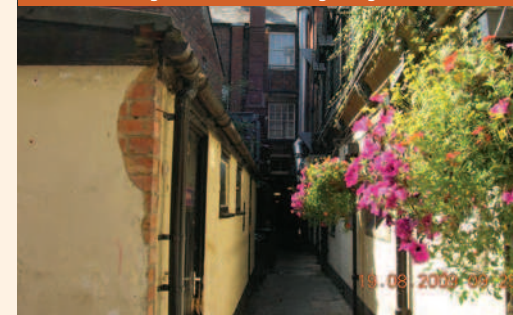


Fig. 51 A tenement alley located south of the High Street.

Limestone outbuildings and tenement walls



Fig. 52 Limestone tenement and outbuilding walls located west of St Aldates.

Cobbled streets



Fig. 53 A cobbled surface at Bath Place.

The Civil War defences



Fig. 54 Traces of the Royalist Civil War rampart at Mansfield College.

Medieval religious precincts

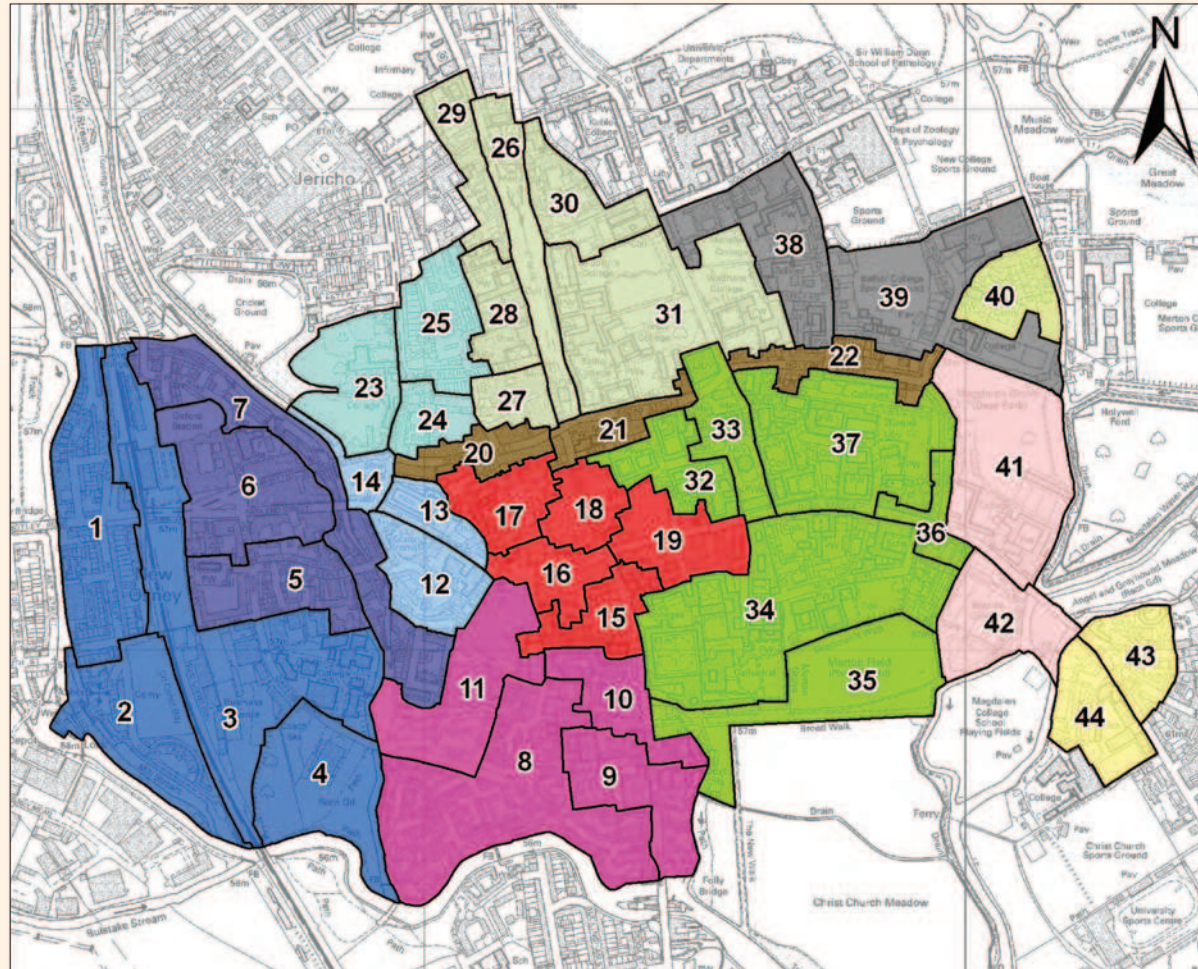


Fig. 55 The medieval stone precinct wall at Godstow Nunnery.

The completion of Historic Urban Characterisation mapping for central Oxford has enabled the identification of 13 broad character zones. These have been defined by examining mapped patterns of land use, built form and plot type. The zones can be further subdivided into 44 smaller character areas. A series of character area statements have been produced providing a summary of the historic, evidential, aesthetic and communal value of each area. The statements can be downloaded as individual pdf files via the archaeology page of the Oxford City Council website.¹

Historic Urban Characterisation mapping simplifies complex patterns into blocks of urban character and therefore should not be used as a definitive guide to historic fabric. The process is designed to facilitate the broad categorisation of urban character and to allow the quantification of urban change. The mapping provides a useful tool for identifying patterns in the historic environment which may be of interest to planners, developers, architects and the general public.














This type of characterisation mapping is undertaken by examining oblique and vertical aerial photographs and also modern and historic maps. The approach requires a degree of subjective assessment and generalisation and provides only a point-in-time snapshot of an ever changing urban landscape



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Fig. 56 Central Oxford Historic Urban Character Areas.

Urban character zones

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Osney Island |  Modern colleges and the edge of the science area |
|  St Thomas' and the western suburb |  Holywell Manor and St Cross Church |
|  Thames crossing and floodplain |  The former northern city ditch |
|  Castle and former canal basin |  The eastern colleges |
|  City centre commercial core |  The eastern suburb |
|  Worcester College and Gloucester Green |  St Clements |
|  St Giles and the northern suburb | |

¹ www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Archaeology_ocw.htm

Managing complexity

The designated assets within the Oxford City local authority area comprise:

- Over 1,600 listed buildings:
 - 12% grade I (national average 2%)
 - 8% grade II* (national average 4%)
- 17 conservation areas – 20% of city area
- 12 scheduled monuments
- 11 Registered Parks and Gardens

In addition to these designated assets 2,075 archaeological events and 1,532 monuments are recorded on archaeological databases covering the city. At present two databases store information about Oxford, The Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) which covers the historic core and the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The City Council is also in the process of establishing a Local Heritage Asset Register to record locally valued heritage assets.¹

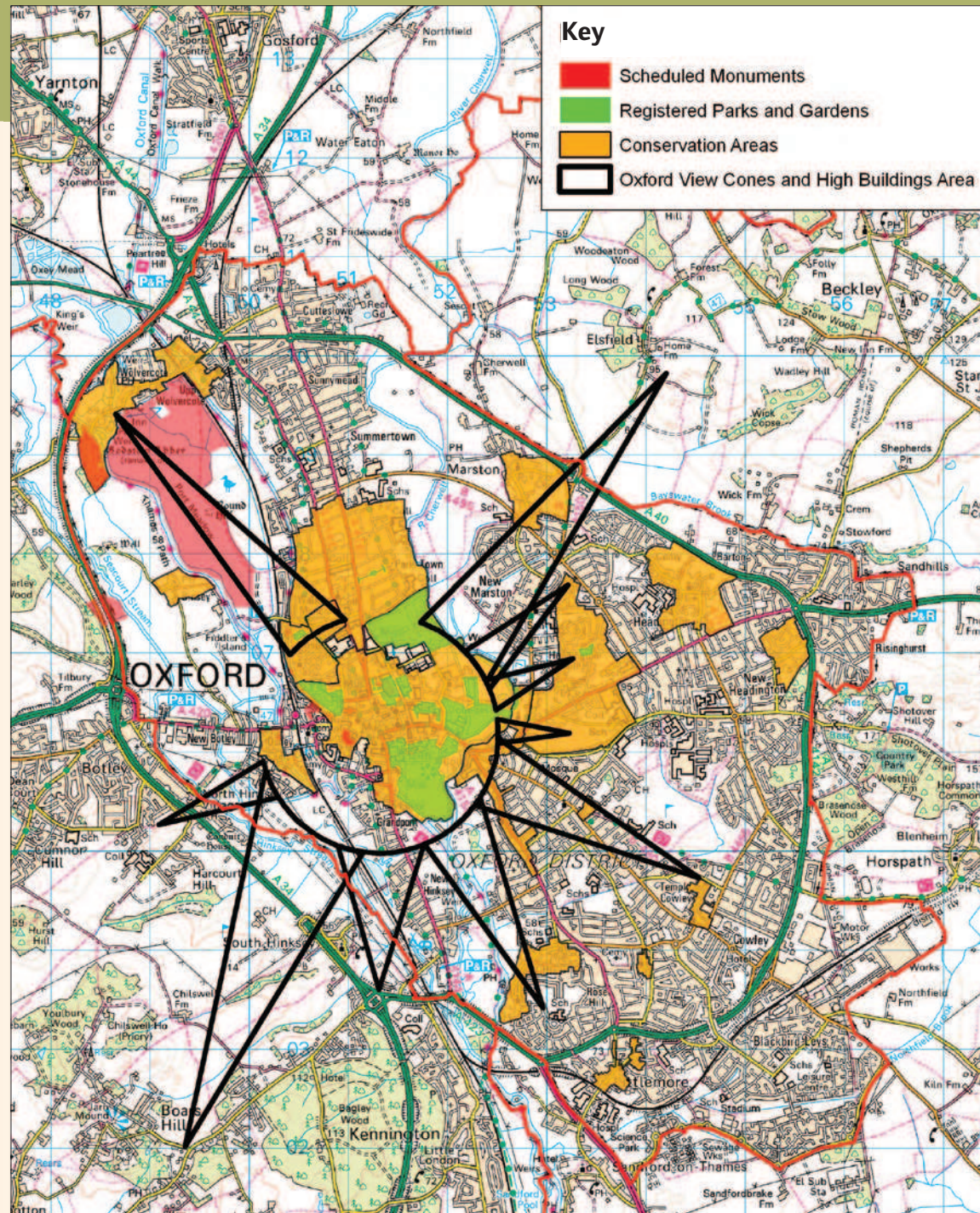


Fig. 57 Map showing view cones, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and Port Meadow Scheduled Ancient Monument.

¹ www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/HeritageAssetRegister.htm

Central Oxford's listed buildings

Oxford has a large number of Grade I (exceptional) listed buildings. The need to protect the setting of these structures places a strong pressure on architects to consider the use of basement constructions to maximise the use of space in the constrained historic core. This in turn poses a challenge if we want to conserve important archaeological remains for future generations to investigate.



Fig. 58 Panoramic view of the Radcliffe Camera and adjacent colleges. © 2012 Oliver Woodford



Fig. 59 The Grade I listed buildings in central Oxford.



Fig. 60 The listed buildings of Oxford colour coded by the date of their earliest recorded fabric.

The need for the higher education and retail sectors to upgrade and evolve whilst at the same time preserving the setting and integrity of surrounding listed structures has created a strong trend towards basement construction which can be seen in these two illustrations. They show a selection of developments with new basements across central Oxford that have received planning permission since the year 2000. A challenge for the future will be to support the development of new educational and commercial facilities whilst avoiding the significant cumulative loss of important buried remains.

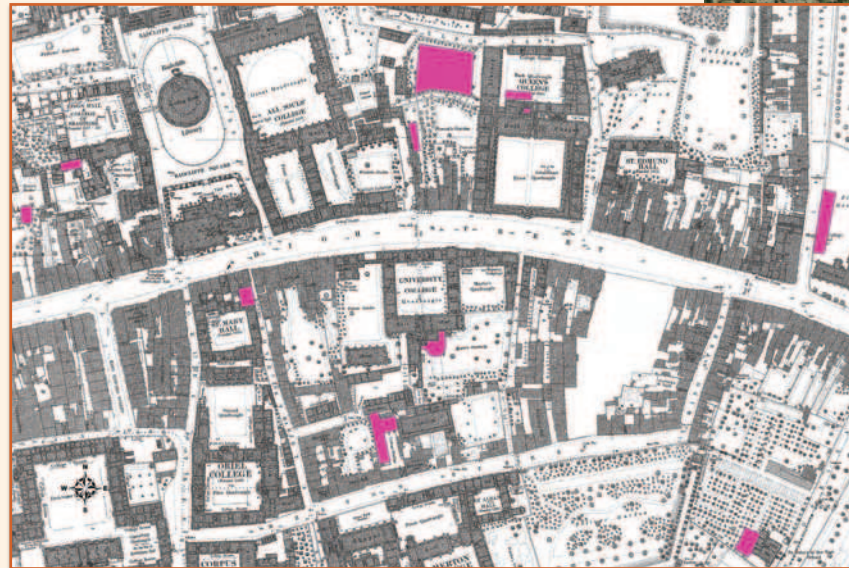


Fig. 61 Basements consented in the east end of the historic city shown on a 1 : 500 1876 OS basemap

Fig. 62 A selection of basement constructions receiving planning permission since the year 2000.

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A key challenge for developers, owners and managers will be achieving the right balance between sustaining Oxford's important heritage assets for future generations whilst both enabling sustainable growth and enhancing our understanding of the past in the present. In order to achieve this balance the City Council will work with external partners to sustain the significance of Oxford's important heritage assets by:

- Providing clear and timely advice on the archaeological implications of development proposals.
- Encouraging major landowners and heritage asset owners to develop their own integrated conservation plans, incorporating assessments of below ground asset survival that can help inform and shape options for future development and expansion.
- Encouraging the identification of heritage asset value prior to costly investment in detailed design in order to ensure that an adequate understanding of impacted assets can contribute positively to the design process.
- Encouraging developers to take into account the impact of cumulative loss on important heritage assets by providing appropriate contextual as well as site specific heritage assessments where necessary.
- Supporting an integrated and cooperative approach between educational institutions regarding the provision of facilities and renewable energy resources in the constrained historic core.
- Supporting creative design solutions aimed at conserving asset significance.
- Monitoring the impact of development on heritage assets and producing an annual report.
- Seeking to add value to the processes of archaeological investigation by promoting community engagement and outreach.



Figs. 63 and 64 Creative design: 17th century or earlier vaulted cellar discovered during works at The Queen's College in 2010 was integrated into the new design by BGS Architects.



Corporate priorities

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Meeting housing need
- An efficient and effective council
- Strong and active communities
- Cleaner greener Oxford

Archaeological Action Plan Objectives

1. Further public access to, and understanding of Oxford's rich heritage.

1a. Maintain and develop the historic environment evidence base for Oxford.

1b. Improve online access to information on the historic environment.

1c. Encourage community participation, enjoyment and appreciation of Oxford's archaeological heritage.

1d. Support and encourage the appropriate storage and display of artefacts and the dissemination of information arising from developer funded investigation.

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2. Sustain the significance of Oxford's important heritage assets.

2a. Provide timely and clear advice.

2b. Provide clear policy guidance.

2c. Monitor impacts on heritage assets.

2d. Provide effective management.

Actions	Timescales	Delivery	Risks
1. Develop and update online resource assessments summarising the city's archaeology.	Review by 2017	CA	Resource implications for officer time.
2. Develop and update online period based research agendas.	Review by 2017	CA	Resource implications for officer time.
3. Provide an annual update for Heritage Gateway.	Ongoing	CA	Resource implications for officer time.
4. Maintain OASIS validation (provides online access to archaeological reports).	Ongoing	CA	Resource implications for officer time.
5. Revise and update the resource assessment reports in light of the results of East Oxford Community Archaeology Project.	By 2017	CA	Resource implications for officer time.
6. Unify HER and UAD to a single database.	By 2017	CA and CAS	Increasing demands of managing on improved format, contribution from CAS uncertain.
7. Undertake programme of UAD enhancement and ensure compliance with national standards.	Ongoing	CA	Resource implications for officer time.
8. Maintain programme of public outreach including talks, walks and media engagement.	Ongoing	CA	High level of interest, careful time management required.
9. Support the legacy of the East Oxford Community Archaeology Project and encourage public engagement with a focus on the archaeology of science and learning.	Ongoing	HSST and CA	Resource implications for officer time, competing demands for developer and other funding.
10. Engage with partners to encourage a unified approach to the storage and presentation of Oxford's material heritage, seeking funding streams where appropriate.	Ongoing	HSST	Resource implications for officer time Competing demands for funding streams.
1. Maintain planning application response targets.	Ongoing	CA	High volume of applications with archaeological interest.
2. Input into the heritage plan and local plan policy review.	By 2017	HSST	Changing policy environment at national level creating uncertainty.
3. Produce an annual monitoring report on heritage asset sustainability.	Initiate in 2013 then annually	HSST	Resource implications for officer time.
4. Source external funding and develop partnership working with other heritage and community bodies.	Ongoing	HSST	Resource implications for officer time, competing demands for funding streams.

CA = City Council Archaeologist, HSST = Heritage and Specialist Services Team, CAS = County Archaeological Service.

The Heritage and Specialist Services Team at the City Council has produced a series of period based resource assessments with the intention of providing a point-in-time synthesis of archaeological information for the Local Authority Area. These have in turn informed the production of archaeological research agendas for each period.

- Palaeolithic to Mesolithic Oxford (500,000–4,000 BC)
- Neolithic and Bronze Age Oxford (4000–800 BC)
- Iron Age Oxford (800 BC–43 AD)
- Roman Oxford (43–410 AD)
- Saxon and Viking Oxford (Early Medieval) (410–1066)
- Norman Oxford (1066–1205)
- Medieval Oxford (1205–1540)
- Post-medieval Oxford (1540–1800)
- Modern Oxford (1800–1950)

The period based resource assessments and research agendas are available as pdfs on the Oxford Archaeological Plan website: www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordArchaeologicalPlan.htm

Resource assessments and agendas for the wider Thames-Solent region can be accessed via the Oxford Archaeology website www.thehumanjourney.net

Further information on the heritage of Oxford can be accessed through the Oxford Heritage Plan and Heritage Gateway websites: www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordHeritagePlan.htm and www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Further information on the history and archaeology of the county, including Oxford, is available on the County Council Heritage Search website: www.publicapps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicapps/applications/heritage

Information on Oxford is also held on the English Heritage Pastscape website www.pastscape.org.uk

Information on designated assets in Oxford can be obtained from the National Heritage List for England: www.list.english-heritage.org.uk

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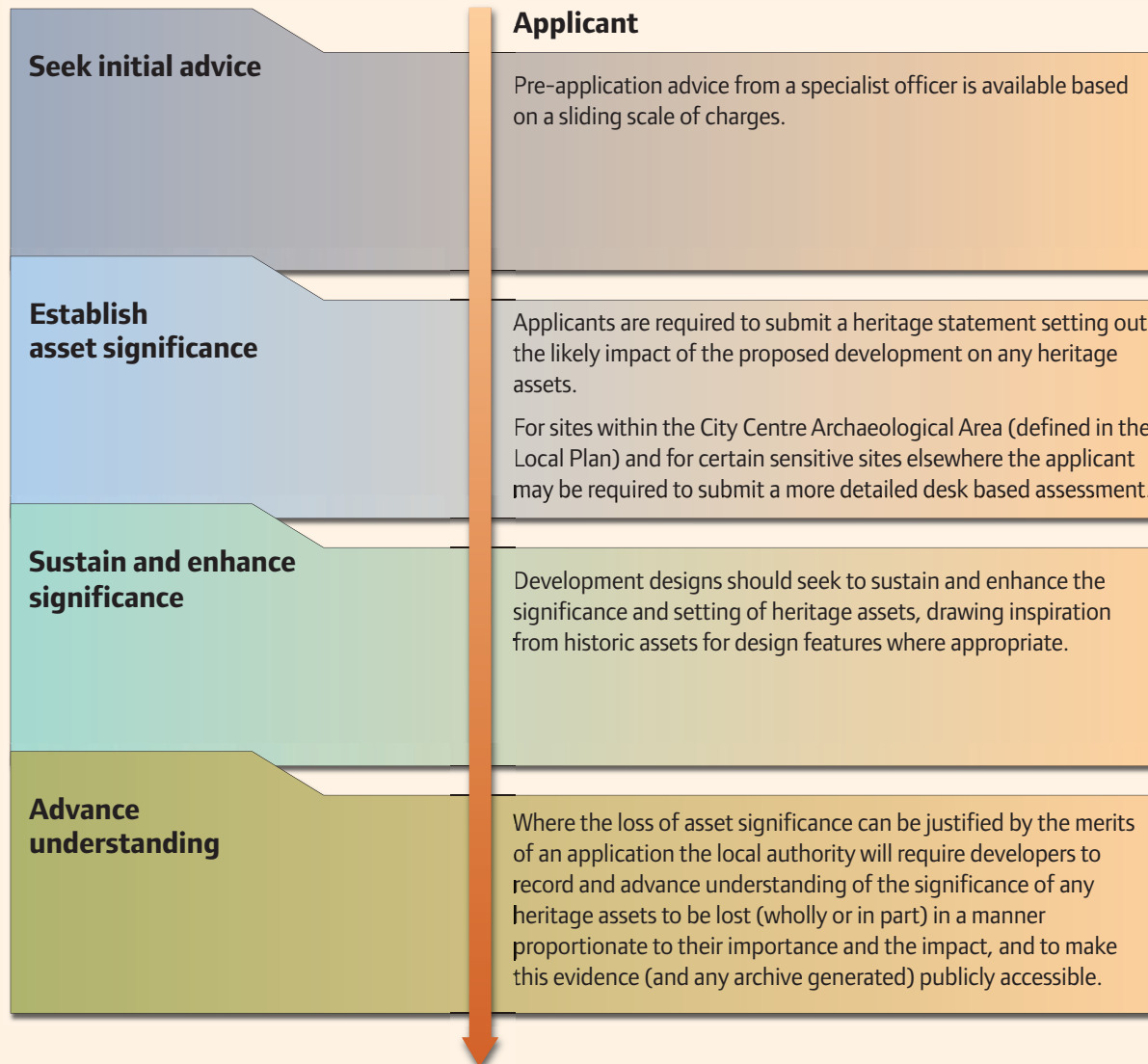
Fig. 65 Screen shot of part of the Urban Archaeological Database showing the mapping of archaeological events (events are activities that record archaeological information, for example excavations, watching briefs or building recording).

Oxford's archaeological heritage is a finite resource. Once disturbed it is irreplaceable. For these reasons the current Local Plan (Policy HE 1) states that the Local Authority will not grant planning permission for any development that would have an unacceptable effect on nationally important remains, whether scheduled or not, or their settings.

Where a development proposal is permitted on an historically sensitive site it will typically be subject to a planning condition requiring archaeological recording, storage and the dissemination of the knowledge recovered.

The diagram to the right explains the process for developers.

If you require the services of an archaeological contractor a full list of registered organisations can be found on the Institute for Archaeologists website: www.archaeologists.net.



Oxford Core Strategy 2026 Policy CS18

Urban design, townscape character and the historic environment

Planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high-quality urban design through:

- responding appropriately to the site and its surroundings.
- creating a strong sense of place.
- being easy to understand and to move through.
- being adaptable, in terms of providing buildings and spaces that could have alternative uses in future.
- contributing to an attractive public realm.
- high quality architecture.

Development proposals should respect and draw inspiration from Oxford's unique historic environment (above and below ground), responding positively to the character and distinctiveness of the locality. Development must not result in loss or damage to important historic features, or their settings, particularly those of national importance and, where appropriate, should include proposals for enhancement of the historic environment, particularly where these address local issues identified in, for example, conservation area character appraisal or management plans. Views of the skyline of the historic centre will be protected.



Fig. 66 Investigation of the cemetery of the medieval hospital of St John the Baptist at Magdalen College in 2012.

Aesthetic value: Value deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Archeox: The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project, a community archaeology project initiated by the University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education.

Communal value: Value deriving from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Evidential value: Value deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including through the local heritage asset register).

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic environment record: An information services that seeks to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

Historic landscape characterisation: The spatial mapping of modern and historic land-use and plot form.

Historic urban characterisation: The mapping of modern and historic building plot form, land-use and building type using digital maps.

Historic value: Value deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Research agenda: research questions that we would like to answer by investigating archaeological remains.

Resource assessment: A summary of the information produced by previous archaeological fieldwork.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

This report was compiled by David Radford, Oxford City Council Archaeologist. Thanks are extended to Ruth Beckley the Oxford Archaeological Plan Project Officer, to English Heritage who funded the Oxford Archaeological Plan project and to the many individuals who have provided comments on the drafts of the resource assessment and agenda reports. Detailed comments were provided on the period resource assessments by John Blair, Paul Booth, Brian Durham, Tom Hassall, Gill Hey, George Lambrick, Julian Munby, Alison Roberts and Liz Wooley. Further advice and comments were provided by David Clark, Anne Dodd, Edith Gollnast, Malcolm Graham, Helena Hamerow, Jill Hind, Robert Lloyd-Sweet, Maureen Mellor, Adrian Parker, Roger Thomas and Nick Worledge. In addition to those already mentioned grateful thanks are extended to everybody who took part in the research agendas seminar discussions in October 2011.



Fig. 67 University of Oxford Vice Chancellor Professor Andrew Hamilton (left) visiting the Minchery Farm Nunnery excavation with Dr David Griffiths, the Archeox project co-organiser.

4 Illustrations

Thanks are extended to the following for allowing use of their images:

- 36 Adam Stanford, Fig 34 and rear cover
Ashmolean Museum, Fig. 25
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Brian Durham, Page 3, Aerial photo
Ben Ford, Oxford Archaeology, Fig. 15
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Museum of London Archaeology, Fig. 17
Oxfordshire History Centre Henry Taunt Collection, Figs. 42, 43, 44, & 45
Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Figs. 12, 13 & 35



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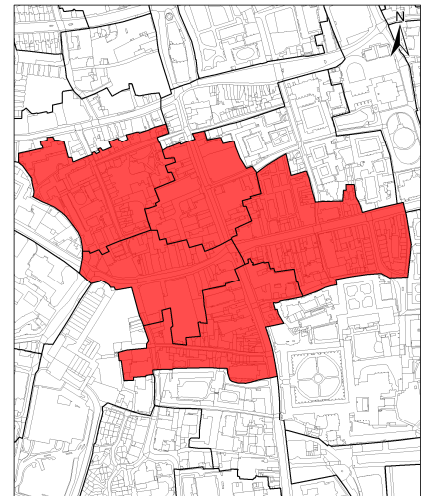
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 15:
CITY CENTRE AND COMMERCIAL CORE- PEMBROKE STREET AND ST ALDATES**

The HUCA is located within broad character Zone E: City centre and commercial core.

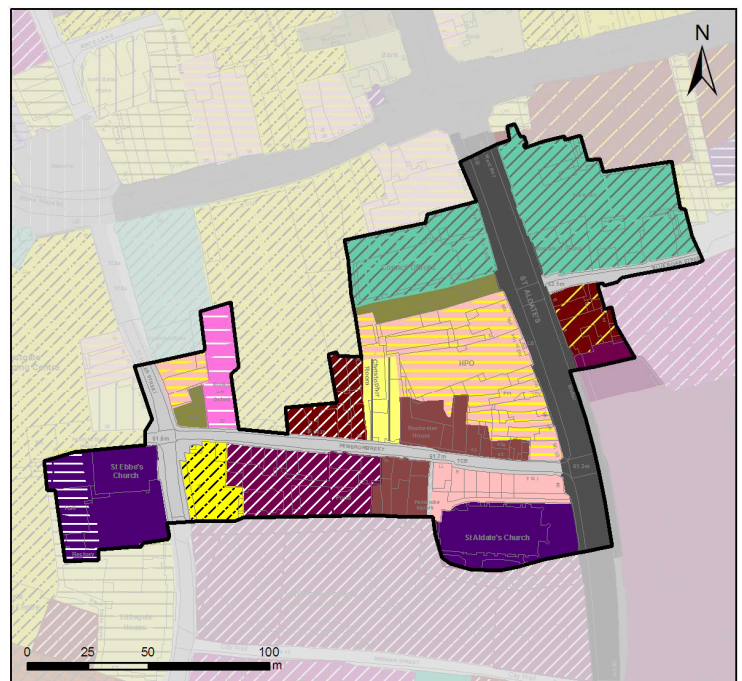
The broad character zone consists of the central historic core around Carfax crossroads linking main axial north-south and south-west Late Saxon streets. The zone forms a coherent central area in the city where the roads, lanes and tenements broadly reflect a history of medieval to modern commercial activity.

Summary characteristics

- Dominant period: 18th-19th century.
- Designations: Three Grade II*, twenty-four Grade II listings. Central Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Potential: Potential for complex urban archaeology relating to Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement and commercial activity. Contains part of a distinct axis of early churches which may represent a settlement axis pre-dating the foundation of the Late Saxon burh. The area is notable for the survival of 17th century town houses along Pembroke Street. Previous archaeological investigation in this area have been limited to small scale interventions.
- Character: Modern mixed offices and shop units, Post-medieval town houses, medieval churches, large 19th century Town Hall
- Spaces: The area has been densely developed, there is little tree and vegetation cover aside from isolated small garden plots.
- Road morphology: St Aldates is straight historic axial road to the river crossing which may be of prehistoric origin. St Ebbes and Pembroke streets of the Late Saxon Burh. Pembroke Street is noticeable for following the axis of early churches rather than the more rectilinear grid of the central burh.
- Plot morphology: Mixture of large regular and large irregular plots for commercial and civic buildings, with good survival of the medieval tenement pattern.
- The natural topography of the area is Summertown-Radley Terrace rising



City Centre and Commercial Core (Zone E)
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HUCA 15 OAP Characterisation	
	Townhouses
	Mixed townhouses/shops
	Narrow plots
	Victorian Townhouses
	Mixed Housing & Shops
	Private housing 1945-1980
	Church pre 1086
	Church pre 1800
	Church post 1800
	non conformist chapel
	Schools & Colleges pre 1945
	Civic
	Medieval Colleges
	Post Medieval Colleges
	19th Century Colleges
	20th century Colleges
	Indoor market
	Modern Shopping centre
	Mixed Shops/Offices
	Offices post 1945
	Banks pre 1945
	Inns pre 1800
	Leisure
	Medieval long distance route
	Medieval medium distance route
	Lane
	Alley
	Modern Roads
	Square or Place

OXFORD HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER ASSESSMENT Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

gently from a height of 61m OD in the south to 65m OD in the north.

- Survival of townscape elements:
 - Late Saxon street grid with potentially early elements.
 - Good medieval tenement plot survival.
 - Multiple listed buildings of medieval to modern date, including a coherent group of well preserved 17th century buildings along Pembroke Street.
 - Notable Norman church fabric surviving within churches that originated in the Saxon period..
 - The 15th century cellar of Falcon Inn survives as the plate room of the Town Hall
 - Modern Art Oxford is housed in a part of the 19th century City Brewery (Hanley then Halls).
 - 18th century and Victorian pubs include The Old Tom, St Aldates Tavern (with cart access) and the Royal Blenheim (1889).
 - Survival of stone built former stable range behind former St Aldates Tavern.
 - Wooden early 20th century post box on St Aldates

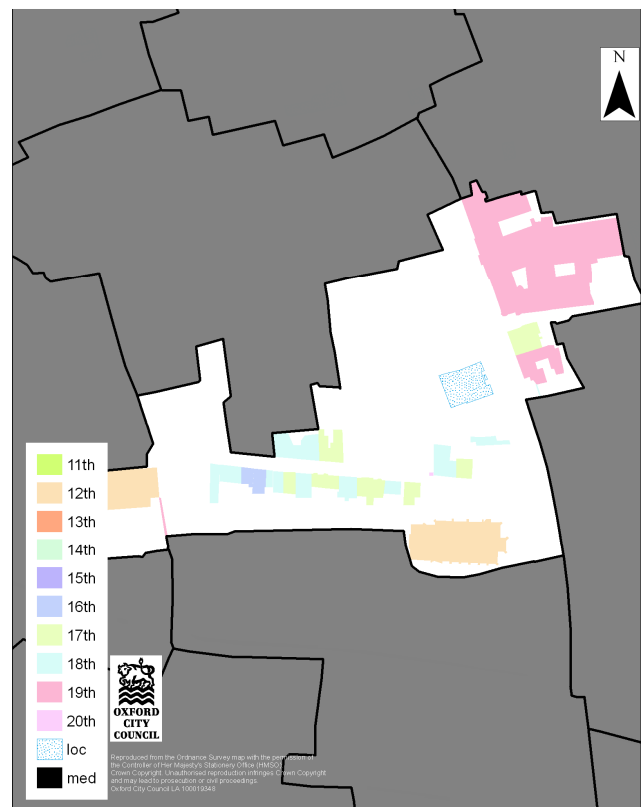
Description

A mixed use commercial and civic area in the southern part of the historic core, encompassing the Town Hall and City Council Office building (St Aldates Chambers), pubs, large modern shop units, historic town houses, heritage and art centres, the central post office, and two historic churches. Overall building density is high, with continuous frontages opening onto the street. The area is located on the south facing slope of the 2nd Thames gravel terrace.

The area is located on St Aldates the main north-south axial route through the town, and includes the historic side streets of Pembroke Street and part of St Ebbes Street. Pembroke Street is narrow and high sided with narrow pavements, it preserves a coherent area of stuccoed and rendered 17th-18th century townhouses. Many of these are in use as offices or as student accommodation. St Aldates represents a slightly less coherent area of stone built civic and commercial buildings with greater variety of design and scale.

St Aldates Chambers is a massive four storey office range, although presents a deceptively small street frontage to St Aldates. The monumental facade of the Town Hall dominates the northern end of St Aldates, and conceals and eclectic and non-uniform arrangement of structures and rooflines to the rear which form the town hall complex. The remaining buildings are a mix of three storey town houses and modern shops. The central post-office also also notable for the scale of its rear office block and the distinctive early 20th century wooden post box located to its front.

The small tree lined Churchyards of St Aldates and St Ebbes provide limited public open space along with a small tree lined court on Blue Boar Street. A number of narrow tarmac car parks and a paved courtyards belonging to Pembroke College provide private open space within the area. There is noticeable amount of Street furniture on St Aldates, mostly relating to bus stops.



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

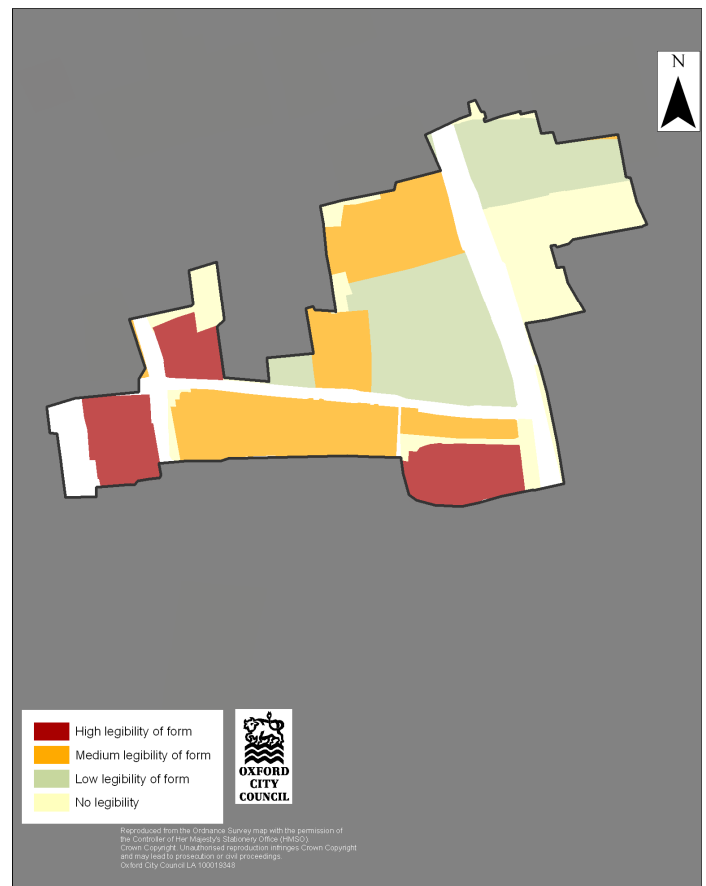
Historical value- means of connecting with the past

Oxford may have its origins as a middle Saxon trading settlement or religious centre (minster) located close to a crossing point over the Thames. Documentary records indicate that a defended burh was established at Oxford by the early 10th century. St Ebbes and St Aldates were early Saxon saints and the churches that bear their name have their origins in this period, although the earliest recorded fabric in each is Norman in date. These two churches along with a church that stood on the site of the current Christ Church Cathedral to the east, appear to have formed an important early east-west axis for the town, the significance of which remains to be fully established.

After the initial shock of the Norman Conquest the town appears to have recovered quickly. The Norman period saw major investment in religious buildings and infrastructure projects including the construction of a stone causeway across the river crossing and floodplain (The Grandpont). Despite the disruption of the Conquest and the later conflicts of the Anarchy in the 12th century the town appears to have done well with trade in cloth and leather goods driving economic growth in the 12th and early 13th centuries. The tenement pattern evolved in this period with subdivision of Late Saxon and Norman plots, especially along the desirable street frontages associated with the weekly market. This extended along the streets leading off the central crossroads at Carfax (the name either deriving from the French 'quatre-face' or a corruption of the Latin 'quadrifurcus' both meaning four forks or crossroads). These tenements can be plotted with some confidence from 13th century records (notably the 1279 Hundred Rolls). The top end of St Aldates houses the stalls of the fish market (hence it previously being known as Fish Street).

The character area is notable for its association with the medieval Jewish community, known to have been in residence from the late 11th century until their expulsion in 1290, with a strong concentration along St Aldates where the synagogue was located (the site of the former synagogue now lies under Christ Church). From the late 13th century and 14th century the cloth trade faltered and disruptions to navigation of Thames and the arrival of the Black Death in 1349 combined with other factors to suppress the local economy. An educational tradition of teaching canon and Roman law had been cultivated locally in the 12th century through the activities of the religious houses and courts. The University subsequently emerged in the late 12th as travel to the more established continental Universities became problematic for aspirant students. By the 13th century the academic halls of the University and its fledgling colleges (founded with endowments from rich benefactors) had taken route. The depressed economy opened up opportunities for further expansion, with colleges taking advantage of low land prices to expand, especially to the north and east of the town away from the market area.

In the late medieval period the frontages of the main streets centred on Carfax would have been occupied by narrow shop frontages within halls often at right angles to the street or set back parallel to the street behind a range of shops or courtyard. Few traces of extant medieval structures now survive in this



Assessment of medieval tenement survival

character area as in the 17th century economic growth driven by the University and colleges led to substantial rebuilding. A process well illustrated by the town houses located along Pembroke Street.

The late 18th century saw renewed efforts to re-organise the city and reduce street clutter. The Carfax street market was moved to a permanent indoor market off High Street in 1773. By the 19th century the area comprised narrow post-medieval tenements along Pembroke Street with mixed post-medieval and 19th century domestic and commercial properties along St Aldates. The 1st edition OS Town Plan (1876) records two further churches, a chapel, two schools, a library, the old town hall and corn exchange in the character area. A total of seven inns and pubs are also recorded. The construction of the current Town Hall in the 1890s resulted in the removal of several medieval and post-medieval structures and can be seen as an assertion of civic pride and authority in a town historically dominated by the University from the 14th century onwards. The library adjoining the Town Hall complex later became the city museum and one of the structures many interesting features is its incorporation of part of the 15th cellar of the Falcon (Knapp Hall) which survives as the muniment room.

The road systems and the churches of St Aldates and St Ebbes are important elements of the Late Saxon town morphology. The churches of St Ebbes and St Aldates are good illustrations of Norman investment in church infrastructure. Pembroke Street provides an excellent illustration of the 17th and 18th century rebuilding of the town. The mixed shops, pubs and Town Hall on St Aldates building provide a good illustration of the expansion of Victorian and Edwardian commerce and of civic largesse. The Town Hall notably illustrates renewed civic confidence that resulted from the acquisition of Borough status in 1889. The re-used brewery warehouse, now Modern Art Oxford, is a rare survival of the one significant local Brewing and Malting industry that was located in the southern and western parts of the town.

Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence

The character has potential for significant urban Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains relating commercial and settlement activity in the vicinity of the history market place. The Urban Archaeological Database records forty-eight archaeological events for this area mostly building records and small scale interventions. Notable discoveries include eight Late Saxon burials at St Aldates Church.

Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation

The St Aldates section of this character area is dominated by the grand Jacobean style town hall complex, opened in 1897, this is complemented by simpler four storey stone fronted buildings on the west side of the street with mixed brick, timber and stone built structures located further to the south. Pembroke Street contains a pleasing mix of 17th-18th century stuccoed town houses and later brick and stone built offices and houses. Despite widespread college ownership and use of many buildings as offices Pembroke Street is a notable area of domestic architecture in a city dominated by monumental collegiate architecture.



Modern Art Oxford

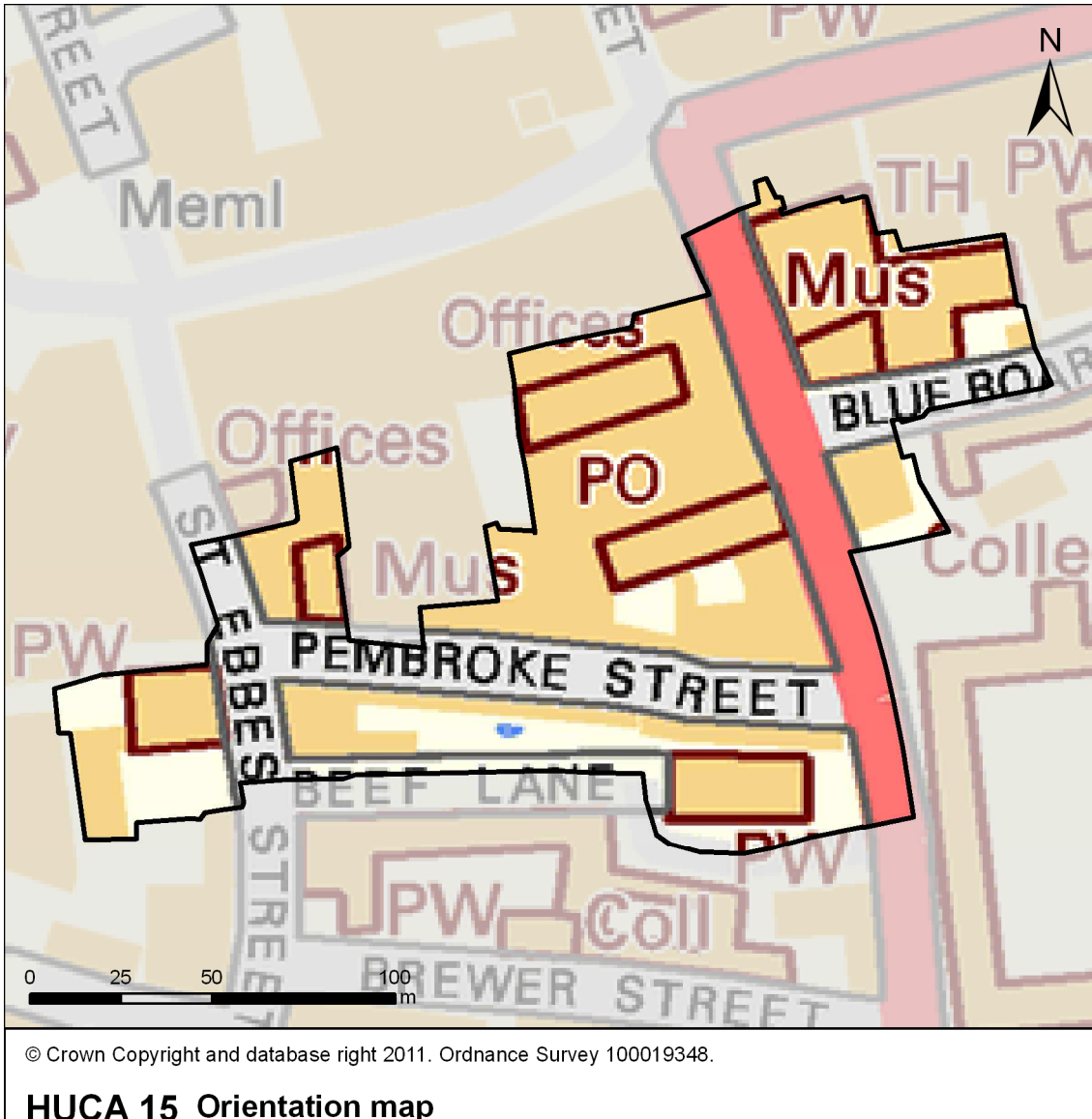


Pembroke Street looking east

Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

The character has value as a historic focal point of civic and commercial activity in the city. It contains the Town Hall complex which continues to be heavily used by community groups and contains the Council Chamber where city council meetings are held. In addition to its democratic function, the Town hall incorporates a public café, shop, gallery and the City Museum. The character area also includes Modern Art Oxford and the Oxford Story Museum. The two churches within the area have distinctive and large congregations.

Version: 18/2/2012



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