

Old Headington

Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation Draft



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Statement of Special Interest

Old Headington retains the character of a quiet rural village largely built between the 17th and 19th centuries within an attractive green setting despite encroachment by suburban housing from the late 19th to mid 20th century.

The conservation area is made up of several character areas, including the village's historic core of closely spaced houses fronting principal streets and an intricate network of smaller lanes including highly distinctive residential areas. These are surrounded by a ring of large detached houses with spacious and mature landscaped grounds and the fragments of pasture fields in the north. These areas contribute to the special historic and/or architectural interest of the conservation area and to understanding of the village's evolution.

The village character is reinforced by the relative tranquillity of the area, away from nearby busy road routes and including many quiet residential enclaves, such as The Croft. The width of roads, low scale of buildings and the close interrelationship of buildings with the roads contribute to the ambience of these intimate spaces. Gaps in the building lines allow the greenery of gardens to permeate to the roadside whilst green roadside verges and banks add further to the village scene.

The greenery of the area is provided by a wealth of tall trees and other foliage, mostly in privately owned gardens. As well as providing height and colour to the area, they form the background to many views and provide enclosure to streets. Occasional survivals of trees from the orchards that once surrounded the village may also be identified. The relatively spacious property plots enable the provision of this greenery and stand in contrast to the smaller, regularly proportioned properties seen in surrounding suburban developments.

The history of the settlement is traceable through its architecture and landscape to the mid 12th century, including suggestions of medieval property boundaries and street alignments. The many houses and cottages built of local limestone between the 17th and early 19th centuries provide a strong character to the built environment. They also contribute considerable variety to the streetscene and make this a rich and interesting area of historic architecture.

The merchant's mansions built around the village in the late 18th and early 19th century, with their ancillary buildings, structures and formal landscapes, provide a higher class of architecture and represent the changing relationship of the village with the nearby city. In combination they form the best surviving example of this type of early suburban development within Oxford.

The high limestone boundary walls that enclose many of the village's streets and lanes provide one of its most distinctive features and are the dominant boundary treatment. This is locally distinctive feature found in other villages within Oxford.

Most of the village's surviving agricultural buildings, which formed elements of several farm units, have now been converted to new uses but remain as evidence of the former agricultural activity of the settlement.

Other buildings reflect the changing economy and social life of this former rural centre, including inns, former shops, bakeries, non-conformist chapels, schools and even a village reading room and temperance house.

The influence of the city, university and the many colleges is represented in the prosperity of the village's inns (at least since the late 17th century), the development of the country

residences, the conversion of notable buildings for educational establishments and, since the mid-20th century, the presence of Ruskin College at The Rookery and Stoke House.

A legacy of the inclusion of the village within the City of Oxford was the creation of Bury Knowle Park and the preservation of Bury Knowle House as Headington Library. This public park was formed from the pleasure grounds of a private mansion.

Later infill development has largely been of a small scale and in-keeping with the village character of the area, or is otherwise discreetly placed to not intrude into views through it.

The green setting of the village was separated from the wider countryside through construction of the Oxford Ring Road during the 1930s. The fragments of green fields within the conservation area contribute to the rural character of the village and provide a green setting with, hedges and hedgerow trees in views from roads and footpaths looking over to the rolling countryside of South Oxfordshire to the north. The importance of these fields to the green setting of the village was recognised by the acquisition of several of them by Oxford Preservation Trust and the retention of others as a public park at Dunstan Road. The attractive tree-lined bridleway leading from Stoke Place allows views over these fields.

The conservation area provides many attractive views. The enclosure of roads by closely spaced buildings and trees means that many of these are contained within the settlement and channelled along its street frontages or to groups of buildings. Other views are focused on buildings, whilst areas of formal parkland and the small fields in the north of the conservation area provide more expansive vistas.

As an area of continuous activity, the area has considerable archaeological potential, including evidence of the origins of the medieval and possibly Anglo-Saxon settlement and known remains of activity during the Roman period.

Summary

Significance

1. Medieval origins of settlement plan and spaces
2. Tranquil village character, creating a well integrated residential area with attractive green setting and many local amenities available either within the area or in the vicinity
3. Low traffic areas with an intimate, pedestrian friendly environment
4. Green surroundings provided by mature trees and gardens
5. Vernacular materials, contributing to the locally distinctive character and sense of age
6. Survival of traditional buildings
7. Survival of locally distinctive features, e.g. high stone boundary walls
8. Mix of cottages, farmhouses and large detached mansions and villas
9. Lack of significant intrusion from later infill development
10. Green and open spaces contribute to rural character and setting
11. High Quality public open spaces that are part of the community's identity
12. Quality of views through the area
13. Visual connection with the countryside

14. Archaeological interest demonstrated by previous finds

Vulnerability

1. Development that undermines the distinctive character or appearance of the area
2. Loss of historic architectural features and detailing, such as traditional doors and windows, roofing materials and features, or locally distinctive construction materials
3. Loss of tranquillity and pedestrian environment through increasing traffic
4. Loss of green and leafy character through depletion of the mature tree stock and hedgerows
5. Loss of rural character through depletion of green open space, roadside verges and hedgerows and views out to rural setting
6. Loss of quality in the public realm through poor quality interventions
7. Loss of boundary definitions including locally distinctive high stone walls
8. Loss of locally distinctive materials

Negative features

1. Visual impact of traffic management and enforcement
2. Condition of No. 29 Old High Street
3. Highway dominated spaces
4. Some architecturally unsympathetic rear extensions
5. Intrusive appearance of security fencing at Cuckoo Lane
6. Intrusion of hospital chimney in key views
7. Clutter in the public realm, e.g. commercial wheelie bins and traffic signs
8. Some boundary treatments are considered out of keeping with the character of adjacent buildings or detracting from the quality of spaces such as Cuckoo Lane

Introduction

The Headington Conservation Area was first designated in 1971 in recognition of the area's special historic and architectural interest, which it was considered desirable to preserve and enhance. The designated area was expanded in 1976 and 1985 to include Bury Knowle Park and House with surrounding areas and buildings. A further extension in 1998 added the parts of the John Radcliffe Hospital containing the former buildings of Headington Manor, as well as areas of fields and gardens on the northern edge of the village running up to the ring road. This character appraisal has been prepared by Oxford City Council following survey within and around the Conservation Area undertaken in summer 2010, which included the involvement of stakeholders representing the local community. Public consultation on the draft appraisal was undertaken in April and May 2011, following which the appraisal will be amended to take into account representations made by the public and a final draft was approved by the City Council on *****

Policy Context

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the City Council have a statutory duty to identify those parts of their area that are considered to have "... special historic or architectural interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" and to designate them as conservation areas. Within these areas the 1990 act requires the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area when exercising its function as a local planning authority. This character appraisal defines the special historic and architectural interest of the conservation area, including those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved. It also identifies negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance and issues that may affect it in future. These

may be the subject of management proposals prepared by the Council at a later date.

The government's policy for the management of conservation areas is set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010). According to PPS5 the government's overarching aim is that "... the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations". Within the PPS, Policy HE2 states that local planning authorities should ensure they have evidence "... about the historic environment and heritage assets in their area and that this is publicly documented". This appraisal provides a public record of the conservation area and an assessment of the features that contribute to its significance. In accordance with Policy HE3 of the PPS, this appraisal will be used by the Council to ensure that the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment are considered and contribute toward the spatial vision of local plan documents. It should also ensure that investment and enhancement in Old Headington are informed by a detailed understanding of the area's special interest.

When developing proposals for change within the conservation area, it is expected that applicants will seek to either conform with or be sympathetic to the positive characteristics of the conservation area in their designs.

The conservation area forms a designated heritage asset as described within Policy HE9 of the PPS, of which it states that "... there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets" and that loss affecting a designated heritage asset "... should require clear and convincing justification". Policy HE10 also directs councils to have regard to the need to protect the contribution of the setting of a designated

heritage asset to its special value. In conformity with Policy HE7 of the PPS, the appraisal should be used when determining planning applications affecting the area. As a basic requirement, planning applications should refer to the appraisal as a part of the Historic Environment Record (in the design and access statement where this is required) when explaining the design concept.

The Appraisal cannot mention every building or feature within the conservation area. Any omission should not be taken to imply that it is not of any interest or value to the character of the area.

Public Consultation

This appraisal was undertaken with the assistance of representatives of a number of key stakeholder groups. Meetings were

held with representatives of the Friends of Old Headington, Friends of Bury Knowle Park, the Headington Ward Councillors of Oxford City Council, The Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, The Oxford Civic Society, Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust. Workshops in the conservation area were held during July and August 2010, including the use of the City Council's 'Character Assessment Toolkit', a standardised questionnaire used to collect information on the positive and negative contribution of different features to the character and appearance of the conservation area. A number of walking workshops were held on 10th September 2010 to allow interested persons to take part in the appraisal process.

Landscape Setting

Geographical location (see Map 1)

The conservation area lies on the north eastern edge of the built-up area of Oxford City adjoining which are the suburban estates of Headington and Northway. To the north the A40 trunk road forms the northern boundary of the conservation area, whilst the District centre of Headington lies just to the south of the conservation area's southern boundary. Oxford City Centre lies approximately two miles to the west.

Geology and topography

The underlying geological make up of the area and surrounding region has influenced land use and settlement, as well as the building materials available.

The conservation area lies at the edge of the Jurassic Limestone ridge that runs between the Valley of the Upper Thames and the Vale of White Horse, which at this point rises as Headington Hill. The hill is separated from the continuation of the

ridge to the south west by the southward turn of the River Thames and the River Cherwell but is continued to the east by the eminence of Shotover Hill. The plateau falls away with a relatively steep slope to the narrow valley of the Bayswater Brook to the north, but has a shallower dip slope running away to the south. As such, the northern edge of the conservation area benefits from views across the Bayswater valley to the north and expansive views across the Cherwell Valley to the Cotswolds beyond in the north west (see photograph below). In the remainder of the conservation area the relatively level ground means that views are constrained by the lines of buildings and tree lines and normally focused to points within the village or in its immediate vicinity.

The limestone of Headington Hill gave rise to well drained soils that would have been easily cultivated and much of this area was arable land in the open fields of Headington until enclosure at the



View west out of the conservation area from Dustan Road looking over suburban housing to the Cherwell and Thames Valleys

beginning of the 19th century. The steeper slope to the north evidently runs through heavier soils and a spring-line emerges part-way down the slope. This land appears to have been used as pasture or hay meadows, for which the village was otherwise poorly supplied in the past.

The bed-rock beneath the village is made up of Lower Corallian beds of sands and grits interspersed with layers of limestone rubble, which provides a long-lived building material as roughly coursed walling, for which it has been used throughout the village. However, it is not suitable for finer masonry. Quarries to the south east of the village provide access to the Upper Corallian series, which include the Headington Hardstone, used for building plinths and kerbs, as well as the softer freestone. The latter was prized for more intricate work and fine ashlar until the 18th century, by which time its poor weathering qualities had become all too evident throughout Oxford's churches and college buildings. Some examples of both stones are found within the village, although freestone from Barrington and Taynton, near Burford, are also found. Lime for building mortar was reportedly brought from Witney.



High walls of limestone rubble are a distinctive feature in the conservation area

The Kimmeridge Clays outcrop in the northern part of the Vale of White Horse to the south and have been widely exploited for brick and tile making, as well as for potting industries that are evidenced in the area in both the Roman and Medieval

periods. The white clay of the Wealden Beds and red ochre are both found at Shotover Hill.

Setting

The conservation area lies at a transitional point between the suburban landscape of Headington and the rural hinterland beyond the ring road. To the north west, Dunstan Road runs steeply downhill to the Northway Housing Estate at Saxon Way. Headington Cemetery covers the ridge of the hill to the south of Dunstan Road and the vast complex of the John Radcliffe Hospital lies directly west of the conservation area. Here the surviving open parkland and buildings of Headington Manor inside the conservation area provide a contrast with the monolithic elevations of hospital buildings just outside its boundary. Osler Road continues south from the conservation area as a residential street of Edwardian or Inter-War houses, as well as including the green of the Headington Bowls Club and the site of the new Manor Hospital (formerly the home ground of Oxford United Football Club). Osler Road leads into the shopping area on London Road just to the south.



Old High Street view looking towards the conservation area

Between Osler Road and the rear of properties on Old High Street, the sunken path at Cuckoo Lane marks the southern boundary of the conservation area and provides access to Stephen Road, which is formed of Inter-War detached and semi-detached houses. Old High Street also

runs south from the conservation area, continuing as a road of attractive Edwardian houses before gaining a more commercial character as it reaches the junction with London Road. East of Old High Street the conservation area wraps around the Headington Car Park and the side of properties on London Road.

Along the southern edge of Bury Knowle Park the conservation area adjoins and includes part of the busy route of London Road. This is an important traffic route into the city from the east, as well as serving the residential areas and business of Headington. Facing the conservation area London Road has a very mixed frontage, which includes historic buildings of local significance such as St Andrew's Primary School and the Victorian-era Post Office, as well as small high street businesses, private houses and a small supermarket. The long, straight route of London Road provides dramatic views along the front of the park's boundary walls.



London Road south of the conservation area

East of Bury Knowle Park, residential streets of mainly Inter-War housing create a sharp contrast to the parkland and fields on the eastern edge of the conservation area. Views out of the conservation area from Bury Knowle Park are restricted by the rear elevations of houses along Chestnut Avenue directly to the east. The northern boundary of the conservation area is marked by the course of the northern ring road, which is a fast flowing

traffic route that acts as a significant barrier to northward movement. However, the fall in ground level to the north and the tree lines either side of and between the carriageways mask some of the traffic and the resultant noise from within the conservation area. Beyond the dual carriageway, the land is a mixture of farmland, recreation grounds and allotment gardens to the Bayswater Brook with a mixture of open arable land and woodland covering the south facing hillsides on the opposite side of the valley and leading up to the small village of Elsfield in South Oxfordshire District Council's administrative area.

Biodiversity

The conservation area is notable for the green and leafy open spaces (both publicly and privately owned) within its boundary. The density of broad-leafed trees in hedgerows around small fields bounded by the ring road and the formal planting of larger gardens provides valuable potential for wildlife habitat. The hedgerows provide an opportunity for the scarce Brown Hairstreak Butterfly, which has recently been recorded on the outskirts of Oxford. These fields include areas of unimproved grassland, along with streams and ponds running down the slope to the north, which represent further opportunities for wildlife with an impact well beyond their immediate limits.

Some fragments of the orchards that surrounded the village at the end of the 19th century have survived, whilst others have been planted. These provide a survival of the living heritage of agricultural plant varieties, many of which have been lost over the past century. Traditional orchards are recognised as a significant habitat within the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Trees and buildings in the conservation area provide opportunities for nesting birds and roosting bats. The colony of house martins nesting at Nos. 87 and 89 Old High Street during the summer of 2010 were notable for bringing the noise

and movement of wildlife into the centre of the village.



Green open spaces at Dunstan with opportunities for wildlife

Historical Development

The process of Headington's development has had a decisive impact on its present character and appearance. This influence is seen in both the shape and landscape of streets and other open spaces of the village and the form, construction and uses of its buildings and structures. The modern village and conservation area represents the outcome of centuries of human intervention in the landscape. In combination these contribute to the special historic interest of the area, whilst certain events and processes stand out as of particular interest in this ongoing story.

Prehistory

Headington overlooks the valley of a tributary of the River Cherwell, itself a tributary of the River Thames. Following the retreat of glaciers at the end of the last Ice Age (c. 8,000 BC) both river valleys are likely to have provided focal areas for exploitation by early colonists living off riverside and marshland resources, whilst exploiting the forests that developed on the surrounding hills. A landscape of Neolithic (4,000 – 2,400 BC) ritual monuments and large circular enclosures has been uncovered to the west of Headington on the low ridge between the Rivers Thames and Cherwell. Finds of polished stone axes from the Headington area attest to activity in the immediate area during this period.

Evidence of an Iron Age settlement was recovered from the former Manor Ground (formerly Oxford United Football Club), prior to construction of the Manor Hospital.

Roman

A road was constructed along the eastern side of the Cherwell Valley from Alchester in the north to a crossing of the Thames at Dorchester during the Roman period, passing just a few hundred metres to the east of the conservation area. Other routes may have passed to the west using fording places around modern Oxford city centre to cross the Thames. A Roman villa

is recorded at the small settlement of Wick just to the north east of the conservation area. Villas formed the centres of agricultural estates often with buildings such as barns found at a discreet distance from the main structure whilst industrial complexes are also associated with them.

The development of an important pottery industry focused in the Headington area is demonstrated by evidence of kilns and manufacturing waste in and around the conservation area. Pottery produced from these kilns is distributed widely on sites of Roman date across southern England and the Midlands and included heavy mixing bowls, known as *mortaria*, of white Wealden clay from Shotover Hill, fine drinking bowls designed to resemble the Samian ware imported from Gaul and tall pitchers used for serving wine. The first manufacturing sites to be identified were located near the Roman road and around Wick. Evidence of pottery manufacturing was identified in the west of the conservation area at Dunstan Road during building work in the 1930s. Recent excavations at The Rookery recorded finds associated with the operation of a kiln.

Saxon

The end of Roman Britain was marked by the collapse of the economic and political systems that generated the wealth needed to maintain villas and fuel industries such as the Headington potteries. The 8th century historian the Venerable Bede named the post-Roman occupants of this area as the Gewisse, a group that were seen as the ancestors to the West Saxons. A burial found in Barton in 1931 was identified as 'Anglo-Saxon' and reflects the presence of settlement in the area and the change in burial practice associated with this new culture. A second burial with a saucer 6th century saucer brooch was found in Stephen Road, just to the south of the conservation area, in 2002. The place name of Headington is formed by the combination

of the Anglo-Saxon name 'Hedena' and the British word 'don' meaning hill and the origin of the modern 'down'.

During the mid-Saxon period (the mid-7th to mid-9th centuries) control of the Upper Thames valley, including the area of Headington, passed between the competing Mercian and West Saxon kingdoms, until Mercia was invaded by the Vikings or Danes in AD 874. Mercia only regained partial autonomy after the West Saxon king Alfred (the Great) defeated the Vikings in AD 878. In AD 911 Edward the Elder succeeded Alfred and claimed the area around Oxford for the West Saxon kingdom. Oxford's origins are hidden in this period, during which Alfred's daughter Aethelflaed ruled Mercia with her husband Aethelraed. It was probably also at this time that Headington emerged as the administrative centre of the hundred of Bullingdon (a large administrative area).

It has been argued that Headington formed an important royal estate in the early 10th century and that the town of Oxford would have been founded from a part of its land. Certainly by 1004 a *villa*

regia (or royal residence) was recorded at Headington when King Ethelred II confirmed his grant of land to St Frideswide's Abbey from there. Ethelred is known to have spent a great deal of time hunting in the Oxfordshire area and the Headington estate may have gained importance from the presence of the Forest of Shotover in which much of the later manor lay. In the early 19th century the stone foundations of a building unearthed on the south side of Dunstan Road were interpreted as the remains of the *villa regia* and were marked as an Anglo-Saxon palace on the early Ordnance Survey maps. This interpretation might be considered more critically now however.

Norman

The manor of Headington remained in the ownership of the king throughout the 11th century and was the second of the king's properties recorded in the Domesday Survey of Oxfordshire in 1086. This reflected the importance of the estate which provided the king with an annual income of £60.



St Andrew's Church

The earliest physical evidence that fixes the location of an important settlement within the present limits of Old Headington is the chancel arch of St Andrew's Church, which can be dated to the mid-12th century. Henry I granted a charter for a chapel at Headington in 1122. In 1142, the Empress Matilda who had famously escaped from Oxford one year earlier, granted the manor to a Breton knight named Hugh de Pluggenait. It is likely that the first stone church was built during his ownership, perhaps as a means of establishing himself in this new community. However, grants of parts of the estate to religious houses had reduced the property of the manor and its annual value in 1142 had fallen to £40.

The mid-12th century village of Headington, next to its stone church, would have stood at the centre of an extensive agricultural landscape of open arable fields lying to the east, south and west. A smaller amount of pasture land was located directly to the north of the village and must have been a closely guarded resource, used for both livestock and draught animals (see the Green Fields Character Area, below). A main street along the line of St Andrew's Road would have lain just above the spring line. The boundaries of a series of tenements running along the south side of St Andrew's Road are suggested by the plots of the modern land holdings, which run back from the street frontage around long gardens that end at a lane (The Croft) that probably provided access to small agricultural buildings on their southern boundaries. Beyond this lane the plots continued as long narrow gardens that ended at the edge of the open field. Larger properties were clustered around the main street as discrete farm units.



The village's medieval cross in the St Andrew's churchyard

Later Medieval

Lanes running from the main street of St Andrew's Road defined the outlines of the village's medieval open fields and pastures and linked it to the subsidiary settlements of the manor at Barton, Wick and Marston. All of these settlements were first recorded by name in the 13th century, although the form of their names suggests they were ancient by that time. During the late 12th century the manor came into the hands of the influential Bassett family and was affected by fighting in the 1230s between Richard Siward and Richard Earl of Cornwall. It may have been the Bassetts who paid for improvements to St Andrew's Church, including construction of a south aisle and arcading in the nave, as well as construction of the tower. On the death of Phillipa Bassett, the estate of Headington Manor was divided between her three female heirs but was soon reunited in the possession of Hugh de Plescy, the husband of one of the heiresses. It appears that Hugh was a demanding landlord and in 1277 his tenants applied to the King's justices for a confirmation of the extent of liberties and customary services due to the lord of the manor. This is a fascinating document and records the number of days and the

different tasks that each tenant was required to provide to the lord of the manor throughout the year. However, Hugh's demands appear to have stemmed from his own financial difficulties and in 1280 the manor was surrendered to the Crown due to non-payment of rent.

The records of the king's bailiffs include reference to the 'aula' (or hall) of the manor, probably the site of the manor house. This was called Westcourte and had gates controlling entry to the village. A map of the property of Corpus Christi College in Headington, made in 1605, shows a rectangular enclosure containing buildings standing in a prominent position at the west end of St Andrew's Road and next to fields named Court Close. The routes of roads that followed a similar alignment to Osler Road and Dunstan Road ran in front of this enclosure to join St Andrew's Road. Given the description of the court it might be reasonable to argue that this enclosure, now in the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital, marks its location, with the manor house taking a dominant position facing down the main street of the village. In 1299 the manor of Headington was granted to Queen Margaret as part of her dowry and thereafter formed part of the revenue of the Queens of England.

The site of a mill at the junction of Old Road and Windmill Road, well to the south of the conservation area, was recorded in 1303. Windmill Road's continuation within the conservation area is Old High Street. This route would have linked the village's main street with an important part of the agricultural landscape and to the route to London (Old Road).

From the late 14th century stone from Headington quarries was increasingly used for the construction of Oxford's college and university buildings, leading to the development of a second settlement centre referred to as Quarry. In 1399 the manor of Headington, which had been granted to various private owners, once again lapsed to the Crown for non-payment of rent. The next holders of the

manor, the Willicotes, did not live in the village and in consequence the manor house was abandoned and fell into disrepair. Nevertheless, new building work was undertaken on the church in the late 14th century, including rebuilding of the chancel and reroofing of the building.

The large stone cross shaft, now in the churchyard of St Andrew's Church, was erected at the entrance to the village from the open fields on Windmill Road demonstrating the importance of this route as an approach to the village during the 15th century. However, a period of decline in the prosperity of the old village is suggested by falling church tax or tithe revenues. The village tithes were not sufficient to support a permanent vicar and, as a result, the vicarage was united with that at Marston. In 1481 the descendent of the Willicotes, William Catesby, swapped the manor of Headington for land in Ippwell and Walcote, with John Brome who lived at Holton. Headington passed by marriage from the Brome family to the Whorwoods, who retained ownership until the early 19th century.

After the medieval period

The top two stages of the tower at St Andrew's Church were rebuilt around 1500, although they were later rebuilt again in 1679. The porch of the church was added in 1598. Other buildings in the village that reputedly incorporate structures from the 16th century include Laurel Farm (No. 20 St Andrew's Road), which was owned by Corpus Christi; the rear parts of Ruskin Hall; and parts of The Priory, Old High Street. Other houses on St Andrew's Road may also contain remains of 16th century, or even earlier structures. Oxford's population boomed in the years after the Reformation and the opening of the colleges to secular scholars, which created a greater demand for housing within the city. In the late 16th and early 17th century it is recorded that tradesmen and cottagers moved to Headington from Oxford because of the cheaper rents outside the city.

A great deal of the housing in the village was renewed during the 17th century, with a long-lasting influence on the appearance of the village. These included buildings forming the southern frontage of St Andrew's Road, of which The White Hart and No. 16 retain much of their original character, whilst Nos. 10, 14 (Church House) and 20 (Laurel Farm) received new facades in the 18th and 19th centuries. Larger farmhouses built at this time included The Manor Farmhouse, built outside the centre of the village on Dunstan Road, Mather's Farmhouse (property of Magdalen College) at the corner of Barton Lane and Larkin's Lane, Church Hill Farm on St Andrew's Lane and The Court at The Croft (also owned by Magdalen College). Numerous smaller cottages were also built at this time including the remaining rear part of the former Bell Public House at No. 72 High Street (visible from The Croft), No. 33 (Ivy Cottage), No. 56 (Monkton Cottage) and No. 69 Old High Street.

These new buildings and the 1605 map of Headington demonstrate the existence of both Larkin's Lane and St Andrew's Lane in the early 17th century. The 1605 map reveals that a 'common well', located on the spring-line approximately 150 metres north of St Andrew's Road, was the destination of both routes, which must have been an important resource to the community and particularly to cottage dwellers who may not have had their own wells. The map also shows one of the college's properties located on St Andrew's Road, with a yard behind and a separate garden just to the south, forming the pattern still preserved in the frontage buildings at St Andrew's Road, with the gardens at the rear as preserved adjacent to No. 17 The Croft. A road named Oxford Way is shown following the modern alignment of Cuckoo Lane and running up to Old High Street. This was the main route from Oxford to Headington until the later 18th century. A northerly branch of this road ran up to the western end of St



The White Hart Inn, St Andrew's Road

Andrew's Road, near the present junction with Osler Road.

Both Royalist and Parliamentary forces used Headington during the Civil Wars of the mid-17th century. Royalist cavalry were garrisoned there in 1643 but the Parliamentarian General Fairfax later used it as an outpost in 1645. In 1646 Fairfax returned and made his headquarters at Headington, drawing up plans for a fortress to surround it, although this never materialised. He also declared a free market (free of tolls) at Headington to divert goods otherwise intended for sale in Oxford.

Perhaps as a result of the troops stationed there, or its proximity to the university city, Headington had developed a surprising number of inns by the mid-17th century. Of these The White Hart at St Andrew's Road is now the most recognisable and has been identified as the infamous 'Joan of Headington's' recorded by the diarist Anthony Wood. The Black Boy is also recorded from the early 17th century, although the present building was built as a replacement in the early 20th century (see below). Other public houses not now recognised included The Bull at North Place, Widow Coxe's and Mother Gurdon's. The former Swan Inn at No. 8 The Croft was modified for a late addition to this group in 1706. The inns were a popular resort for undergraduates and other members of the university in the late 17th century, being outside the watchful eye of college proctors. Entertainment at the inns included more than ale and the village developed a dubious reputation, translated for the stage in a play by Dr. William King called *The Tragi-comedy of Joan of Hedington*. The riotous behaviour of the students caused serious problems on a number of occasions in the early 18th century, including a fire in 1718 that destroyed many houses at the northern end of Old High Street and, consequently, a sizable group of later houses dominate the junction of Old High Street and Barton Lane. A large number of new cottages were added around the village in the 18th

century, including one on the south side of North Place and those at the northern end of Larkin's Lane. Other buildings were lost, apparently including the vicar's house, which was considered too derelict to be used by the parish curate.

Merchants' Mansions

Whilst the village was essentially an agricultural village at the end of the 17th century, it was from this time that it began to develop as a resort for wealthy Oxford merchants to develop homes outside the crowded environment of the town. John Finch built the first of a series of gentlemen's residences over an older cottage in 1660. The house stood well back from the road, in private grounds and was named The Rookery.

Further large houses were built around the edges of the village during the 18th century, apparently using the older enclosed fields and closes surrounding the historic village core. This process was enabled by the gradual dismemberment of the manor estate by the Whorwoods. Headington House was built by Sir William Jackson, the proprietor of Jackson's Oxford Journal, on land between The Croft and the open fields to the south in around 1775. The land had previously been known as Plants and was bought by Jackson from the Whorwoods to build the mansion of his newly styled 'Hedington' Manor, which included many other properties in and around the village. Sir Banks Jenkinson built another mansion to the west of the village on former Headington Manor land in 1779. The course of Cuckoo Lane was diverted from a path across Jenkinson's property to create a new road named Sandy Lane, but later as Manor Road, when it was connected to the turnpike road to the south in 1804. More recently it has been renamed as Osler Road. Joseph Lock's house at Bury Knowle occupied another enclosure on the eastern edge of the village and was built in about 1800, with a ha-ha dividing the pleasure grounds from the fields to the south. The Grange had also been built by 1804 and is recorded on

the map accompanying the enclosure award, although the present building was clearly remodelled later in the 19th century.



Headington Manor, built by Sir Banks Jenkinson in 1779

This rush of large house building coincides with the plans for construction of the Stokenchurch Turnpike, for which acts were applied for between 1773 and 1788. This road moved the Oxford to London road from Old Road to the course of London Road, just south of Old Headington. The availability of a good road for carriages or horses into the city centre; the healthy climate and clean water on the Headington hilltop; space to build an imposing and commodious residence; and a prominent position seen from the new highway to the capital would all have been considerations in the location of these grand tradesmen's houses.

The village in the 19th century

Enclosure of the open fields surrounding the village in 1804 would have had a major impact on the village landscape. Each of the larger property owners was able to consolidate land near to their houses to create attractive parklands, of which Bury Knowle's is the best surviving example. These new landscapes of pleasure were a far remove from the agricultural landscape that preceded them, which is only preserved as fragments in the north of the conservation area. Old

property boundaries were removed to create uninterrupted and picturesque vistas, new boundary walls were raised and created as a robust symbol of ownership and traditional pathways and routes were modified or diverted around the new enclosures. At Headington House the house and gardens were divided from the new parkland by Cuckoo Lane, which, consequently, was sunken to hide travellers from views from the parkland and gardens. Two small brick bridges were constructed over the lane to allow easy passage from the garden to the park, both of which survive. At Bury Knowle the new park walls blocked the traditional route used by funeral processions from Headington Quarry to St Andrew's Church. On several occasions the wall was broken down by processions and the parish curate was forced to ask the Bishop to intercede with the owners of Bury Knowle. The footpath enclosed by high walls that runs around the western edge of the park is the alternative route that was provided.

In 1801 the Whorwoods sold their Halton property and moved to Headington, making Sir Banks Jenkinson's house their new manor house (this is now within the John Radcliffe Hospital grounds). However, the fortunes of the family were evidently in decline. In 1806 the title of lord of the manor and the ownership of the estate were split between different parts of the family. In 1813 ten acres of the estate were sold to the Radcliffe Infirmary for construction of a lunatic asylum. In 1835 the remaining manor estate was sold off in 30 lots and three years later the Whorwoods transferred ownership of the 'Manor House' to George Alexander Peppercorn. Eleven years later his brother William Peppercorn was able to buy the manor title and the manor farm.

Despite the growth of the merchant's estates the village remained an agricultural community in a relatively isolated rural position throughout the 19th century. Several public buildings were built in the village. A small Baptist mission

hall was built at The Croft in 1836 (now Croft Hall). In 1840 a small school for the children of Headington and Barton was established on the north side of North Place as an act of philanthropy by the Lock family. Although its role as a junior school was superseded by construction of a national school at London Road in 1847, it continued to act as an infant school for the village and its hamlet. A post office was also opened in the 1840s at the corner of Old High Street and St Andrew's Road. Its role as a central post-office was removed when the new building on London Road was opened in 1915, but the building continued as a shop until the 1970s and retains a wall-mounted post box in the St Andrew's Road elevation. In 1858 a subscription reading room was established in one of the small cottages at The Croft. This was later augmented as a British Workman Club, which acted as a temperance tavern for the village. However, this building wasn't big enough to satisfy demand and a new building was constructed on land given by Maria Ballachey (daughter of Joseph Lock) and with funding from Miss Mary Ann Nichol of Jesmond Cottage (No. 83 Old High Street). Suitably enough, this building replaced an earlier brewery maltings, part of which was retained for some time as a hall, whilst another wing became part of the Hermitage at No. 69 Old High Street. The British Workman was extended in 1883 and in 1891 a gymnasium was created in a barn at the rear of the property. The Headington Workhouse was built just outside the conservation area on the south side of London Road in 1858.

A number of private schools were established in the village in the mid-19th century. These were advertised as preparatory schools for Eton and, no doubt, took advantage of Oxford's academic reputation. One, at the Rookery, was founded by the Revd John William Augustus Taylor and continued in use until the 1890s. He retired to Stoke House, originally a small cottage (and possibly a field barn at an even earlier

date), which was considerably extended in the later 19th century. A second school was established at Linden Farm (now The Priory), on Old High Street, which operated between 1859 and 1864. A tiny 'dame school' was also founded at No. 41 St Andrew's Road in a hut of corrugated tin which still survives. It was known as Miss Steff's School.

In 1850 Quarry had grown to a size that justified its independence from Old Headington through creation of a separate ecclesiastical parish. During the 1860s sale of farmland south of London Road enabled the New Headington suburb to develop between the two older settlements. The rate of development escalated rapidly after the sale of Highfield Farm, although in the 1870s Headington was still described as an agricultural parish growing wheat and barley. The economic fortunes of the parish had clearly recovered by the mid-century and in 1864 major restorations were undertaken to St Andrew's Church, including a westward extension of the nave by the locally significant architect J. C. Buckler. A north aisle was added to provide even more accommodation in 1881 along with the north porch and vestry.



Houses of brick and stone at The Croft, built in the mid and later 19th century

House building in the village during the later 19th century echoed the development of the former agricultural land outside the village core, with smart, red or yellow brick cottages and villas constructed in standardised patterns. Such buildings are

scattered throughout the conservation area, including houses built on the former gardens in The Croft and replacing older cottages on Old High Street, such as Nos. 57 - 63 just north of North Place or Nos. 19 and 21 St Andrew's Lane. The earliest brick-built cottages use the locally produced Shotover red bricks laid in Flemish bond with blue headers, which produced an attractive chequer-board pattern, such as Nos. 2-5 The Croft. At this time brick was considered a superior material and was often carefully laid with very narrow joints. However, it is often seen that the less expensive limestone rubble was used to construct the side and rear walls of buildings (see Nos. 10, 12 and 17 The Croft for example), suggesting that brick was then considered a more prestigious material. The construction work in the mid and later 19th century appears to have filled the gaps in the street frontage created by the fires of the early 18th century.

The group of cottages at Nos. 2-6 Stoke Place are dateable to 1885 and include Nos. 41 and 43 St Andrew's Road, built in buff coloured bricks (used in only one other location in the conservation area), which provide an attractive match to the limestone of the village's older cottages and garden walls.

In 1884 Colonel Desborough appointed the prominent church architect H.G.W. Drinkwater to rebuild Linden Farm (now The Priory). Drinkwater's new scheme included picking out the window openings on the roadside face of the building in red brick, providing a strong contrast to the yellow rubblestone. The tall chimneystack to the front of the building suggests some of the North Oxford style creeping into the village setting. In 1885 the manor estate's land at the western end of Dunstan Road was bought to supply a new cemetery to serve the expanding communities of Headington.

20th century Headington

A new, larger Baptist Chapel was built to replace the old hall at The Croft in 1901.

The new building was prominently located on Old High Street facing Linden Farm. A convent of Dominican Sisters bought Linden Farm in 1923, and renamed it as "The Priory of All Saints and All Souls", which was in turn purchased by The Congregation of The Sacred Heart in 1968 who simplified the name to The Priory. They used the building as a mixed religious institution and students' hostel. The local builder Charlie Morris replaced the three cottages just to the north of the Priory in 1909 with two semi-detached cottages in a heavy half-timbered Olde English style. Their new name 'Linden Cottages' is spelt out in initials carved in relief on the brackets that support the jettied first floor.



Linden Cottages, Old High Street

In 1927 the Civil Parish of Headington briefly became an urban district, reflecting the rapid growth of housing in the past fifty years. Then, in 1928 Headington was taken into the City's administrative area through the City of Oxford Extension Act, becoming part of the Civil Parishes of St Giles and St John. Among the first works undertaken by the City Council in its new suburb was the provision of a public park to ensure the provision of recreational open space. The Council had initially looked on the Bury Knowle estate as a possible area for new housing development. However, it was for the park that the Council bought the land in 1930 and by 1932 it had been officially opened for the use of the community, including the conversion of the former gate lodge into public conveniences and with tennis courts, hockey pitches, a children's

playground and pavilion. The house was converted for use as a public library in 1934 and the upper floor came to house the mother and baby clinic that had operated from the British Workman



The British workman (right of frame), Old High Street

The Radcliffe Infirmary had purchased the majority of the remaining lands of Headington Manor in 1917 for the construction of new hospital buildings. Among the first buildings they constructed were pavilion wards for treatment of tuberculosis (built in 1928) named after William Osler who held the Regius Professorship of Medicine at the University. Osler died during the Spanish Influenza of 1919 shortly after the purchase of the land. Both the superintendent's house and Osler Road were named after this pioneer of medical education. The location of Headington for the hospital took advantage of the clean air and spaciousness to be found on the hilltop outside the city centre, as these formed an important element in treatment of the disease at that time. Indeed, a local quote was that "down in Oxford the air's like stale beer; up in Headington it's pure champagne". The former Manor House and stables buildings were reused as office accommodation for the hospital. Despite the eventual spread of hospital buildings across much of the estate, areas of parkland have been retained that relate to the formal parks and gardens of the manor houses. Walls of Headington Manor's kitchen garden and some smaller agricultural buildings have also been retained.

Until the 1930s the Black Boy Inn formed a landmark at the corner of Old High Street and Barton Lane. In 1937 the old building was demolished and a new building reflecting the taste for the 'improved public house' constructed set further back from the road. This has created a wider open space at the north end of Old High Street, including the Black Boy's car park.

In 1946 Ruskin College established its 'out of town' campus at The Rookery, which was thereafter known as Ruskin Hall.

The former malthouse at No. 69 Old High Street was conscientiously extended and remodelled by C. F. Bell, the keeper of Fine Art at the Ashmolean Museum, to provide another attractive Georgian style villa between 1912 and 1925.

Five new replacement cottages on the north side of St Andrew's Road, designed by Fielding Dodd, were built to replace a group of 18th century cottages demolished in 1938. These maintained the continuous frontages to the street that had characterised the old cottages, but were set further back from the road to provide a more open space at the heart of the village. The scale and form of the buildings was contemporary whilst sympathetic to the historic setting of the village, although Dodd was not able to use thatch for roofing as he had hoped.

Redevelopment of land at Church Hill Farm, to the west of St Andrew's Lane, (now William Orchard Close), was instigated by a group of local residents in 1959 to create a small cul-de-sac that was considered to be sensitive to the character of the village.



Fielding Dodd's houses at St Andrew's Road

The theme of building contemporary housing within the area continued into the 1970s with the construction of the buildings of Nos. 10 to 18 Dunstan Road in a highly contemporary style by the architects Ahrends, Burton and Koralek.

During the 1980s the City Council developed the former farmyard and orchards of Laurel Farm to provide more affordable housing in the area. The development aimed to be sensitive to the setting of the village adopting a sympathetic scale of building forms and materials that do not stand out in contrast to the buildings on St Andrew's Road. Other developments included the sheltered housing at Emden House on Barton Lane and further sheltered housing to the rear of Bury Knowle built in the 1980s.

A new Baptist Church was opened in 1926. This replaced the old building, which had already been enlarged in 1934 and again 1971.

Archaeological Potential

The potential for remains of prehistoric activity in the area of the village is uncertain, although there is clear evidence of repeated use in the Roman and historic periods. The finds of two Neolithic polished stone axes in the vicinity may suggest some potential for earlier activity.

The remains of activity in the Roman period at Dunstan Road, including recent excavations at Ruskin Hall, confirm that a site involved in pottery manufacture is

located within the conservation area. Whether this site is associated with the stone-founded building recorded in the area of Ethelred's Palace in the early 19th century is not known, but might suggest a future direction for research.

The pottery industry based around the course of the Roman road, which passes to the east of Headington, was of national importance in the third and fourth centuries. Further evidence of the development and organisation of manufacturing gained through observation of archaeological remains in the area would, potentially, add to understanding of the society and economy of both the area and the wider region in the later part of the Roman period. As pottery production appears to have ceased around the end of the Roman occupation, study of the final phases of the manufacturing activity would also provide an opportunity to examine evidence of changes in society at the transition from the Roman to Anglo-Saxon periods.

Little evidence is identifiable across the city for the pattern of settlement or other activity in the area during the Anglo-Saxon period. Although the origin of the place name Headington is Anglo-Saxon, it refers to an area 'the hill of Hedena' probably relating to an expansive estate, rather than a settlement identifiable as the antecedent of the present village. The Ordnance Survey's identification of the stone building at Dunstan Road, unearthed in the early 19th century, as the site of King Ethelred's Palace, should be considered critically. Further archaeological investigation might help to demonstrate whether high status late Saxon activity is actually represented near that location, in the conservation area or elsewhere within the postulated extent of Ethelred's Headington estate.

The Church of St Andrew provides a firm reference point for the medieval settlement attached to the manor of Headington from the mid 12th century. However, much of the remaining landscape of the village can only be

conjectured. The location of the medieval court or manor house that had become ruinous by the 15th century is not readily identifiable. The extent of the surviving medieval road network and its influence on the form of the later village is uncertain and the location, form and number of house and cottage plots within the medieval village centre might also be investigated through observation of archaeological remains. The reason for the curious form of Larkin's Lane and St Andrew's Lane, for example, might be tested through observations of remains within the intervening land and around the site of the recorded 'common well'.

The archaeological remains of the village in the post-medieval period include a mixture of both buried remains and the above ground archaeology of buildings, streets, boundaries and spaces that form the modern landscape of the conservation area. All of these provide potential for study that could help to illuminate the changing society of the village from the end of the medieval period up until the modern day and the influence of different events and processes on this. The impact

of the fires recorded at the beginning of the 18th century is, as yet, only partially understood, as is the impact on its landscape of the various military occupations of the village during the Civil War. The influence of longer term trends such as the changing methods of agricultural production and land ownership in the late 18th and 19th centuries on the society of the village may also be reflected in its landscape, as will the increasingly urban function of the settlement as a part of the expanding suburban landscape that reached out to the village during the 20th century. Study of the later archaeological landscape of the village may facilitate reinterpretation or subtler retelling of the apparently clear and obvious stories within the village's history.

Whilst study of the village's archaeological remains may be of interest to academic scholars, it should always be born in mind that if this resource is to be cared for and conserved, these stories need to be made accessible and relevant to the wider public under whose homes, gardens and public spaces much of it lies.

Spatial Analysis

Key Positive Characteristics:

- A complex street pattern made up of main streets, small lanes and footpaths has developed organically over several centuries and creates a network of intimate and tranquil spaces, along with more public streets.
- Roads and lanes out from the village centre to the north-east and west run through the village's green setting.
- Grassed verges and banks to roads and sinuous lanes reinforce the rural character.
- The Croft is an area of intricate narrow lanes running between main streets and surrounding the remnants of historically interesting garden plots, with a tranquil character and picturesque groupings of buildings in a leafy setting.
- Several narrow lanes have interesting histories as part of the enclosure period landscape or as remnants of field lanes through the former open fields. They remain as quiet tree lined routes often bounded by high stone walls.
- Much later 20th century development is inconspicuously located away from the main routes in small cul-de-sac developments.
- Groupings of cottages in uneven sized plots and with gardens fronting the road in spaces between reflect the organic growth of settlement over several centuries and have a lack of uniformity that is part of the village character.
- Buildings are often built at the back of the pavement or with very small gardens creating enclosure to the roads and active frontages.
- The larger houses surrounding the village core have large gardens and parks, reflecting the historic fashions for villa development and creating a gap of green spaces between the historic village core and nearby suburban development.
- Small fields cut-off from the wider countryside by the ring road provide the rural setting of the village.
- There are numerous significant views through, out of and into the conservation area which benefit from the framing of well defined street frontages, the focus on landmark buildings or grouped frontages, as well as vistas of formal parkland or out to the green setting.
- A small number of areas of historic paving have been identified as having special historic interest.
- Local Headington Hardstone kerbs represent a distinctive local material.
- Traditional street furniture including the red post-box, red telephone box and black painted 'Lucy and Dean' street lamps are a positive element of the village's historic character.
- A number of small greens at road and footpath junctions contribute to the rural character and aesthetic appeal of the conservation area.
- High stone boundary walls provide enclosure and are a distinctive local character feature

Plan form and layout – See Map 2

Main streets: Old Headington has a complex plan form that is built up around a network of main streets, back lanes and public and private open spaces. Together, Old High Street and St Andrew's Road form the principal streets within the village. Old High Street runs from north to south with St Andrew's Road running east to west and meeting the northern end of Old High Street at its eastern end, the two roads forming a '7' in plan. The meeting point of these roads forms a focal point in the village. Barton Lane runs into the village from the north east to this focal point, it has only a minor role in the frontages in the conservation area but provides access to the green setting of the village. It follows a sinuous course that runs between steep grassed banks with a rural character.

**Osler Road**

Osler Road approaches the conservation area from the south west on a parallel course to Old High Street. It follows a long, straight path with grass verges and a grassed ditch on the east side that separates a footpath from the carriageway. The road narrows at its northern end and runs through a dog-legged course to join St Andrew's Road at its northern end with a small triangular green at the junction of the roads. St Andrew's Road runs north from this green before joining Dunstan Road, which runs to the west on a relatively straight and level course following the crest of the slope that falls away to the Bayswater Brook. At the western limit of the

conservation area Dunstan Road runs down the hill, wrapping around the western edge of Dunstan Park where it joins Saxon Way.

Rural lanes: Apart from these primary routes, a number of minor routes or lanes provide access to quieter areas, off the beaten track. These include interesting historic lanes with a rural character, such as Stoke Place, St Andrew's Lane and Larkin's Lane, which are all narrow, curving routes that run northwards from the Dunstan Road – St Andrew's Road – Barton Lane corridor and down the slope to the Bayswater Brook valley and farmland on the village's northern edge. St Andrew's Lane and Larkin's Lane curve towards a meeting point in the north that creates a sharp bend or corner between the two narrow routes that suggests a common historic destination (the now lost common well). Stoke Place gradually narrows to a bridleway, which runs between small fields illustrating its historic function as an access way from the village to fields in the rural hinterland.

**Stoke Place**

The Croft: The Croft is an unusual back street route that is a particularly distinctive feature of the settlement. It runs northwards as a broad alley between high stone walls from a small green on the west side of Old High Street and along the rear boundaries of properties on that road. At its northern end it becomes rapidly narrower, until, as a very narrow passage it emerges at St Andrew's Road.

The Croft has two arms running to the west, one, starting approximately 100

metres from the Old High Street entrance, runs through to Osler Road with the grounds of Headington House and Sandy Lodge on its south side. On its north side there is a scatter of development including Victorian semi-detached cottages, older houses of 17th, 18th and early 19th century construction, as well as the small converted chapel of Croft Hall. The side boundaries of properties in the Laurel Farm Close development form a significant portion of the northern side of this path. A side spur also provides access to Osler Road at The Court. West of this point a more continuous frontage of houses and cottages addresses the footpath on its north side. The second, northerly arm running off the main north-south route has a continuous frontage of small cottages and other buildings on its north side but is more open to the south, with some open plots running through to the southerly arm. At its west end this route narrows to an unusual unmetalled green footpath that runs in front of No. 8 The Croft and curves around to the south to join the southerly arm next to Croft Hall.



Groups of buildings cluster around narrow lanes at The Croft

Narrow lanes: Another very narrow alley named Cuckoo Lane runs directly between Old High Street and Osler Road and continues to the west along the southern boundary of the John Radcliffe Hospital grounds, forming the southern boundary of the conservation area for a large part of its course. The route preserves part of the historic course of Oxford Way, recorded running through the open fields of

Headington on Corpus Christi College's map of its landholding produced in 1605. Between Osler Road and Old High Street it runs along a sunken course, with banks to either side, which are topped by garden fences and shrub growth. Stephen Road provides a gap in the enclosure of the southern side of this alley. A third narrow alleyway runs along the western edge of Bury Knowle Park. It is named Coffin Walk, recording the creation of this route as an alternative to the processional route for funeral parties from Quarry to St Andrew's Church across Bury Knowle Park before the building of Quarry Church.



Coffin Walk next to Bury Knowle Park

20th century cul-de-sacs: North Place turns off Old High Street on the east side of the road from the fork for The Croft. It has a short straight route that used to terminate at the entrance to Bury Knowle Park. However, it is now continued along a sinuous course to the north to serve the municipal housing built to the north of Bury Knowle House. The modern development of Laurel Farm Close, on the south side of St Andrew's Road has a similarly serpentine and branching route to serve the modern housing development although this is cut through by a straight and narrow pedestrian route that serves the fronts of the residential properties. These later 20th

century housing developments, which include Bury Knowle, Laurel Farm Close and William Orchard Close, are largely hidden from the view from the wider road system.

Characteristics of plots: Along Old High Street, St Andrew's Road and parts of The Croft, properties are closely spaced, often forming continuous buildings frontages of informal terraces. They generally stand in plots of irregular width and either directly at the back of the pavement or road, or behind small front gardens that are bounded to the front by low garden walls. A small number of properties have higher stone walls to the front (such as Bell House and No. 69 Old High Street) that screen views of front gardens and main frontages from the street, such as No. 56 Old High Street, with trees providing a green element to the street scene above high garden walls. These larger gaps between buildings contribute to the rural character of the area. Away from this central core, plots are generally more spacious, allowing buildings to stand further back from the frontage along Dunstan Road or larger buildings such as Emden House on Barton Lane.

The rural lanes of St Andrew's Lane and Larkin's Lane include a great mixture of properties with an organic pattern of development often with building set at the back of the pavement but with generous spacing between groups of buildings and a variety of orientation and scale represented.

Large gardens around the village core: The ring of mansion houses built around the village core have very large gardens several of which are more or less hidden from view by mature planting. These include the large properties of Headington House, The Grange, White Lodge, Sandy Lodge, Ruskin Hall, Stoke House and Manor Farmhouse. These combine spacious grounds with a grand house and, often, polite ancillary buildings. Public ownership of Bury Knowle House and Headington Manor (now the John Radcliffe Hospital) provides a degree of access to

two of these landscapes. Along with the parkland and small fields, these larger gardens provide a buffer of open space between the village and surrounding urban development that helps to preserve its rural character.



A small green space between Old High Street and The Croft

Areas of open space: Whilst the central part of the conservation area is typified by a dense pattern of small and medium sized plots, larger areas of open space are located around the peripheries of the settlement which include a ribbon of open land in the north of the conservation area. This is largely in private ownership and includes orchards and small fields running down from the village, which formerly provided the village's pastureland. The land provides a buffer between the village and the ring road and provides a green rural foreground to views out from the village to countryside beyond or into the village from the ring road and high ground further to the north.

Views and Vistas (See Map 2)

The conservation area contains numerous attractive views that benefit from the interest and quality of its historic buildings, historic street form, formal landscapes, location on the rural margin of the city and the greenery of its townscape, gardens and parkland. Several types of views can be defined within the conservation area, which contribute to its character, examples of which are identified on Map 2 and described below. In each case other examples of these types of view will be found throughout the conservation area.

View type A: Views channelled along streets: Throughout much of the conservation area, views are enclosed within streets by the surrounding buildings and trees to focus attention along the routes of roads. These views emphasise the importance of the street pattern to the structure of spaces within the village and to the historic development of the settlement along it. The gentle rhythm of divisions between buildings and properties provides a key element to these views. The views north and south along Old High Street in particular benefit from the pinch-points, where the road is narrowed or where large trees arch over the road, often providing a small focal point in the distance. The trees and greenery of the village gardens make an important contribution to the character and aesthetic quality of these views



A channelled view along Old High Street

View type B: Views to landmark buildings: The conservation area includes a number of landmark buildings which stand out as a result of their architectural interest, their position within a formal landscape or the accidental creation of a vista to which they make an important contribution as an end stop or point of incidence. Particular examples include St. Andrew's Church as viewed from St Andrew's Road, Bury Knowle House, viewed from the parkland to the south, The British Workman from Old High Street, and Headington Manor from adjacent parkland, although the best views of this are currently screened by ornamental planting.

These views serve to highlight the importance of these buildings and often include supporting features including trees, other planting and sympathetic boundary features that are part of a designed view.



View to Headington Manor at The John Radcliffe Hospital

View type C Views along grouped building frontages: In addition to views of individual buildings, the conservation area is characterised by the views of informally grouped cottages and houses, which form a key element of the area's pattern of development. Probably the most significant example of such a view in the conservation area is the group of buildings forming the south side of St Andrew's Road, which provide a palimpsest of the village's history. Several examples of views along Old High Street are also particularly notable, illustrating the dense pattern of development, including buildings of a wide variety of dates at Nos. 84 – 94 or the smaller groups of cottages at Nos. 73-79, 39 and 41, or Nos. 51 – 55, as well as Nos. 1 and 2 North Place. Other examples in the more hidden areas of the conservation area include the view north down St Andrew's Lane to Church Hill Farm and Pumpkin Cottage, south west along St Andrew's Lane, including Unity House, The Old Bakery and Nos. 19 and 20 St Andrew's Lane or north along Larkin's Lane, including Nos. 1 and 2 Larkin's Lane with the walls and trees of The Grange as a background. The view west from the north – south section of The Croft along the northern arm to the

attractive group of cottages at Nos. 8 – 11a The Croft, is of particular note and must be truly picturesque in high summer, when the small cottage gardens are full of flowers.



View along the St Andrew's Road frontage

View type D: Views across parkland with formal tree planting:

The polite landscapes of the grand houses surrounding the village core have provided their own characteristic views, notably including wide grassed lawns studded with specimen trees or groups of mature trees. These have been consciously created to maximise the feeling of space and of an ordered rurality, devoid of the trappings of labour or agriculture and harkening to the landscapes of greater stately homes. The best examples of this type of view in the conservation area are seen in Bury Knowle Park. This landscape received additions during the 20th century as a result of its role as a public park, including tree lined walks, which help to create additional designed views.



View across Parkland at Bury Knowle

View type E: Views across fields to landscape beyond the conservation area:

Despite its location within the city, the village has thus far retained a rural setting in the form of small fields to the north, as well as visual connection with the countryside beyond the ring road. Views from Barton Lane or the northern edge of Bury Knowle Park and the bridleway at Stoke Place include the small fields within the conservation area as a rural foreground. The land beyond the ring road in the mid-ground is hidden from view by the falling landform, but is indicated by the tops of tall trees, whilst the rolling hills of the South Oxfordshire countryside that rise north of the Bayswater Brook form an extremely attractive background. The connection of the rural foreground and background of the South Oxfordshire countryside provides a visual connection from the conservation area to the wider rural setting, which is a key feature of the character of Old Headington. Some views across Bury Knowle also include the wooded eminence of Shotover Hill as a horizon, providing visual contact with another area of countryside beyond the conservation area.

Trees and green landscape

The trees and greenery of the conservation area make an important contribution to its rural quality. The wealth of mature trees in the village, the majority on private property, makes a particular contribution to the character of spaces and the attractiveness of views through the conservation area.

Trees of the rural landscape: The network of hedgerows around the small fields in the north of the conservation area contains numerous trees. These have grown up, or were planted, as hedgerow trees that were managed in the past both as a means of providing stock enclosure and as a long-term timber crop. At Stoke Place they have grown up to line the bridleway running down the hill. They also provided shelter from strong winds to both fields and buildings. The hedgerows appear to mark the boundaries of a series of long narrow fields, suggestive of the strips created by enclosure of medieval ploughed fields, which ran down the hill to the common meadow, which was recorded as Headington Meade on Corpus Christi's map of Headington in 1605. They include a high proportion of native varieties such as hawthorn, oak, ash and field maple. They may include some less common native varieties such as black poplar, and spindle, as well as fruiting varieties such as crab apple and blackthorn. Many of these provide attractive colouring in autumn or blossom in springtime, whilst the green of foliage is an important backdrop in many views. The skeletal structures of juvenile elm trees, which have succumbed to Dutch elm disease, provide a reminder of a lost element in the rural landscape.

Among other trees, St Andrew's churchyard contains the yew trees that are a hallmark of English village churchyards and given spiritual symbolism for their apparently unending life spans. Orchards of apple trees have been planted in the grounds of Ruskin Hall and Emden House, replacing lost orchards elsewhere in the area, and possibly using historic local

apple varieties. The derelict garden plot in The Croft also contains several veteran apple trees that may represent historic local varieties.



Trees line the edges of small fields to the north of Ruskin Hall

Trees in formal landscaping: Trees in the grounds of private houses indicate fashions for gardening and planting. The grounds of Bury Knowle and Ruskin Hall include numerous interesting exotic species such as sequoia pine, cedar of Lebanon, ginkgo, monkey puzzle and tulip tree. These reflect the status of former owners as wealthy businessmen, requiring the latest in newly introduced tree species to grace their pleasure gardens. Other trees in these gardens and parkland reflect the planting taste of the English Landscape Garden movement, which developed from the mid-18th century. These include groups and specimens of large-growing native species such as beech and lime that contribute to the idea of the idyllic pastoral landscape. The avenue of lime trees in the west of Bury Knowle Park, for example, was planted to shade the drive to the house from London Road. Before the construction of housing across its parkland, Headington House would also have been seen from London Road lying within a bay of trees that extended down either edge of the park to the road. The mature trees in the grounds of Headington House now play an important role in providing a green backdrop to many views through the conservation area, as well as framing views along Old High Street. Mature trees in the grounds of other large houses,

including Ruskin Hall and The Grange, as well as the John Radcliffe Hospital have a similar effect elsewhere.



Trees in the grounds of The Grange provide an attractive backdrop to views from Larkins Lane

Trees in the public realm: Other than the parkland trees in Bury Knowle and Dunstan Parks, the trees in the public realm are relatively limited. They include two large lime trees in the pavement on Old High Street with a small rohan that has (incongruously) been planted to replace a third lime. Historical photographs record an elm tree that stood outside The Black Boy pub at the junction of Old High Street and St Andrew's Road until the 1920s, which provided a visual marker of this focal point in the village. A large maple stands on the small green outside St Andrew's House at the western end of St Andrew's Road. The tree partially obscures views of this interesting building but also helps to soften its austere lines. Trees standing outside the village hall on Dunstan Road are also located in the public realm.

Public Realm

Within the conservation area the spaces where the public have a right of access (referred to as the public realm) include the parks, streets and alleys. The materials used to pave these areas, the planting and street furniture all make an important contribution to their character.



Mature lime trees at Old High Street



Area of listed Paving at St Andrew's Road

Paving: When many of the houses in the conservation area were built the surrounding roads would have had a basic surface of beaten earth as preserved in the small footpath near No. 8 The Croft. Areas of historic paving are decidedly unusual in rural contexts and, as such, the 18th century limestone cobble pavement outside the White Hart Inn is a particularly rare survival and makes a significant contribution to the setting of the adjacent group of listed buildings. As such it has been given listed building status in its own right. The pavement has been re-laid in the recent past, somewhat inexpertly, but still makes an important contribution to the character of this part of the conservation area.

Throughout much of the conservation area, road and footpath surfaces are paved with tar macadam, which is seen as a natural successor to the beaten earth of the past and fitting to the rural context. However, where works have been undertaken to services, the marks of patch repairs, often in badly matched materials, create a poor visual impression.

The area of cobbled paving at North Place provides a more interesting area of modern surfacing, which acts as an entrance feature to the park, Bury Knowle Library and the municipal housing to the north. Again, where works have been undertaken to services under this area, patch repairs have been poorly undertaken and, thus reduce the otherwise high quality appearance of the area.

Kerbstones throughout the area are made of a variety of materials, including the local Headington Hardstone. This is seen as short slabs, laid on edge particularly at the western end of St Andrew's Road and the adjacent area of Osler Road, where it retains the footpath at some height above the road. Another significant area for its use is Larkin's Lane. The survival of this use of a local material is, again, dependent on the quality of workmanship in its maintenance. By contrast, a graduated kerb on the north side of St Andrew's Road using small unit granite setts has created an attractive edge to the road but is now in need of maintenance and repair.

Road markings may have an impact on the appearance of the area. In the past no-parking areas have been marked with two-inch wide yellow lines, which are narrower than those normally used, to reduce their visual impact.

Greenery: The green open spaces of the parks are described in more detail below as character areas. Other small areas of public green open space are found throughout the conservation area. These include the small triangular greens found at a number of sites around the conservation area, such as the junctions of

Old High Street and The Croft, St Andrew's Road and Osler Road, and the small space between the Laurel Farm Close development and The Croft. These small green spaces contribute to the informality of development that is part of the rural character of the village, as well as forming part of the greening of the streetscene. The grass banks and verges on several routes in the conservation area, including Osler Road, Barton Lane and Dunstan Road make a similar contribution and help to maintain the 'ring of green space' that separates the village core from the surrounding suburban development.



View south along St Andrew's Road between Green verges

Street furniture: The conservation area contains a small amount of the traditional street furniture that reflects the self-contained community of a village, including a wall mounted Royal Mail post-box from the reign of George V, fixed in the side of the building that was Headington's first Post Office at No. 94 Old High Street. A red K6 telephone box, located outside the Baptist Church on Old High Street, adds to the traditional furnishing of the village centre, although this is a relatively recent addition, donated to the village by a former resident.

Street lighting throughout the conservation area is provided by a mixture of the very distinctive Oxford Corporation cast iron lighting columns with 'Windsor' lanterns, now converted from gas to electricity, and modern Victorian 'style' lighting columns. The older lampposts are of historic interest in their own right as the product of the nearby W. Lucy and Co.'s foundry in

Jericho and Dean and Son's of Cowley, and were custom designed for the Oxford Corporation, bearing their logo. They were installed in the 1970s as they were removed from other areas of the city. Further Windsor lanterns are attached to buildings by scrolled metal brackets on Old High Street, St Andrew's Road and Larkin's Lane, where lighting columns would have intruded into the highway. Telephone wires supported on basic wooden posts are considered to be relatively unobtrusive throughout the area and conform to its rural character.

Highways signage can have an incongruous impact on the character and appearance of an historic area. The main village streets are subject to a residents' permit parking scheme, which requires numerous signs around parking bays. Each sign is displayed on a black painted metal post of a standard height. Some of these are obtrusively placed. Responses to consultation with the public identified the fixing of highways signs to the otherwise attractive lampposts as a negative impact on the character of the area.

The parkland areas have specific furniture, which reflects their use as a recreational and community resource. These are described in more detail in the character area descriptions below.



A 'Lucy and Dean' lamppost

Boundaries: The pattern of high stone walls as the boundary to public open spaces is consistent throughout a large part of the conservation area, where buildings do not otherwise form the limits of space. Several of these walls, including those of Headington House, Monkton Cottage, St Andrew's Church and The Grange have been designated as listed buildings in their own right (see below) and date from the 18th century, with decorative lobed brick copings.

This feature of the local character has been conscientiously upheld and reinforced by development in the mid and later 20th century, including William Orchard Close, the Ahrends, Burton and Koralek houses on Dunstan Road and at Laurel Farm Close.

Buildings

Key Positive Characteristics:

- The mixture of building types in the village is an important part of its historic interest.
- They include a medieval church, vernacular houses and cottages of the 17th and 18th centuries with attendant agricultural buildings, larger mansion houses or villas built in the late 18th and 19th century with ancillary buildings, red brick and stone cottages built in the 19th century and larger houses representing national styles built in the 19th and 20th century, as well as a number of public, commercial and religious buildings of importance to the history of the village community.
- The materials and uses of buildings have influenced their appearance and illustrate their historic development.
- The styles of architecture, including features such as windows, doors and roof construction contribute to the historic interest of the buildings as well as their aesthetic appeal.

Building Types and Forms (See Map 3)

The types of buildings represented in the conservation area strongly reflect the story of its development from a traditional agricultural community to a prestigious location on the periphery of the growing city and the latter development of the community with ongoing pressure for high density housing following its incorporation into the city's growing urban expanse. The parish church of Saint Andrew stands out as a highly visible symbol of the continuity of the village community for nearly 900 years.

Vernacular Farmhouses and Cottages

The cottages and farmhouses of the village provide the village's essentially rural character. Many of the houses were built in the 17th century, although they may have earlier origins or lie over medieval buildings. Many of them share a common two unit plan, normally with a central doorway giving access to a passage running from front to back and with rooms to either side. Hearths with chimney stacks are normally set at either end, representing a development from many 16th century buildings, where the chimney was often centrally located. A small number of examples of centrally located stacks are seen at No. 10 St Andrew's Road and adjacent at the White Hart Inn

(No. 12). In the former this appears to be an original feature and, as a result, the front door to the building is located at the right hand extremity of the frontage with narrow windows lighting the area of the frontage in line with the chimney. At the White Hart, the main façade of the building was refronted in two sections suggesting it was divided into two properties at one time, with the central chimneystack rising between the two halves.



Mather's Farmhouse, dating from the 17th century, forms a landmark at a focal point in the conservation area.

A characteristic feature of the houses is the use of a rear stair-tower to provide access to upper floors without encroaching on the central passage or without using narrow and inconvenient spiral stairs, or 'winders', in the corners of the building. The best examples of these

are seen at The Court, The Croft and Church Hill Farm, St Andrew's Lane, whilst the stair-tower at No. 14 St Andrew's road was apparently rebuilt in brick in the 19th century. Church Hill Farm also provides a good example of the cat-slide roof added at the rear to cover two single storey extensions either side of the stair-tower. Where space has allowed, or where the street pattern facilitates it, these early buildings have an east - west axis that makes efficient use of available daylight. Some of these properties were subdivided using the central passage as a natural point of division, as recorded at No. 16 St Andrew's Road.



The rear of Church Hill Farm showing the stair tower and 'cat-slide' roof

The houses are mostly of two storeys, although additional accommodation has normally been provided in the roof space through the addition of dormer windows and several have basements. They have steeply pitched roofs with gable end walls, although these are hidden where they form informal terraces such as at St Andrew's Road. The fenestration is often asymmetrical reflecting the different sizes and functions of rooms prior to the requirements for symmetry that emerged in the later 17th and 18th century. The survival of so many of these early houses within the village is exceptional and provides a key element in its special architectural and historic interest, as well as contributing very significantly to its character. They represent the investments of the prosperous farming community that existed in the area in the seventeenth century, perhaps with wealth derived as much from the nearby quarries

and the booming university town as from agriculture.



Lower Farm (No. 8 Dunstan Road), built around 1800 is a late addition to the group of vernacular farmhouses and cottages

The smaller cottages constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries are altogether more lowly buildings. Most were originally built as single-storey buildings with attic accommodation illuminated by dormer windows and constructed of unevenly finished rubblestone laid in rough courses. Many originally possessed thatched roofs with low eaves which were replaced in the 19th century when the eaves were raised for more shallowly pitched slate or tile roofs. At No. 3 Larkin's Lane this process is illustrated by the use of use of brick to raise the eaves. The cottage at No. 1 Stoke Place is recorded in historic photos with a thatched roof, although it now bears a roof of fired clay plain tiles. These buildings are more often symmetrically arranged with centrally placed front doors and a single window to either side on the ground floor, although they show a great deal of variation. Some, such as Nos. 9 – 11a The Croft, represent converted agricultural buildings, a process which is illustrated in this example by the surviving barn and the mounting block at the White Hart Inn which stands between Nos. 8 and 9 The Croft. These buildings provide a different aspect of the society of the 17th and 18th century village community of Headington. They would have been relatively inexpensive to construct and heat and would have housed the many labourers and servants required on the

farms represented by the larger houses. A relatively high proportion of these buildings have been lost and replaced, including the ten on St Andrew's Road that were demolished in the 1930s. The remaining examples are to be all the more valued as survivors.



No. 18 St Andrew's Lane a small workers' cottage, probably of 18th or early 19th century construction

Agricultural Buildings

In addition to the houses and cottages of the rural community, the conservation area contains several examples of the agricultural buildings that served its farms and smallholdings. Perhaps the best example of these is the 18th century barn at Barton Lane, now converted into housing. Others include the barn to the west of Bury Knowle House, a building adjacent to No. 20 St Andrew's Road (Laurel Farm House) and another small barn in the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital. As noted above the White Hart Inn also retains a small barn of 18th century construction facing onto The Croft, which retains many original features. These buildings take a variety of forms but their agricultural purpose is normally readily understood by the onlooker as a result of original features such as their barn or stable doors, distinctive window forms and absence of lighting to upper floors or attics. As such, they make an important contribution to the rural character of the conservation area.



The Barn at Barton Lane stands out as a building formerly used for agriculture



Details of the barn doors and windows at Bury Knowle

Mansion Houses

The mansion houses of the village mark the transition of the village from a rural community in the 17th century to a gradually more suburban role in the 18th and 19th century, at least for the wealthy few who could afford such residences. They have broad frontages that express the wealth of their owners and use symmetrical, classically proportioned facades that were designed to demonstrate their good taste, learning and rationality. Roofs are generally low pitched and hipped with natural slate covering to provide an unobtrusive and weatherproof covering over a relatively broad expanse and provide a significantly different character compared with the prominent, steeply pitched roofs of the earlier farmhouses and cottages. The buildings are of between two and three

storeys, often with additional wings of a lower scale that were built to provide extra accommodation, as it was required. They are also distinguished from the farmhouses by the types of ancillary buildings with which they are associated. These include coach houses and stables, walled kitchen gardens, gate lodges and high boundary walls to their parks. These buildings are often just as ornate as the main house. The boundary walls have ornamental brick copings and monumental gate piers. The houses and their ancillary buildings stand well away from the roadside and are now often hidden from the road, although they may once have been more visible in designed vistas.



The former coach house at Bury Knowle, now used as offices

19th Century Houses and Cottages

The classical influences of the mansions also spread to the middle class of houses in the village, such as the semi-detached pair of red brick houses at Nos. 1 and 3 St Andrew's Road, built in the early 19th century. The lower status of these buildings is marked by the use of gable end walls rather than hipped roofs but the classical influence is readily identified in the symmetry and proportions of openings and use of Bath Stone quoins and string courses to divide the monumental three storey frontages. Elsewhere, earlier buildings were re-fronted or extended to stay up-to-date with architectural taste. Nos. 10, 14 and 20 St Andrew's Road provide interesting examples of these conversions. Even the smaller cottages of the 18th and 19th centuries display an effort

to provide symmetry and proportion in conformance with neo-classical ideals.



No. 10 St Andrew's Road

Later houses in the conservation area exhibit the increasing influence of other national styles of architecture in the village. St Andrew's House, at the corner of St Andrew's Road and Osler Road conforms to the Gothic Revival style used extensively in the contemporary North Oxford Victorian Suburb, although in Headington limestone was used instead of brick. The building's construction emphasises the vertical axis, with the steep pitch of the roofs highlighted by prominent gable end walls and the height marked by the tall chimney stacks which spring from corbels at first floor level. Unity House on St Andrew's Lane provides another, less ornate example of the same style. The lighter Queen Anne style and the Olde English styles are represented in the rebuilt Priory (designed by H.G.W. Drinkwater), and the half-timbered Linden Cottages, built in 1909, as well as the British Workman Temperance Tavern of 1881 and No. 6 The Croft. Whilst these maintain the complex roof plans of the Gothic revival, they have a more horizontal emphasis and use a greater variety of decorative

materials and features. Again the use of limestone helps to integrate these buildings with the older structures of the village.



No. 6 The Croft

The 19th century also introduced a cohort of brick-built houses, some of which contribute to the locally distinctive use of handmade Shotover bricks laid in Flemish bond with blue or 'dust-brick' headers forming a decorative chequer-work pattern. These include Nos. 16 The Croft, 35 St Andrew's Road and Nos. 2 – 5 The Croft, which have idiosyncratic features of design and fenestration that set them apart from mid and later 19th century brick cottages built to more widely represented designs. Examples of the latter are seen in the village and reflect the encroachment of speculative development into the village in marginal areas such as The Croft, St Andrew's Lane and the western limit of St Andrew's Road and in larger groups on Old High Street.



Nos. 2 – 5 The Croft

Public and commercial buildings

Several of the public and commercial buildings in the village have been mentioned in the description of the village's historical development. Most of these have now been converted to private houses. The two surviving public houses are perhaps the most visible of the commercial buildings. The White Hart has a history extending to the mid 17th century, whilst the predecessor to the present Black Boy was recorded in the early 17th century. The present building was constructed as a purpose-built public house in the early 20th century in the 'improved public house' style. It may not satisfy all tastes, but does show attention to detail and antiquarianism in style, which is a hallmark of the attempt to re-brand public houses for more middle class markets. This involved use of 'Tudorbethan' and Arts and Crafts styles of architecture to recall the coaching inns of the early 17th century. Other buildings with a commercial past include Mather's Farmhouse, which served as a bakery owned by the Berry family, until this business moved in to No. 1 St Andrew's Road, which has only recently lost its small shop window and bakery building to the rear. A second large bakery building was located at the northern end of St Andrew's Lane and has a stark appearance as a tall brick building with few windows overlooking the road and two prominent chimneystacks rising from its roadside frontage.



The Old Bakery at St Andrew's Lane

The corner building at No. 94 Old High Street retains a shop window and the post

box to the sidewall, despite its conversion to residential use. This was Headington's first post-office and continued in use as a grocer's shop first under the name of Rudd's and subsequently under several owners. It remained as a shop until the 1970s. Just a few doors to the south, the small Whitewashed cottage at No. 86 Old High Street was a butcher's shop owned by another member of the Berry family. It has been restored as a dwelling in recent years with the loss of the shop window.



The Old Post Office at No. 94 Old High Street

Further south on Old High Street, the two properties at Nos. 51 and 53 Old Street were formerly the home and business premises of the village blacksmiths, the Stow family, from the 1880s, when the house was probably built until the 1940s. No. 51 Old High Street retains a small shop window and the sign writing advertising the builders' merchants that took over the premises. During the later 19th century land between Old High Street and Bury Knowle was used as a market gardens owned by Messrs Jacobs and Field, who have recently been memorialised by the naming of a delicatessen on Old High Street. No. 29 Old High Street formed part of their property and bears a small plaque that advertises that, in addition to fruit and vegetables, the owners also supplied Ransom's Lawnmowers.

The Baptist Chapel, built in 1830, is now a private house named Croft Hall, but retains the appearance of a small neo-classical chapel built in rock-faced stone. It is the village's earliest surviving non-conformist place of worship. The boundary wall to its grounds includes impressive wrought iron gates, which may have been reused from another chapel. Another small chapel is located at the entrance to the Headington Cemetery at Dunstan Road built in a simple Gothic style.

The village contains several buildings that were used as schools, including the small corrugated iron school building at No. 41 St Andrew's Road and the somewhat altered building of the Headington and Barton Infants School at No. 3 North Place, which dates from 1840. It has a similar form of construction to the earlier farmhouses and may have been converted from an older building. The former British Workman Tavern is located just to the west and, as mentioned above, is constructed in the Olde English style with a half timbered upper floor on a stone ground floor and a half-hipped roof of plain tile set with its shorter end to the street. It is likely that the Olde English style was used here to give the building an historic look that represented a traditional English Inn, to support its role as a temperance house.

The site of the village pound appears to be marked as a small square enclosure at The Croft on the Corpus Christi map of Headington of 1605. Nearby field names on the map referred to the presence of the pound, which would have been used to confine stray livestock found wandering in the village or its fields, until an owner paid a fee for their release. Such enclosures were often constructed of timber and rarely survive in their original form. However, a square walled enclosure in the grounds of the Old Pound House may mark the position of a later structure for the pound.

Houses of the 20th Century

Of the early 20th century houses in the conservation area, a few stand out as particularly interesting. Between 1912 and 1925 The Hermitage (No. 69 Old High Street) was developed from a part of the former maltings into an attractive Georgian style house by a former keeper of Fine Art at the Ashmolean Museum. The conversion is convincing and anyone would be forgiven for thinking the building to be at least a hundred years earlier in origin than it actually is. William Osler House, recently substantially extended, is quite different and provides the village's only example of the white rendered modernist style. It was designed by Stanley Hamp in 1931 for the administrator of the developing Radcliffe Infirmary premises at Headington. It is now used as teaching facilities for the hospital.



William Osler House, The John Radcliffe Hospital

A group of middle class houses were built along Dunstan Road during the Inter-War years, of which No. 7 Dunstan Road (also known as Orchard End), stands out due to its position on a corner plot, attractive garden setting, generous proportions and simple design. Dodd's group of terraced cottages at Nos. 27-33 St. Andrew's Road, which replaced a very attractive group of smaller, thatched cottages, illustrate a turning point in concern for the character of the village at the time when surrounding urban development was threatening to engulf it. They are modelled on the 18th century cottages of the village (see above) sharing their form, scale and fenestration,

although the materials are more clearly of the Inter-War period and details, such as their roofing materials, set-back from the road and some of their proportions were determined by building regulations and other requirements of the time.

The most controversial buildings in the village are the group of five houses designed by Ahrends, Burton and Koralek at Nos. 10 – 18 Dunstan Road. These extend the principles of architects such as Lasdun (best known for his South Bank Centre and the Norfolk Terrace halls of residence at University of East Anglia), to a domestic terrace of houses. The houses have a functional appearance to the exterior, using undecorated concrete block walling and aluminium frames for windows with vehicle garages prominently located to the front. However, they carefully fulfil the requirements of a difficult brief, providing privacy from the road to the south, gaining daylight from the same direction whilst exploiting the extensive vista to the north and yet maintaining a low scale, an intricate roofline and the mixture of integration and separation that characterise more traditional cottages elsewhere in the village. Although they are not to everyone's taste these buildings are of particular architectural interest.

Walls

The high stone boundary walls of the conservation area deserve particular note for the contribution they make to its character and appearance. A number of these walls have been designated as listed buildings in recognition of their architectural and historic interest. They are (mostly) of 18th and early 19th century construction and vary greatly in height. Their capping material is often decorative, including the distinctive lobed orange-red brick with a highly porous surface that encourages growth of plants, such as moss and grasses on the wall tops. As an ostentatious means of enclosing their estates, these walls provide an insight into the messages that the village's mansion builders wished to send to their

neighbours. Now they create intimate, enclosed areas with a tranquil ambience.



Stone boundary walls at The Croft

Materials, Style and Features

The choice of materials will have a particular influence on the success of new development within the conservation area. The most characteristic materials used in the conservation area are described below.

Walling materials and construction

Corallian limestone rubble: The form and detail of vernacular buildings is often determined by a complex relationship between their functions and the materials available locally. The local Corallian rubble limestone provides the strongest visual presence of any one material in the conservation area. It is used as the main construction material on the majority of the village's farmhouses and cottages, as well as subsidiary structures of the mansions, some of the later houses and the parish church. Its visual dominance is reinforced by its use for construction of the majority of the high boundary walls that run throughout the village.

It is normally laid in uneven courses with a rough surface finish that was often covered by a lime wash or render in the past. A few traces of this lime wash can still be seen in the conservation area, a notable example being at No. 8 The Croft. It appears here that the lime was coloured with red-ochre (possibly sourced from Shotover). The use of a carefully chosen

lime mortar is important with this material to prevent damage through differential shrinkage and moisture retention, potentially leading to saturation and damage. It was used for buildings in mass (solid) wall construction, often with very thick walling that have a high thermal mass if well maintained. This is a heavy form of construction and its use determined the positioning of upper floor windows over lower to reduce loading on lintels and therefore has an influence on schemes of fenestration. It also increases the difficulty of building upwards and, therefore, contributes to the long, low form of buildings throughout the conservation area.



Corallian limestone with a lime render weather coating

Oolitic limestone and Headington

Stone: The Corallian rubble was a relatively poor material for forming the corners of walls or the jambs of openings for windows and doors. It also failed to produce the smooth, ashlar surfaces that were considered desirable by the builders of prestigious houses in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Oolitic limestone, available in larger blocks and more easily carved, was brought from quarries such as those at Taynton near Burford for window jambs and mullions, such as those at Mather's Farm. Harder Corallian limestone used for the plinths of buildings was also taken from the nearby Headington Quarries, while the attractive Headington freestone may have been used for the facades of buildings. However, the problems of blistering and

spalling that affect this stone may have required its replacement in some cases.

The wealth introduced by the builders of new mansion houses and the improved transportation of materials by canal allowed the covering of these buildings with a veneer of ashlar masonry (providing the appearance of construction using smooth squared blocks). Some of the village's middle class houses, such as No. 10 St Andrew's Road, also received a re-facing during the 18th century using the local materials adapted to simulate the ashlar effect in combination with the introduction of up-to-date windows.

Brick: In the early 19th century the use of brick to provide, at least, the most visible facades of buildings reflects the adoption of this material as a high status material. These buildings are not uniform however and provide different styles of construction that reflect the status and prestige of their builders. The neighbouring properties at Nos. 1 and 3 St Andrew's Road have a main façade of brick, with smooth surfaced Bath stone dressings to windows jambs, lintels, quoins and a stringcourse over the ground floor. No. 35 St Andrew's Road has a brick stringcourse over the ground floor with brick sills to windows and rusticated stone lintels. No. 16 The Croft is a humbler building, originally two cottages, with significantly less architectural decoration, although the use of gauged brickwork for flattened arches to the window and door openings provides a sense of pride in construction. The terrace of small cottages at Nos. 2 - 5 The Croft provide the lowest status properties in this group and were presumably workers houses for one of the villa estates. Although they are simple buildings, they still have carefully crafted gauged-brick arches to the door and window openings.



No. 35 St Andrew's Road, local red brick laid in Flemish bond

All of these buildings have brickwork laid in the characteristic Flemish bond with 'blue' brick headers, creating a decorative chequer pattern that is a characteristic feature of the Oxford area in the 1820s-1840s. The brick is the handmade Shotover brick, manufactured locally and with an orange-red colour and an open texture. Later brick fronted buildings such as Nos. 2-6 Stoke Place, Nos. 6 – 8 St Andrew's Road, Nos. 57 – 63 Old High Street and Nos. 90 – 94 Old High Street used contrasting buff or yellow brick to provide detail in facades, particularly as string courses of alternate red and yellow brick or as diaper (diamond shaped) feature panels. At nos. 41 and 43 St Andrew's Road the pattern is maintained but the colour of bricks is reversed. Where stone was used to provide the surrounds of bay windows or lintels, a simple incised ogee motif is used as to provide a decorative feature. The later brick buildings use the products of the Oxford and Berkshire Brick Company or similar, which have a smoother, more reflective surface texture and more even colouring than the earlier bricks.

Roofs

Until the mid-20th century there were still a number of cottages with thatched roofs in the village. Indeed, the destruction of many buildings in the village in the early 18th century through fires may have been due to the prevalence of its use. However, these roofs have all either been

replaced with other materials or the buildings themselves have been demolished. An alternative local vernacular form of roofing is the very heavy Cotswold stone or Stonefield slates. These are found at Mather's Farmhouse, whilst replica stone-tiles of cast concrete are seen as an intentionally 'traditional' looking material on the Black Boy public house. Their use may also have been more widespread in the past. They require a steeply pitched roof to bear their considerable weight and normally have gable end walls, sometimes with low parapets, to protect the exposed ends of the roof. These steep roof slopes are suitable for the introduction of small dormer windows to create additional accommodation in attics. These were normally small and evenly spaced along the roof slope to maintain the symmetry of frontages. The majority of roofs in the village are covered with hand or machine made fired clay tiles. These would originally have been produced locally from the same material as the local brick. They have generally mellowed to an inconspicuous dark orange-red or plum colour that provides an attractive contrast to the pale yellow/grey of the limestone buildings. A few of the later 19th century cottages also retain ornamental Victorian ridge crest tiles and terracotta finials, which adds to the interest of ridge lines and provides an interesting historic detail.

Windows and Doors

In a number of the village's older cottages and houses, the regionally distinctive vernacular window form of three timber or metal framed casements under a timber lintel has survived. An even smaller number of buildings have retained fine cavetto moulded or chamfered stone mullions and surrounds to windows that were used during the seventeenth century. These include Mather's Farm, parts of Ruskin Hall and a small in-filled window at the rear of No. 20 St Andrew's Road. Some casement windows also retain small rectangular leaded glass panes. The survival of both forms of windows makes

an important contribution to the architectural authenticity of the village's older buildings. They help to reinforce the rustic character of the buildings through their simple design and construction. In the case of buildings such as the Rookery and Laurel Farm, that were aggrandised at a later date, the survival of these features helps to indicate the earlier origins of the structures and their complex histories.

From the mid-18th century, new buildings were normally constructed with vertically sliding sash windows. A simpler variation was the horizontal sliding sash window that survived until recently at No. 3 Larkin's Lane. Sash windows conformed to the proportions that were desirable for Georgian and Victorian houses. Until the mid 19th century they were generally made up of panels with matching numbers of small panes of crown glass in patterns such as six-over-six and eight-over-eight. After the plate glass production process was established in the 1870s, these windows were produced with fewer, larger panes, although the frames often required additional support at the corners in the form of horns to the runners. The timber frame to the window, containing the boxes for the sash cords and weights were gradually integrated into the walls during the 18th and 19th centuries, becoming less visible and providing another feature that reveals their date.

These windows were an important element of the original architectural design of many of the buildings in the conservation area, ranging from the impressive mansions to smaller houses and cottages. They also formed an important element of the modernising of earlier buildings in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their construction involved considerable expertise in joinery and they may be compared favourably with other skilled craftwork of the past. Many have lasted without replacement for as much as two hundred years. However, to avoid deterioration they do require maintenance from time to time.

Doorways tend to reflect the status of historic buildings in the conservation area. The middle class of houses tend to have four or six panel doors, often with fanlights over, whilst ornate wooden or stone doorcases, such as that at No. 14 St Andrew's Road, show a pretension to greater grandeur. In some cases upper panels have been replaced with glazing. Lower status houses, including cottages, retain plank doors (vertically set planks with cross members and bracing on the interior face). Some of the mansions have more ornate doorways. One at Headington Manor has ornamental stained glass and a porch supported on Doric

columns. Ruskin Hall also has a stone porch to the front, whilst the front door of Bury Knowle is approached by sweeping staircases to either side.

Buildings of Local Historic Interest and 'Positive' Buildings

Within the conservation area numerous unlisted historic buildings make a positive contribution to its character and appearance. These buildings are illustrated on Map 3. However, where a building has not been marked this should not be taken to mean that it is of no interest but may reflect lack of access to land during the survey for this appraisal.



Front door of Mather's Farmhouse, Barton Lane

Character Areas (See Map 4)

The Historic Core - Old High Street and St Andrew's Road

Key Positive Characteristics:

- The main streets of the historic village with attractive views framed by buildings trees and garden walls.
- Continuous or near-continuous frontages of buildings at the back of pavement or set just back with small front gardens, creating enclosure and active frontages.
- Some wider green gaps between groups of buildings.
- Uneven sized plots, reflecting historic process of development.
- Low scale of buildings two storeys, rising to three in the north.
- Green spaces including the churchyard, contribute to the green setting.
- Leafy setting provided by tall trees in

private gardens and front gardens.

- A small number of street trees make an important contribution to the streetscene.
- The Old High Street/St Andrew's Road junction provides a focal space as an informal square.

This area contains the central streets of the historic village, with long and gently sinuous paths and a strong sense of enclosure provided by closely spaced or informally terraced buildings built at the back of pavement, behind small front gardens or with high garden walls of local limestone to the road. This area contains the focus of the seventeenth and eighteenth century houses, cottages, inns and farmsteads as well as the medieval core of the village around the parish church of St Andrew. It has a quiet, residential character, with only four non-residential buildings (two churches and two public houses), although it preserves the evidence of shops and businesses that reflects the historic village as an independent community. Buildings are generally low in scale, only occasionally



View north at Old High Street

rising to three storeys in larger properties and have broad frontages to the street. This creates a gentle rhythm to views along the street, with some sizable gaps between groups of buildings forming the roadside frontage.

Greenness is provided by the foliage of the small front gardens or mature trees, in the gardens of larger properties. The trees of Headington House, in particular make an important contribution to the character of the street by overhanging the road and creating a pinch point in views along it from both north and south. These and other mature trees, including the two limes in the pavement just outside The Priory, provide a greater vertical scale within views and contribute to the character of the area as a historic village centre. Tall trees in rear gardens and adjacent areas are also glimpsed in views between buildings and provide a pleasant rural background.

The majority of properties have front entrances opening directly to the street or small front gardens with low garden walls providing a high degree of visibility that creates a well articulated street frontage.

This area includes a number of small open spaces, of which the churchyard of St Andrew's Church is the largest, providing a more open area on St Andrew's Road and containing numerous historic headstones, as well as the village's medieval cross. The church is an important landmark building with attractive views to it from St Andrew's Road. The group of buildings on St Andrew's Road, which face the churchyard, form the centrepiece to the village as a row of large seventeenth century houses, which have been variously altered according to changing fashions. They maintain a unity of scale, with a more or less continuous roof and eaves line, whilst their even width and the continuity of the property units with the former garden at The Croft (to the rear), suggests that the arrangement of development is in fact of medieval origin. They are accompanied by a stretch of cobbled pavement on the south side of the

street, which has survived since the 18th century.

At its northern end Old High Street broadens out to form an informal village square occupied by the car park of the Black Boy Public House and the highways landscape at the junction with St Andrew's Road. Until relatively recently the village centre character of this area was reinforced by the various shops, including a baker's, butcher's, green grocer's shops and post office, as well as the public house. All except the Black Boy have now been converted for residential use, although No. 94 Old High Street retains its traditional shop window and the post box in its side-wall. No. 51 Old High Street, the former village blacksmith's and latterly a builder's merchant, also retains a shop window and sign-writing on its exposed gable wall despite now being wholly residential.

Small triangular greens at the entrance to The Croft from Old High Street and at the entrance to Osler Road add to the verdant rural character of the area. The green at the Croft also faces the entrance to the short village lane at North Place, which runs up to the entrance to Bury Knowle. This short stretch of street frontage shares the characteristics of Old High Street, with 18th and 19th century cottages constructed at the back of pavement (one the former Bull Inn) or behind a small front garden, as with the former infants' school at No. 3 North Place. The location of this building also signals its association with the Bury Knowle Estate the owners of which founded the small school as an act of public benevolence. This short stretch of street is distinguished by a modern road surface of granite setts with stone flagged pavements to either side, which complement the historic buildings.

The buildings of the area are varied in their dates of construction, materials and style reflecting the development of the local vernacular, the growing of national styles and their local adaptation. The alignments of buildings are also varied, either with the long side of buildings

presented to the street or buildings running back from the street at 90 degrees, exposing their gable end walls and reflecting the organic nature of the village's development. However, both the alignment of buildings, long side to the road, and the use of limestone rubble for construction are sufficiently regularly repeated to stand out as characteristic of the area.

A number of significant buildings mark street corners and, as such, form the focus of views through the conservation area. These include: Mather's Farmhouse at the corner of Barton Lane and Larkin's Lane and No. 1 St Andrew's Road, which forms the other corner to Larkin's Lane; St Andrew's House at the corner with Osler Road (one of the few buildings to rise to three storeys); and No. 56 Old High Street, which has frontages to both Old High Street and the small green formed at the entrance to The Croft. Many other buildings stand out in the views along both streets as a result of their position and the architectural details and materials that reflect their age and the wider story of the village's development

The high stone garden walls of Headington House and No. 56 Old High Street creates a break in the active frontage of Old High Street with shade cast by the overhanging trees in their gardens. South of this point a series of cottages of mixed 17th, 18th and 19th century date form attractive points in views of the east side of the road. With infilling of relatively plain later 20th century houses, that stand back just enough from the roadside to allow the older buildings to remain dominant in views of the frontage.

The area is a popular pedestrian route used by people living within the conservation area and in the wider area including the Northway and Barton Housing Estates. It provides access from these areas to the London Road shopping area, Bury Knowle Park and Library, the schools on London Road and to buses, which use London Road. Vehicle Traffic in this area is generally slow moving as a

result of the narrowing of the road by parked cars.

The Croft

Key Positive Characteristics

- A tranquil residential area with little motor traffic.
- A network of narrow lanes often defined by high stone garden walls or densely built-up frontages of small cottages.
- Open spaces of historic (possibly medieval) garden plots.
- A focus of (listed) buildings of special historic and architectural interest, particularly on the northern arm of The Croft and including a large number of high boundary walls.
- Use of a mixed palette of materials, including rubblestone, red brick and white painted render for walls reflecting the varied origins of buildings.
- Roof materials playing an important role due to low scale of development.
- Low scale of development from one to

two storeys creates an intimate feel.

- Pleasant walking and cycling routes, including the unusual green lane passing No. 8 The Croft.
- Green backdrop of trees in the grounds of Headington House and Sandy Lodge to views through this area
- Evidence of former uses of buildings adds to their historic interest.



View west along cottage frontage at The Croft



View across gardens at The Croft towards Headington House

The Croft is formed of a network of small quiet lanes, which provide an attractive residential area bounded by the high stone garden walls of large houses, such as Headington House and Sandy Lodge, or the rear gardens of properties on Old High Street, which creates a very strong sense of enclosure. The area is tranquil with little vehicle traffic and providing a well used pedestrian friendly environment. The feel of the area is intimate with a mixture of short views contained by building frontages and longer ones along lanes, framed by high walls. At the heart of this area is an enclave of cottages or small houses, which form a hidden community within the village. The scale of buildings is generally low but most address the street frontage providing enclosure and active frontages in small groups.

The area was formed from the medieval or early post-medieval settlement pattern, with small agricultural buildings at the rear of properties fronting onto St Andrew's Road, which were subsequently converted into cottages. The small barn at the rear of the White Hart Inn retains its use for storage and its appearance as a traditional agricultural building. No. 8 The Croft represents a grander redevelopment of this space as a small farmhouse of the late 17th or early 18th century that was also used as a public house (The Swann Inn). Long gardens (literally 'crofts') extended southwards from the lane and several of these were developed for infill housing during the 19th century, adding red brick houses amongst the stone and lime washed cottages. Gardens at No. 17 The Croft and adjacent have remained largely undeveloped and provide a rare survival of these medieval garden plots with an indication of their original appearance. They also provide a soft, green setting to the historic buildings and allow views between the various lanes. One even preserves several veteran apple trees (possible remains of the orchards that once surrounded the village). The importance of the area's character, including the tight-knit nature of development and the juxtaposition of the

physical development in relation to unbuilt, or open, space was identified as a key positive feature of its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area by the Secretary of State in planning appeal decisions in the 1980s, as was the necessity of maintaining the area's safety resulting from the relative absence of traffic.

The tall trees in the grounds of Headington House form a backdrop to views south and west across this area and create a tunnel of foliage over the arm running to Osler Road.



Nos. 2 – 5 The Croft

A second cluster of houses lies to the west. These are highly varied, including an aggrandised cottage of 17th century origin (The Court), a short terrace of early 19th century workers' cottages and No. 6 The Croft, a generously proportioned Olde English style house set back from the road with a private garden. These houses face away from the nearby through route of Osler Road, focussing instead on the narrow footpath of The Croft, or the small side road which runs off Osler Road. This helps to retain the tranquillity of the area surrounding these properties, including their front gardens, which are protected from the noise of passing traffic. Just to the north, the Old Pound House, recently extensively rebuilt, marks the site of the village pound recorded on Corpus Christi's map of 1605, which appears to be preserved in the small, square walled garden within the property's curtilage. The mature trees in the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital provide a curtain of foliage that encloses views to the north

west of this area, while the high garden walls of Sandy Lodge, No.7 The Croft and The Coach House provide enclosure to the south.

Between these two areas lies the Laurel Farm Close development. This was constructed by the City Council in the 1980s across the former farmyard and orchard of Laurel Farm. It contains small brick houses built to resemble informal terraces, which face onto a narrow lane that provides pedestrian access to each property from St Andrew's Road and The Croft. The lane has a strong sense of enclosure within an area of low scale development. A wider road provides vehicle access from St Andrew's Road. The arrangement of buildings, their design and the choice of landscaping have all been carefully considered to reduce any adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are arranged to create a narrow lane running between building frontages that step forward and back to provide a degree of complexity, reflecting the organic development of more historic areas nearby and creating an intimate communal area. The scale of buildings is designed to resemble the 17th and 18th century cottages in the village. They were built using a mixture of white painted render and redbrick to complement the traditional building materials in the village, with plain tile roofs and upper stories lit by half-dormer windows.

Houses throughout the area are of a consistent low scale, rarely of more than two stories, whilst the cottages at Nos. 9, 11 and 11a The Croft are a group of single storey cottages with additional attic rooms lit by dormer windows. The character of individual materials throughout this area, such as the distinctive colouring and texture of both the locally produced handmade brick of the early 19th century and the later 19th century wire-cut bricks is immediately appreciated due to their proximity to the pedestrian.



The Coach House, The Croft

There is little or no differentiation between the surfaces for motor vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists, except where bollards restrict access to vehicles. The amenity and safety of this environment for pedestrians and cyclists is dependent on the maintenance of minimal traffic movement. It was pointed out during public consultation that this is still an area where children can play in the street. The numerous points of access, including routes through Laurel Farm, from Osler Road, St Andrew's Road and Old High Street, and the position on the routes to shopping areas on London Road or the public facilities at Bury Knowle, means that this area is popular with and very well used by pedestrians. The lack of traffic movement and noise also provides a distinct air of tranquillity, highlighted, on occasion, by the sound of the bell ringing at St Andrew's church (including the regular Tuesday night practice) or singing at the Baptist Church.



No. 6 The Croft

Although properties surrounding this area have high garden walls, hiding buildings and gardens from public view, the houses

with frontages to The Croft are generally set behind small front gardens bounded from the road by iron railings, picket fences or low brick walls, all of which allow a degree of transparency to the street, which contributes to the intimate character of the area.

Responses to public consultation pointed out a range of people enjoy using the pedestrian routes through this area, because it is safe and relatively vehicle free and for its attractive environment and historic interest..

Bury Knowle

Key Positive Characteristics

- Bury Knowle together with its pleasure grounds, picturesque parkland and subsidiary coach house, stables, barn and boundary walls provide a well preserved example of the one of the 'big houses' built around the village by Oxford merchants in the late 18th and early 19th century.
- Public access to the park and house provides a valuable opportunity for the public to benefit from these attractive and historically interesting features.
- Mature tree planting in the park represents elements of the 19th century formal landscaping.
- The park and house now have a history as an element of the Headington community which is expressed in public art and park furniture.
- Coffin Walk and the park's boundary wall have historic interest relating to

the period of enclosure of the open fields.

- The many attractive views across the parkland benefit from mature tree planting, the historic buildings and landscape outside the park including woodland at Shotover and the countryside to the north.

Bury Knowle Park combines the historic interest of the well preserved mansion and gardens built by Joseph Lock and his successors, with the municipal landscape of public library and park that has been an important feature for the Headington Community for eighty years. It is a vibrant area well used by the community as a spacious green area for recreation and relaxation. Important features for the use of the park include its greenery and tree planting, children's play areas and sports facilities. The provision of park furniture has recently included a mixture of public art including references to the work of local artists, such as the Story Book Tree.

Bury Knowle House, which stands at the centre of this landscape, is an Italianate



Bury Knowle House

Villa built in the first years of the 19th century and represents a part of the move of wealthy Oxford merchants out of the city centre to the healthier climate of Headington Hill. It retains its associations with subsidiary structures, such as the coach house and stables, which were once required to support the high status lifestyle of its owners. The immediate surroundings of the house retain some of the polite landscaping of the 19th century pleasure grounds that surrounded the villa, including exotic specimen trees, such as the large cedars to the front, as well as the ha-ha or sunken fence that allows views from the house to sweep across the lawns to the open parkland beyond.



Late 19th century stable building at Bury Knowle

The wide, green open space of Bury Knowle Park survives from the enclosure of the open fields of Headington in 1804, when Joseph Lock amalgamated several fields or furlongs to create his idealised pastoral landscape. The construction of the high stone wall by Lock, to surround his park, is well attested in the records of the controversy it caused when burial parties from Headington Quarry repeatedly broke it down to follow their traditional processional route to St Andrew's Church. It has connotations of the class struggles of the early 19th century, including the repercussions of the enclosure of the historic open fields and commons. The status of the narrow footpath along the western edge of the park, as the replacement procession route is related more anecdotally.

The availability of these buildings and the associated landscape to the public reflects far-sighted planning on behalf of the City Council in the 1930s. As a result, the public have benefited from both the landscape as an open space and the historic interior of the house in its various uses. Without the public use and access to both of these it is likely that neither would have survived in their present condition or be enjoyed by so wide a part of the public. Indeed it is more probable that the parkland would have been lost as occurred at Headington House. The uses of the house have also provided a focus for community activity, be they the mother and baby clinic that occupied the first floor for many years or the library that has operated from the building almost from the date it was purchased by the Council.

The small enclave of sheltered housing to the north of Bury Knowle House is discreetly located and does not intrude into views of the house or parkland. The density of mature broad-leafed trees that lie between it and the house assists this. A Council depot to the north of this later development is also relatively discreet and currently surrounded by a tall cypress hedge, with Emden House screening views to it from the north. Its presence also reduces the visibility of Emden House from the park. In the north, the parkland contains several modern elements including a small sensory garden that currently seems a little lost in its wider setting. Tennis courts and a putting (golf) course are also located in the north with the wooden pavilion block, including a warden's office and changing rooms. Just to the north of these a terrace provides views northwards across the small orchard at Emden House to the rolling farmland of South Oxfordshire. These views are important in uniting the conservation area with Oxford's green setting.



The ha-ha at Bury Knowle Park

Views across the parkland in the south and east are particularly attractive as a result of the combined elements of the wide, green open space, its historic settings, which includes including the park walls and surrounding buildings such as the village school and post-office on the south side of London Road), and the mature tree planting. Historically significant trees include specimen trees, planted to ornament the parkland, trees lining the boundary with London Road, which act as a screen to views from the street and an avenue running along the western edge of the park, which marks the former carriage drive to the house from gates on London Road. More recent tree planting in the park has included the small arboretum in the east, which replaced hockey pitches, as well as a second avenue running along the path following the eastern park boundary.

Views from the parkland to Bury Knowle House are also of high value and show the house in its designed setting.

Modern additions to the public parkland include references to Headington's literary heritage and, particularly to C.S. Lewis' children's stories. These include the Storybook Tree, and the surrounding benches, which depict animals that feature in the Chronicles of Narnia, as well as the 'Peace Sculpture' of 12 decorated slabs set in the grass, each provided by one of Headington's schools. The large children's playground, enclosed by a low beech hedge, provides another resource for families with small children in the park.



Specimen trees in parkland at Bury Knowle Park

Larkin's Lane and St Andrew's Lane

Key Positive Characteristics

- A tranquil residential area focused around two historic lanes.
- Curving road lines provide gradually unfolding views.
- Groups of closely spaced historic cottages, houses and a former bakery create attractive and historic frontages.
- Buildings of varying width, alignment and height reflect an organic process of development.
- A small group of three-storey buildings at the rear of the pavement provide a distinctive area of character.
- Use of local limestone or red brick for construction provides a locally distinctive character and establishes cohesion between buildings.
- Larger gaps provided by gardens break up the frontages creating a low density character contrasting with the

village core.

- Some views out to the village's green setting.
- Mature trees in private gardens provide greenery and some enclosure to the roads.
- Small front gardens and grassed roadside verges provide greenery, which reinforces the rural character.

This is a small residential enclave with a rural character set around two narrow and gently curving lanes. These descend the north-facing hillside from St Andrew's Road and meet at a sharp angle at the



former site of the village's common well, located on, or near, the natural spring-line. The curving lines of the roads provide a progression of views in which the eye is repeatedly drawn to the pretty cottage frontages.

The many small stone cottages either face directly onto the road frontage or have very narrow garden borders to provide some separation from the pavement. In a similar way to parts of The Croft, this area helps to illustrate the social spectrum within the historic community of the village, with small cottages located just outside the higher status frontages of Old High Street and St Andrew's Road. The building frontages provide a good deal of enclosure, which is accentuated by the fall in ground level and tall trees in the grounds of The Grange and Nos. 8 – 12 St Andrew's Lane. These partially screen views northwards with only occasional glimpses to the farmland beyond.

The trees also provide seasonal colour and the greenery of foliage that contributes positively to the area's character. A tunnel effect is created at the



southern end of St Andrew's Lane by trees overarching the road, which channels views down the lane to the picturesque farmhouse at Church Hill Farm and the cottages to either side. Further trees of stature lie in the private gardens between the two lanes and provide interest in the background to many views from and into this area.

A few larger houses, including several modern infill developments, are set back from the road with high garden walls of local limestone rubble forming their road frontage and providing additional enclosure. Where significant historic buildings, such as the Grange, are hidden



from view, the imposing boundary walls and ostentatious gate piers provide evidence of their presence out of sight and have historic interest in their own right.

Buildings are set at a variety of angles to each other, partly due to the curving road lines and an informal approach to their development, which provides a pleasantly informal character. However, the long side presented to the road is the most frequent orientation. The area has a mixture of detached and informally semi-detached properties, creating occasional clusters of buildings that provide areas of heightened enclosure.

The lanes generally have a pavement on one side only, if at all, with a grassed verge or bank to the other, which provides a soft green edge to the roads and contributes to the rural character. In the past, the lanes would have given access directly to surrounding fields and this impression is retained with the five bar gate at the bottom end of St Andrew's Lane.

Other features that contribute to the positively to the area's character include the former farm buildings at Mather's Farm (now Meadow Larkin's) on Larkin's Lane, which have now been converted into a dwelling.

The curving road lines lead the eye along the roads and to the building frontages and high boundary walls, which, in consequence, become prominent in views. Where buildings retain original historic architectural details this is therefore readily apparent in this area.

The lower (northern) end of St Andrew's Lane is a surprising area with a number of taller buildings rising to three stories, which are closely spaced and set directly on the roadside (including the red brick bakery building and Unity House (No. 8). Nos. 15 and 17 St Andrew's Lane (a pair of late Victorian semi-detached red-brick cottages) stand across the lane on a bank above the road giving these properties an additional element of height. Although the

scale and proportion of buildings in this spot have some urban characteristics, the rural character of the area is maintained by the varying orientation of the buildings and the greenery in their surroundings (see photo).

The area has had several phases of infill development over the last 50 years, which include the cul-de-sac development of William Orchard Close (overseen by The Friends of Old Headington), courtyard development at The Stables, next to the former bakery, a small lane of suburban executive homes, including Springfield and Gables, as a northern extension to Larkin's Lane and a group of stone cottages at No. 3 Larkin Lane built in a pastiche of the local vernacular style. The success of the integration of these developments might be judged on their impact on the overall character of the wider area, which remains as an intimate rural area dominated by small limestone cottages.

Headington House and Osler Road Mansions

Key Positive Characteristics

- An area of large houses in large grounds with attendant subsidiary buildings reflecting development for wealthy Oxford merchants in the late 18th and 19th centuries.
- Houses articulated to the road by their boundary walls, gate piers and gate lodges.
- Mature trees in private gardens preserve evidence of formal landscaping.
- Long view lines on Osler Road with grass verges, high stone boundary walls and framing by mature trees creates an area of distinctive character.
- Publicly accessible parkland at the John Radcliffe Hospital with views to the historic mansion and mature tree planting.
- A small transitional area in the north provides a break between this area

and the historic core of the village.

- Large gardens provide a green buffer between the village core and nearby residential development.

This large character area preserves elements of the landscapes of three of the village's most significant mansions (Headington Manor, Headington Lodge and Headington House). All three were originally created in the late 18th century for wealthy Oxford merchants on formerly undeveloped farmland or gardens. They were fashionably designed houses, with imposing façades. The surroundings of these houses include the familiar trappings of the wealthy villa estates, including coach houses, walled kitchen gardens, gate lodges and attractively planted parkland or gardens, with majestic mature tree planting. Their high limestone rubble and red brick boundary walls are among the most distinctive features of the Old Headington Conservation Area.

As a result of their inclusion in the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital, the buildings and formal landscape of Headington Manor are accessible to the public. Unfortunately, the construction of



View south along Osler Road

the buildings, car parks and roadways for the hospital has obscured some of the formal design and relationships of the earlier buildings and spaces. The attractiveness of its remaining parkland is largely due to the mature tree planting to the south of the house, which encloses the park and provides screening or softening of the modern hospital buildings.

Headington House has remained a family home and, as such, has retained more of its original character as a private space secluded from the surrounding village. Its walls and gate lodge form part of the Old High Street frontage, whilst the narrow lanes of The Croft and Cuckoo Lane run around the outside of it. Its notable residents have included Sir Isaiah Berlin, who was one of the leading social and political philosophers of the twentieth century.

Headington Lodge was extended and subdivided during the 19th century to create two large houses; White Lodge and Sandy Lodge. The grounds of White Lodge were subsequently subdivided further, providing a plot for another large house. These properties share the common traits of spacious grounds in which the dwelling house is set well back from the road. The high boundary walls and gate piers make up the roadside frontage with the houses largely screened from view. Gate lodges and gateways with ornamented piers provide occasional articulation to the road frontage and hint at the larger houses hidden behind, although they have now mostly been separated as private residences in their own right.

No. 1 The Croft lies on the edge of this area at the northern end of Osler Road before the road bends sharply from a northerly to an easterly course. This is an enigmatic building of uncertain origin. Although it is now a private residence, it has the appearance of an 18th or early 19th century garden building but lies outside the present boundaries of any of the large houses. Its position suggests that it may once have stood at a corner of the estate of Headington Lodge, which Osler Road

would have run around. This may suggest it was removed from the estate when it was subdivided. Alternatively it may have stood within the grounds of Headington Manor, at one corner of its kitchen gardens but was later cut off by a re-routing of Cuckoo Lane to the course of Osler Road.



No. 1 The Croft

Osler Road runs through this area on a straight, broad course between the tall boundary walls of the John Radcliffe Hospital (Headington Manor) and White (Headington) Lodge. The road was probably formally planned at the same time as the laying out of Headington Manor's grounds in the 1770s, as a diversion of the northern arm of Cuckoo Lane. A footpath along the east side of the road is separated from the carriageway by a grass verge and ditch, whilst a second grass verge borders the road to the west. The greenery of the verges and the separation of pedestrians from the carriageway contribute to the rural character of Osler Road, with an abrupt change to a more suburban feel just to the south of the conservation area.

Tree planting also contributes to the rural character of the area. A line of tall lime trees in the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital shade the road (which is otherwise bright and open) in the afternoon and provide additional framing, vertical interest and rhythm to views along it. The long parallel lines of the road surfaces, grass verges and footpath accentuate the length of these views.

Trees in the gardens of White Lodge include lower growing ornamental varieties just behind the boundary wall, which must provide an abundance of blossom in these views during the spring. Taller trees are set further back in the plot to the east, appearing in the background in views eastward.

The spaciousness and abundant greenery of each of the properties in this area helps to illustrate their development over the small fields that once surrounded the historic village core and before wider suburban development created the pressure for more intensive development of the surrounding fields. Along with Bury Knowle, Ruskin Hall and The Grange, these houses and their formal landscapes help to illustrate the early process of suburban development that represented the growth in wealth and status of Oxford's mercantile elites and their escape from city life. This area might be compared with Summertown and North Oxford, which both underwent a similar process of suburban villa development during the late 18th and early 19th century but were both significantly altered by later development.

At the northern end of Osler Road, the road narrows and is more enclosed as it runs through two sharp bends before joining St Andrew's Road. The grass verge is lost and the footpath on the north side of the road runs alongside the boundary wall of the John Radcliffe Hospital. Branches of the trees in the hospital grounds arch over the road. The south side of the road is bounded by the rear elevation of the short terrace of brick cottages at Nos. 2 – 5 The Croft. That these cottages face onto the narrow footpath of The Croft and not onto Osler Road provides suggests of some change in the status of these two routes in the past. At the second bend the road broadens sufficiently to have a footpath on both sides with views eastwards, across the road, to the verdant gardens at the Old Pound House. However, buildings on the east side of Osler Road, north of this bend, maintain the sense of enclosure and

channel views along the road. None of these buildings address the street directly, with entrances on other streets or through gardens. They are well spaced in large plots and rise up to three stories at the Old Pound House and St Andrew's House. However, they are of a more domestic scale than the mansions to the south. The break in the line of vision along Osler Road, increased enclosure of the road and change in scale and spacing of the buildings provides a comfortable transition in character between the larger properties and formal landscapes to the south and the densely built-up village core to the north.



View north at Osler Road, including St Andrew's House



View west at Osler Road, including No. 6 The Croft

Dunstan Road

Key Positive Characteristics

- A tree lined approach to the historic village core, with grass verges and high stone garden walls contributing to the village character.
- Houses are generally set well back from the road in large gardens, reflecting the process of development onto former agricultural land on the village-edge.
- Ruskin Hall (The Rookery) is another example of the big houses built on the edge of the village by an Oxford merchant, but also has historic interest as an educational institution.
- Older buildings at Manor Farmhouse and No.8 Dunstan Road stand out in the streetscene and create an informal gateway to the village.
- Attractive expansive views from Headington Cemetery over the conservation area and to the South Oxfordshire countryside.

Dunstan Road provides an important approach to the core area of the historic village from Northway and Marston but provides a contrasting character to the historic core. The area is focused along the long narrow space of the road. This has a pavement on the north side and a grass verge to the south, which is bounded by either a low, ivy-grown wall or a hedge that has grown into a mature tree line, both of which contribute to a pleasantly rural and occasionally sylvan character. Mature trees arch over the road from both sides creating a tunnel



No. 8 Dunstan Road



View west along Dunstan Road

effect and channelling views along it to terminal buildings (Manor Farmhouse to the west and the yellow brick cottages at Nos. 41 and 43 St Andrew's Road). The trees in the grounds of Ruskin Hall and the land across the road are notable for their positive contribution to this effect. The coach house at Ruskin Hall and a tall rubblestone wall enclose the road to the north with intermittent gates to properties creating occasional breaks.

The plots to either side of the road are generous, but vary considerably in size reflecting the long and organic process of development in this area. Buildings are generally set well back from the road and, at least partially, screened from view by intervening boundaries and trees. Important exceptions are Lower Farm (No. 8 Dunstan Road) and Manor Farmhouse, which create a pinch point that acts as an arrival point for the built-up part of the village. The prominence of these buildings in the streetscene accentuates their obvious architectural interest. It also illustrates an association with the roadside at the time of their construction that had

been lost by the time later developments were constructed.

Other buildings that stand out include the white painted Inter-War house 'Orchard End' at No. 7 Dunstan Road, which is prominently located on a corner plot at the entrance to Ethelred Court. Although not of outstanding architectural interest, its appearance is faithful to the original design and a good representative of the style of its time. It illustrates the process of the area's development through infill development over the village's orchards during the inter-war years.

The buildings are widely varied in their historic origins, materials and styles. They provide a cross section of the village's development history, including the 1960s experimental architecture of Nos. 10-18 Dunstan Road by Ahrends, Burton and Koralek, referred to by local people by various epithets including the Castle Houses or the Elephant Houses. Although partially hidden from the road by the front boundary wall, the roofline of these buildings is visible and provides a tantalising suggestion of what may lie



View north west from Headington Cemetery

beyond.

The process of villa or mansion building by wealthy Oxford merchants is represented on Dunstan Road by Ruskin Hall (originally The Rookery). Like the village's other mansions, this property preserves the genteel landscape of villa or mansion with associated coach house, walled kitchen garden and pleasure grounds with exotic tree planting, all within the enclosure of a high stone wall. Ruskin Hall is unusual, however, in having been taken up for the use of Ruskin College as a higher education establishment in the mid 20th century. The college is currently in process of moving from its premises in central Oxford, to the Old Headington campus and expects this to be completed by September 2012. The grounds have attractive views northwards over the small fields within the conservation area to the rolling arable countryside around Elsfield in South Oxfordshire.



Orchard End, Dunstan Road

The west and east ends of this character area provide a transition from the surrounding areas. In the west the open spaces of Dunstan Park and Headington Cemetery flank the road. Although mostly lying outside the conservation area, the cemetery provides a wide-open space with broad vistas looking over the Cherwell and Thames valleys, North Oxford and the fringe of the Cotswolds. Landmarks in this view include the tower of St Nicholas' Church in Marston, the spire of the Church of St Philip and St James on Woodstock Road and the Radcliffe Observatory. The cemetery and Dunstan Road also provide views north across Dunstan Park to the

valley of the Bayswater Brook and Elsfield beyond. The thick tree growth largely screens views out from the park. As a relatively recent creation, the railings that provide a boundary to parts of Dunstan Park have yet to gain much historic interest. However, they do make a positive contribution to the character of the area, containing the space with a physical barrier to the roadside that, nevertheless, retains a degree of transparency. The park and cemetery contribute to the buffer of green open space, which separate the village from the surrounding urban development.

In the east the character area contains a group of cottages of late 19th century construction that extend from the end of St. Andrew's Road down Stoke Place Lane. These introduce the more densely built up character of the village centre, as well as illustrating the difference in the housing provision made for the village's working class inhabitants and its wealthy inhabitants, such as the owners of The Rookery and Stoke House in the later 19th century. To the south St Andrew's Road narrows and runs through two bends that create a visual barrier between this area and the rest of St Andrew's Road. St Andrew's House is framed by walls and garden foliage in the view south, with the small triangular green at the entrance to Osler Road adding to the amenity of its setting.

Green Fields

Key Positive Characteristics

- The last remnants of the green fields that once ran up to the edges of the village, now cut off from the countryside by the ring road.
- Views from the public realm across green open spaces with visual connection to the South Oxfordshire countryside beyond the Bayswater Brook.
- Footpaths and sinuous lanes with grass verges and banks and hedgerow boundaries preserve the rural character of the village’s setting.
- The green spaces in this character area are important in views to the conservation area from outside its boundaries.
- The Grange provides another example of the large houses in parkland grounds built by wealthy Oxford merchants in the late 18th and early

19th centuries.

- The green bridleway at Stoke Place was identified as a particularly valued feature by respondents to public consultation on the conservation area appraisal.

This area includes the remnants of the agricultural land on the edges of the historic village, which have been separated from the surrounding landscape



Views East at Barton Lane



Oxford Preservation Trust’s fields at Barton Lane

by the ring road, and contribute to the conservation area's rural character. The land is formed of several small pasture fields, as well as the grounds of The Grange, which were probably enclosed in the early 19th century. Many of these fields were once longer, and appear to fossilise the outline of amalgamated strip fields, but were truncated by the building of the Northern Ring Road during the 1930s, cutting them off from the wider countryside. The fields are enclosed by hedgerows of native tree varieties with occasional taller hedgerow trees, which provide an important wildlife resource, as well as providing structure and vertical interest in views.

Barton Lane runs from the east to the village centre through this area. The lane follows a sinuous course with a series of views opening along its route. These provide a gradual transition from green surroundings including fields on its north side and an orchard with a hedgerow boundary to the north in the east to the built-up frontages of the village centre in the west. The road has steeply banked

green verges to either side, which contribute to its rural character, with a paved footpath running along the top of the bank on the south side. To the north of Barton Lane views are possible across the open fields to the ring road and the South Oxfordshire countryside beyond the Barton housing estates beyond. Oxford Preservation Trust manages some of these fields to preserve their contribution to the village's green setting.

A newly planted orchard on the south side of the road links this area to the green open spaces of Bury Knowle Park to create a green gap that helps separate the village's historic core from the suburban housing to the east.

Stoke Place is continued within this area as an attractive public bridleway running northwards from the Dunstan Road Character Area lined by trees that help green it. The bridleway runs up to the ring road between land owned by Ruskin College and other privately owned fields. To the west, iron railings with an unusual gate form a distinctive boundary to Ruskin

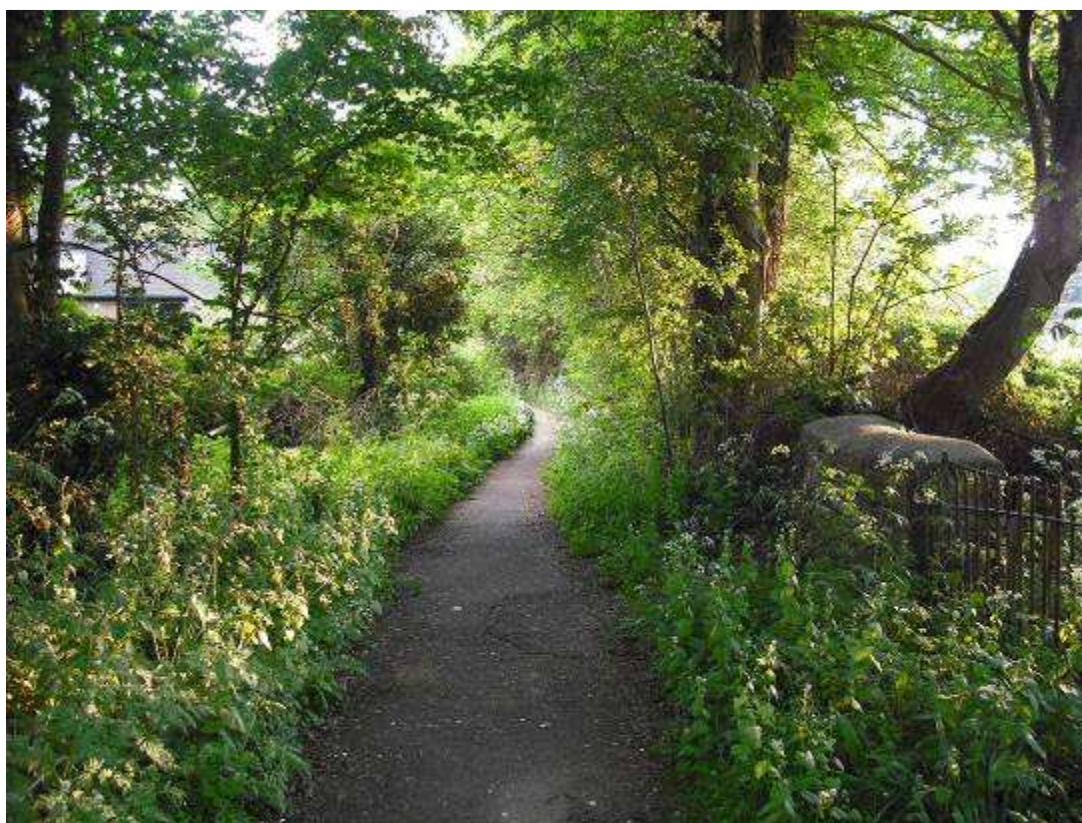


View north west from Stoke Place bridleway

College's land, allowing views across it to the countryside beyond. On the east side of the path a denser screen of foliage encloses the lane, with a small ruined farm building lying in the undergrowth. The ability to walk just a few hundred yards from the tightly enclosed village centre to a point with such a rural character and wide open views over the landscape is an important part of the special character of Old Headington. The path also benefits from greenery of the verge, which includes carpets of flowers of wild garlic, as well as bluebells in late spring. The rural character of the path was highlighted in 29 responses (46 % of the total number) to public consultation on the draft appraisal, which highlighted the rural quality of the bridleway as a key feature of the conservation area.

The ring road and the adjacent footpath and cycleway run along the edge of this area, allowing glimpsed views through the hedgerows and tree-lines up to the village. In particular these views cross the land owned by Ruskin College with Ruskin Hall forming a prominent feature.

In the views to the conservation area from the higher ground north of the Bayswater Brook, the green open spaces in this character area form the setting of some of the village's listed buildings, including St Andrew's Church and Ruskin Hall. The green wedge of space that it creates in these views, running between the built up Barton and Northway estates, illustrates the distinctiveness of the character of Old Headington from its surrounding communities.



Looking south at Stoke Place bridleway

Cuckoo Lane

Key Positive Characteristics

- An historic lane, once the main route between Oxford and Old Headington, now a quiet footpath.
- An attractive tree lined route with glimpsed views between trees across the grounds of the John Radcliffe hospital (formerly Headington Manor).
- Brick bridges crossing the path near Headington House preserve evidence of the link between the House and its parkland
- The route continues to the west of the conservation area.

The narrow footpath of Cuckoo Lane follows the ancient route to Headington recorded as Oxford Way on Corpus Christi's map of 1605. It is divided into two areas of rather disparate character by the course of Osler Road. Its course defined the southern boundary of Headington Manor's park and, consequently, it now

runs along the southern edge of the John Radcliffe Hospital. Having been superseded by the London Road as the main traffic route between Headington and Oxford it now provides a quiet by-way for pedestrians and, unofficially, for cyclists, running from Old High Street to Pullen's Lane in the Headington Hill Conservation Area.

Between Old High Street and Osler Road the course of the footpath was straightened in the 19th century and excavated to run below the ground level of the gardens and parkland of Headington House. This would have allowed the owners of the house to view their estate, including the parkland south of Cuckoo Lane (which has now been developed over), without having to see passing travellers in their vista. The path's sunken course, which is now accentuated by overhanging trees and the fences of adjacent properties, provides visible evidence of the power of these wealthy landowners over the landscape surrounding them in the late 18th and 19th



View west at Cuckoo Lane

centuries. Two low brick bridges cross the footpath and formerly provided access between the garden and park of Headington House, illustrating a relationship in the landscape that has now been lost.

West of Osler Road, Cuckoo Lane runs along the southern edge of the John Radcliffe Hospital. The land next to the path includes the remaining parkland associated with Headington Manor, which includes a belt of mature tree planting, including some attractive oak and beech specimens that may date from the setting out of the parkland in the mid 18th century. This belt of trees continues within the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital but outside the conservation area to the west. Cuckoo Lane continues outside the conservation area alongside Woodlands Road but separated from it by the continuation of the tree belt as a long row of beech trees. A boundary stone on the grass verge next to Cuckoo Lane marks the historic boundary of Oxford City following its expansion in 1889.

Trees and the grass verge next to the footpath make an important contribution to the character of this area both illustrating its historic context and contributing considerably to its visual amenity. The mature broad-leafed trees add height and colour, which changes attractively with the seasons, as well as softening the outline of the surrounding buildings. They also contribute to the rhythm of views along the path. Glimpsed views through gaps in the tree line to the open space at the John Radcliffe Hospital add to the amenity of the route, including a sense of greater openness and illustrate the historic relationship between these two areas.

Negative Features, Issues and Opportunities for Enhancement

A number of features were identified during the survey and consultation for the appraisal as having a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. There were other issues too that give rise to opportunities for enhancement. These might have occurred through the intrusion of new features or activities that are not sympathetic with the character or appearance of the area or through the removal or obscuring of features that contribute positively to it, either intentionally or unintentionally through neglect and accidental damage. These negative features and other issues affecting the character and appearance of the area are set out below. It will be an aim of future management of the conservation to address these issues. Where there is an opportunity for enhancement of the area's character and appearance through remedial works, or changes in management or control, these are noted below.

Intrusiveness of new developments

Most new development has been small scale, with some new buildings standing back from the road sufficiently to reduce their prominence and maintain the visibility of the area's older buildings. The village and the wider environment of Oxford is part of a living working community and further changes are needed to sustain and meet the community's needs

The Barton Area Action Plan

Opportunity Within the City Council's Local Development Framework the Core Strategy has identified the land immediately to the north of the ring road for the development of around a thousand new homes. This will be delivered through the Barton Area Action Plan, which will set the planning policy framework for the site and the surrounding area. The Area Action Plan boundary includes part of Old Headington Conservation Area as an area that is sensitive to change.

The development of this area for housing involves change and will have an impact in the area but also could give rise to opportunities for enhancements. This conservation area appraisal will provide understanding of the character and

appearance of this historic settlement and its setting to inform decisions.

Heavy traffic

The village's road network is not designed for the needs of modern transport and concerns have been expressed through the consultation process about the negative impact of traffic at peak times – noise, movement, appearance. Indeed, the threat of an increase in traffic to the character and appearance of the conservation area was identified in 77% of responses received to the consultation draft of the appraisal. Public concern was expressed that areas with shared surfaces or where pedestrian and cyclists are likely to come into contact with motor vehicles, such as The Croft, Stoke Place and St Andrew's Lane, would be particularly sensitive to any increase in traffic.

The introduction of traffic management measures to slow traffic down can in itself have a harmful impact on the appearance of the village. The impact of intrusive traffic signage at The Croft was highlighted as particularly unfortunate by responses to public consultation.

Impact of on-street parking

On-street parking and associated highway controls throughout the conservation area introduce clutter to views along the streets and draws the eye away from the historic buildings and attractive greenery of gardens and the wider setting. However, the parked cars provide a benefit in slowing passing traffic through the village.

Highways dominated areas

The junction of St Andrew's Road, Old High Street and Barton Lane has acted as an important focal point in the village. This is now a wide, bell mouthed junction with narrow pavements to either side, and a central refuge marked with white line painting. It has a poor appearance due to the highways dominated landscaping, which extends into the bland car park area at The Black Boy public house. This fails to achieve the high quality that is present in the areas with triangular greens at the Croft and Osler Road/St Andrew's Road. As such, this area fails to act as the village centre it might otherwise be. There is an opportunity to enhance this area should funding permit.

Noise from the Ring Road

From some parts of the conservation area the noise of traffic on the northern ring road has an intrusive impact on the tranquillity that is otherwise an important part of its character. This affect was particularly notable at St Andrew's Lane/Larkin's Lane and in the rural fringe area in the north. The development of the Land at Barton is likely to be associated with lower speeds on this stretch of the ring-road and therefore reduced noise in Old Headington.

Speed bumps and traffic signage on Barton Lane

As part of the programme of highways works to reduce use of the village roads as a through route or 'rat-run' for motorists, several speed-bumps, with associated traffic signage, have been introduced along Barton Lane. The signage is mounted on tall, black-painted metal posts on top of the roadside bank. As such, the signs are in the line of sight in views for pedestrians in both directions along Barton Lane and add an unattractive element to the views, which detracts from their otherwise attractive rural character.

Responses to public consultation suggested that the signs are above the line of sight to motorists and not helpful.

Historic paving and street/utility repairs

Whilst the conservation area contains a number of distinguished areas of paving, the majority of footpaths and pavements are covered with black tar macadam, which has weathered to a recessive grey. Throughout much of the area, excavation of cable trenches for services, with subsequent patch repairs, has created snaking ribbons of discordant colour along pavements. This detracts from the quality appearance of the conservation area and, with a clutter of highway signs, adds to the perception that the public realm is not well cared for.

The kerbs to pavements in several areas include local Headington Hardstone slabs set on edge, which vary considerably in size. This natural and local material adds to the rural character of the conservation area and has its own historic interest. These areas are vulnerable to damage, can be difficult to walk on and are difficult and expensive to repair.

Entrance to Headington Car Park

The entrance to the Headington Car Park from Old High Street creates a gap in the street frontage that is filled by features with an urban character, which are at odds with the conservation area's more rural character. This includes a large area of hard surfacing next to the pavement, around which tubular metal posts have been set to prevent the use of this area for car parking. This area also contains a pair of immature alder trees, as well as signage for the car park. The signage has recently been replaced. However, the opportunity remains to enhance this area further by reducing the dominance of hard surfacing.

Loss of detailing

The high level of survival of architectural features, such as original or historic timber framed windows, doors, roofing materials and boundary walls has been noted above as a positive element of the area's character. However, a number of cases of removal of these features (using the permitted development rights of the owners) has resulted in harm to the area's character.

No. 29 Old High Street

No. 29 Old High Street is a medium sized house set within a relatively large garden and dates from the 19th century. It is the first building within the conservation area on the route north along Old High Street and, as a result of its south facing main frontage, stands out in views looking north, indicating the beginning of the historic village area. The building appears not to have been occupied for a considerable period of time and, at present, both it and the boundary wall to Old High Street are becoming increasingly derelict and dilapidated. Some work has recently been undertaken to secure the building and to reduce the growth of scrub in the garden. However, the condition of the building has a serious negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area and poses concern for surrounding neighbours.

Poor design of rear extensions to properties

Due to the intricate network of passageways and lanes running through the conservation area, the rear elevations of buildings are often visible to the public, particularly around The Croft (including the

west side of Old High Street). The desire to enlarge houses has led to numerous extensions to the rear of buildings, which are evident in views through the area. Comment has been raised through consultation that several examples are considered to be out of keeping with the character of historic buildings or the wider setting impacting on views of historic roofscapes, or use of poorly matched materials.

Wheelie bins

Concern has been expressed about the visual impact of wheelie bins when they are stored in front gardens or in full public view. This represents one of the ways the most appropriate means of implementing modern government priorities for efficient and sustainable waste collection need to be considered in protecting the value of the historic environment.

A local concern is the storage of large red wheelie bins at the rear of The White Hart Inn on the highway at The Croft. These conspicuous bins detract from the appearance of the group of listed cottages and listed barn that form the northern side of The Croft. These bins are left on the public highway and mar views to the listed buildings, despite the availability of a building in which they might be stored. At present they intrude into one of the most attractive scenes within the conservation area. It was noted during public consultation that the properties at The Croft have particular difficulty in providing appropriate storage for modern domestic wheelie bins.

Enhancement of Bury Knowle Park's historic landscape

This is a large area and a detailed survey of the park's landscape features is outside the scope of this study. Many of the trees within the parkland must date from the setting out of this area following the enclosure of the fields in 1804/5 and, therefore, are now over two hundred years old. The City Council have undertaken programmes of tree planting, including specimen trees and the groups forming the 'arboretum'. There is an opportunity to build on these early initiatives to enhance the Parks significance and value to the community.

Stables buildings and yard at North Place

The former stables of Bury Knowle are owned by the City Council and were for some time rented to a small film making company. They are currently vacant and disused and, as such, are at risk of deterioration through lack of maintenance, as well as vandalism. The buildings represent a surviving element of the working Bury Knowle landscape. Proposals are in place to find a new use for these buildings. The later 20th century wall to the front of the yard has been noted as a visually intrusive element in responses to public consultation.

Bury Knowle House

The condition of Bury Knowle House was raised as a concern during public consultation, on the draft appraisal. This suggested that maintenance of the interior of the building is required and suggested that both the terrace and the ballroom should be made available for public use in future.

Litter bins at Bury Knowle Park

Another response to public consultation identified the style of bins used at Bury Knowle as an issue because they allow seagulls to scavenge from them, spreading litter across the park.

Setting of Headington Manor

The setting of the listed buildings at Headington Manor has been greatly affected by the construction of the massive, monolithic structures of the John Radcliffe Hospital. Whilst the public benefits provided by the hospital are such that an adverse impact to the setting of the listed buildings might be deemed acceptable, concern has been expressed that the design of the buildings, including their cladding, fenestration and form might have been more sympathetically designed to reduce their intrusion.

Within the open spaces to the south of the Manor House, an area of ornamental planting has been created to screen views of the car park in front of the building. This has now grown to height that obscures the manor house from the parkland, resulting in a loss of most of its contribution to the area's character and appearance. Maintenance, including thinning of this shrub planting would help to restore the building to views across its green open space.

Visual intrusion of the hospital chimney

The incinerator chimney of the John Radcliffe Hospital is a stark and highly visible feature with an industrial appearance that is exacerbated by the discolouration and weather staining of its cladding. Whilst the hospital buildings are generally hidden from sight in much of the conservation area, the chimney rises above the surrounding tree level and can be seen in many views within the conservation area, including those looking westwards along St Andrew's Road and across Bury Knowle Park. It is also very prominent in views into the conservation area, both from the high ground near Elsfield and from the ring road. It is particularly intrusive in the setting of Ruskin Hall in these views.

Security fence between the Cuckoo Lane and John Radcliffe Hospital

Along most of its course between Osler Road and Woodlands Road, Cuckoo Lane is separated from the grounds of the John Radcliffe Hospital by an unsightly chain-link fence. Within the grounds of the hospital, the land adjacent to the path contains a belt of mature deciduous trees, as well as some evergreen hollies, which are well spaced with long grass between and the open grassed lawn of the hospital's parkland beyond. It was noted in one response to public consultation that boundaries on the north side of Cuckoo Lane are also unattractive, reducing the amenity of this historic lane.

Maintenance of roadside verges

Another issue identified by respondents to public consultation included the timing of cutting of grass verges and banks, which should be programmed to allow wildflowers to complete their lifecycle.

Works to trees

Respondents to public consultation raised concern that the felling of trees in the conservation area has had a negative impact on the character of the conservation area, suggesting a large number of trees have been felled in the past few years without suitable replacement planting.

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Appendix: Listed Buildings

The Conservation Area contains a total of forty statutorily listed buildings all of which are considered to be of special historic or architectural interest. These buildings are protected by law and listed building consent is required for any alterations that might affect their special interest. St Andrew's Church is the only building listed Grade II* in recognition of its value as of outstanding importance. The churchyard wall is also listed Grade II. The remaining listed buildings are all rated as Grade II and include the following:

In addition to St Andrew's Church, all the buildings on the south side of St Andrew's Road from No. 10 to No. 16 are listed. These form a group of 17th century houses, including the White Hart Inn, with various sensitive later alterations. The small barn at the rear of the White Hart Inn is listed separately as is the cobbled pavement running along the fronts of Nos. 10 – 14 St Andrew's Road. Listed farmhouses of the seventeenth century include Mather's Farmhouse at Barton Lane, the Manor Farmhouse, Dunstan Road and Church Hill Farm (No. 4), St Andrew's Lane along with the attached cottage and former shop at No. 2 St Andrew's Lane. The barn at Barton Lane is also listed along with the boundary wall to the farmhouse's curtilage. The garden wall at the Manor Farmhouse is also separately listed. No. 8 The Croft also appears to have been a small farmhouse or large cottage of 17th century construction, while The Court, The Croft is also described as a cottage, although it certainly appears to be a grander dwelling. The boundary wall of the latter has been listed separately.

Many of the village's small 18th century cottages are listed, including Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Larkin's Lane, No. 6 St Andrew's Lane, Nos. 9, 11 and 11a The Croft and Nos. 1 and 2 North Place.

Of the various mansion houses that surround the village core, The Rookery (Ruskin Hall) on Dunstan Road, Headington Manor (at the John Radcliffe Hospital), White Lodge (including Sandy Lodge) on Osler Road, Headington House, Old High Street and Bury Knowle House are all also listed along with their subsidiary buildings where these lie within the curtilage of each property. Many of the high boundary walls of the village's mansions are listed in their own right. These include the boundary walls of Headington Manor, White Lodge/Sandy Lodge, Osler Road, Headington House (wall to The Croft), Bury Knowle (wall on London Road and from London Road to North Place) and The Grange (wall to Larkin's Lane including the gate piers). The 'crinkle-crankle' garden wall at Ruskin Hall is also listed. Of the boundary walls of smaller houses, the wall of No. 56 Old High Street, which extends along The Croft, is listed.

Croft Hall is listed as the village's earliest Baptist chapel along with its boundary wall.

Of the later houses in the village surprisingly few are listed. These include the farmhouse at No. 8 Dunstan Road, built circa 1800, the early 19th century pair of symmetrical brick-fronted houses at Nos. 1 and 3 St Andrew's Road and the early 20th century neo-Georgian house and former maltings at No. 69 Old High Street, also known as The Hermitage.