

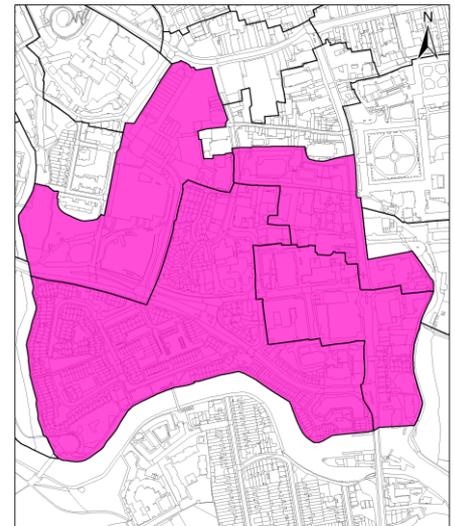
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 10:
THAMES CROSSING - COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITY**

The HUCA is located within broad character Zone C: Thames crossing and floodplain.

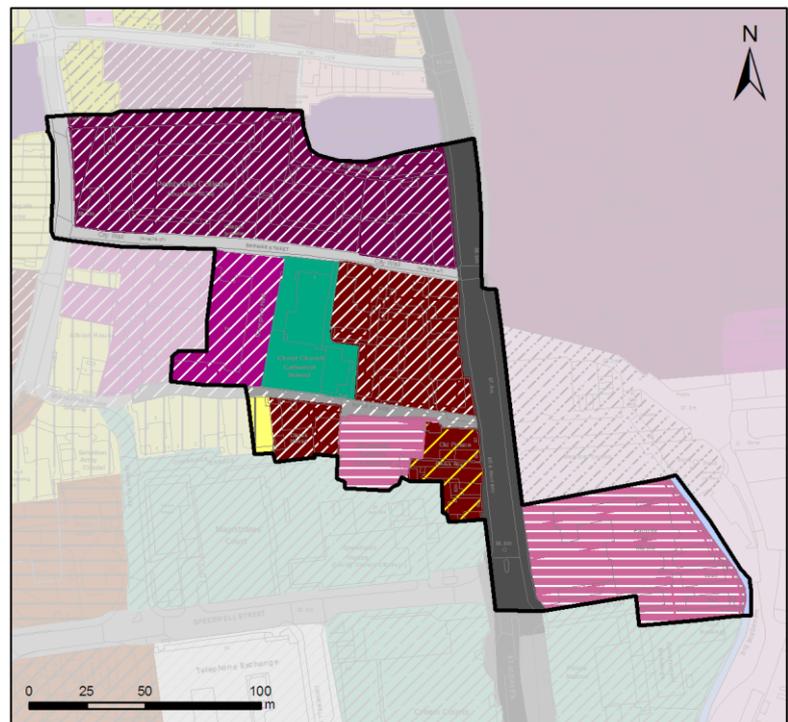
The broad character zone comprises of the southern suburb and the historic route over the Thames floodplain along St Aldates, combined with reclaimed floodplain land south of the medieval town wall. It includes the 1960-70s Westgate shopping centre and car park complex which occupies reclaimed floodplain and encompasses parts of the now largely redeveloped intra-mural and extra-mural parish of St Ebbes.

Summary characteristics

- Dominant period: 16th-19th century.
- Designations: Three Grade I, two Grade II* and nineteen Grade II listings. Section of medieval town wall, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Oxford Central Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Interest: The area has the potential to preserve evidence for Middle and Late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval activity relating to the settlement of historic river crossing route along St Aldates. Specific areas of interest include the remains of the Late Saxon and medieval town defences, Cardinal Wolsey's former 16th century Almshouse and the later 17th century foundation of Pembroke College. The college also has the potential to preserve burial remains of possible Saxon origin based on 18th century observations. The former medieval tenements along Brewer Street and St Aldates have the potential to preserve evidence for brewing, animal management and other commercial activities associated with this part of the town.
- Character: Post-medieval walled college precinct encompassing part of the 13th century town wall, with post-medieval town houses, modern University buildings and areas of modern infilling.
- Spaces: St Aldates is a wide road with expansive views. Narrow high sided lanes lead off St Aldates. The green space within the area is mostly enclosed.



Thames crossing and floodplain (Zone C)
© Crown Copyright and database right 2011. Ordnance Survey 100015048.



© Crown Copyright and database right 2011. Ordnance Survey 100019348.

HUCA 10 OAP Characterisation			
	Townhouses		Mixed Shops/Offices
	Mixed townhouses/shops		Offices post 1945
	Schools & Colleges pre 1945		Water feature
	Civic		Medieval long distance route
	Post Medieval Colleges		Lane
	20th century Colleges		Major road scheme
	University of Oxford Structures		Modern Roads

Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

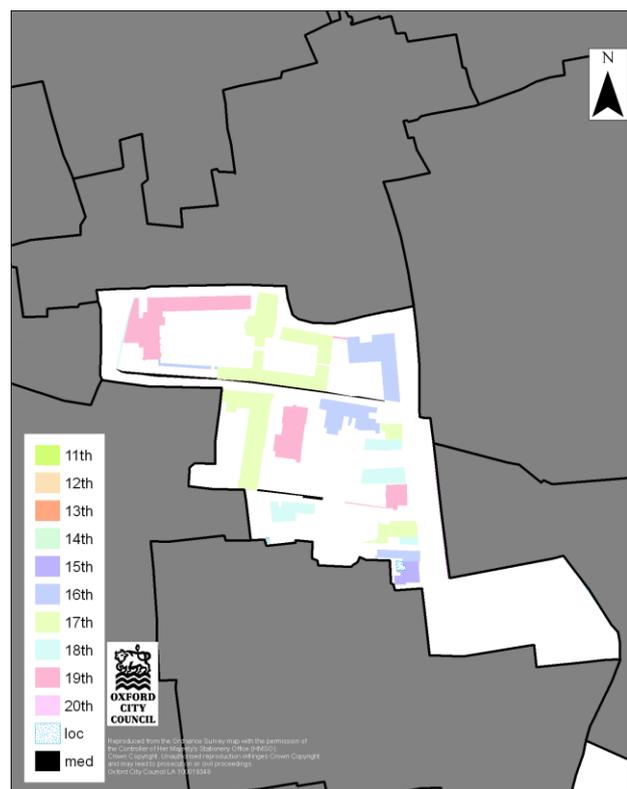
- Road morphology: Straight wide trunk road along route of historic river crossing with narrow historic lanes at right angles.
- Plot Morphology: Poor survival of medieval plots. The area is comprised of the large regular post-medieval quadrangles of Pembroke College, several post-medieval small regular tenements and some large regular modern plots.
- The natural topography of the area is Northmoor First Terrace and Summertown-Radley Terrace, with the floodplain gradually rising from a height of 58m to 61m OD. The alluvial floodplain underlies the city to the south of the character area gradually falling from a height of 58m to 57m OD. The junction between the two terraces follows the southern line of Brewer Street.
- Survival of historic townscape elements:
 - Saxon and medieval street pattern
 - Extant section of the 13th century town wall along the north side of Brewer Street.
 - Part of the Trill Mill Stream runs through this area (historic and Victorian culverted routes).
 - The remains of the medieval Micklem Hall are located within Campion Hall.
 - Several listed post-medieval buildings. The Old Palace on St Aldates, built c1622-8, is a good example of a 17th century narrow fronted house.
 - Post-medieval college.
 - Post-medieval or early modern cobbles in Pembroke Square and Beef Lane.

Description

The Brewer Street character area contains a mixture of post-medieval town houses, enclosed post-medieval and modern college and University buildings. The buildings in this area are largely in educational use. The area includes the walled precinct of post-medieval Pembroke College, the 1930s Catholic College of Campion Hall, townhouses taken over by the colleges and the modern University Faculty of Music.

Pembroke College is located within the historic walled town and retains the high 13th century town wall along its southern boundary. The college buildings are stone-built ranges of three-four storeys. The remaining properties are located south of the walls, on the reclaimed floodplain, either side of the route to the historic river crossing along St Aldates. These include three storey post-medieval town houses and three-to-five storey modern educational and student accommodation buildings.

The plot morphology includes large spacious post-medieval quadrangles and a mixture of mostly rectangular plots of varying sizes and shapes. Aside from the more spacious proportions of Pembroke College and the music faculty development is high density with much infilling and reworking of the earlier medieval tenement plots. Street frontages are mostly continuous with buildings fronting onto-the street. To



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

the east of St Aldates the music faculty is comprised of a series of interlinked three storey ranges with low roofs disguising the upper floors, these ranges are set within an open grassed plot partially enclosed by semi-mature trees.

St Aldates forms the main north-south axis of the city linking the central cross roads at Carfax to the north with the Thames crossing to the south. Historic lanes run off St Aldates to the west and Floyd's Row, a former pre-Victorian tenement yard now a modern access road, runs off the west. The Trill Mill Stream bounds the character area to the east and its culverted channel runs below Rose Place.

Historical value- means of connecting with the past

The north-south route of St Aldates, running over the gravel terrace and down to the crossing point over the Thames floodplain, may yet prove to have a prehistoric origin. By the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age much of St Aldates would have been an area of reed swamp containing a series of braided channels of the Thames. In the Roman period the deposition of alluvium gradually began to cover this landscape and by the Middle Saxon period there is evidence of timber structures and a causeway linking islands between the channels. St Aldates became a focus for settlement in the middle-Saxon period. In the 7th or 8th century the Minster or monastery of St Frideswides was established in the vicinity of the current 12th century priory church which now serves as Oxford Cathedral. Subsequently in the late 9th or early 10th century a defended burh was established at Oxford. The town passed between West Saxon, Mercian and Viking and became both a point of friction, contact and trade between these groups. Following the Norman Conquest a stone causeway known as the Grandpont was built along the line of the former River Crossing, demonstrating the commercial value of the routeway.

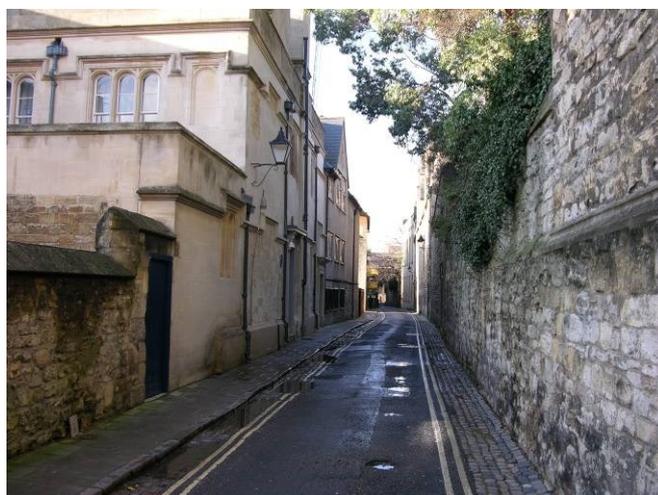
The precise character of Late Saxon and Norman defences in this part of the town is not well understood. In the 13th century the existing wall was replaced, although there is no evidence for an associated ditch in this area. By the 13th century a pattern of long narrow tenement plots along St Aldates had established on the reclaimed floodplain. Further tenements were established along the line of Brewer Street. The western character area boundary includes a stretch of Littlegate Street, including the site of the former medieval Littlegate, which provided historic access to the Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) located further to the south.

Within the walled town six academic halls are recorded on Beef Hall Lane in the 14th century, including Broadgates Hall, which was later incorporated into Pembroke College. To the south of the wall Brewer Street, also known as 'Sleying Lane' and was notably occupied in the medieval period by brewers and butchers. Part of Micklem Hall, a late medieval tenement associated with Brewing in the post-medieval period, is incorporated into the present Campion Hall on Brewer Street.

Pembroke College was founded in 1624 and incorporated the former Almshouse belonging to Christ Church College. The college also incorporates a stretch of the late-medieval street network, Beef Lane, which was legally enclosed in 1960.

In the Victorian period rows of small low status terraced houses developed in the rear yards of properties fronting onto St Aldates (for example Floyd's Row). These houses and cottages have now been demolished.

The character area enables the appreciation of the medieval street grid and the early 13th century economic success of the town, reflected by investment in the town wall. The area also provides an insight into the renewed dynamism of the town and University in the 17th century with the

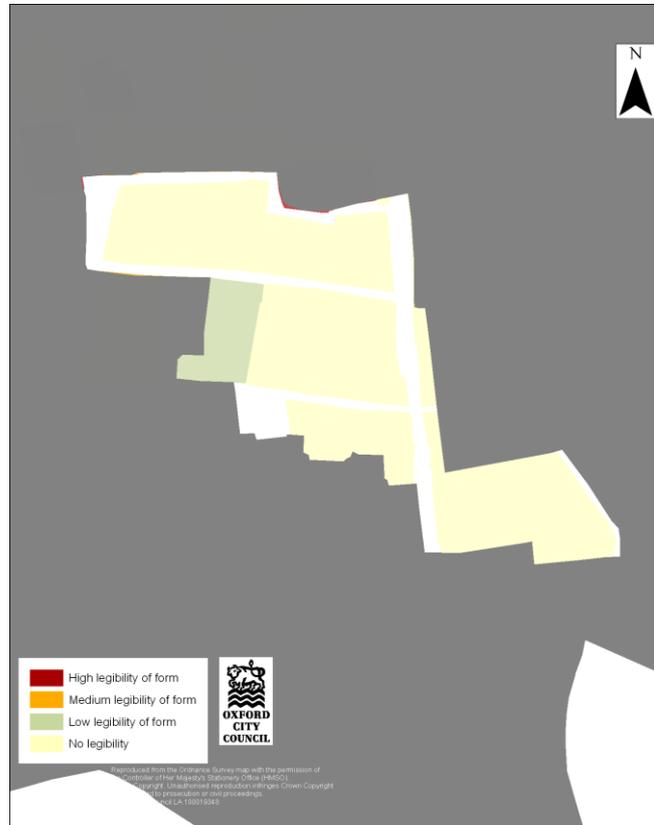


View west along Brewer Street

foundation of Pembroke College and extensive new construction and redevelopment of townhouses. The row of characteristic medieval townhouses fronting onto St Aldates, with stuccoed Georgian facades, are a reminder of the domestic character of the street before the 20th century redevelopment and the dominance of educational and commercial buildings.

Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence

The character area has the potential to preserve Middle and Late Saxon, medieval and post medieval remains including waterlogged deposits. The Urban Archaeological Database records fifty archaeological events within the character area. Previous investigations have allowed the development of a detailed cross-section model for the Thames Crossing at St Aldates. Excavations have recorded evidence for channel management and Saxon flax retting (the soaking of flax to release the fibres for weaving) and leather working on St Aldates and the possible remains of a Late Saxon turf rampart has been noted along the line of the later 13th century defences on Brewer Street. Medieval evidence has been recorded at several locations in the character area including 13th century remains on the site of Broadgates Hall. Post-medieval college remains have been recorded with finds including tankards, plates, glass bottles and phials.



Assessment of medieval tenement survival

Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation

The wide thoroughfare of St Aldates retains long important views of Christ Church, along the narrow side streets (e.g. Brewer Street and Rose Place) and across Pembroke Square.

A row of attractive Georgian fronted town houses survive on St Aldates. The long narrow high sided Brewer Street, with the partially rebuilt 13th century wall along its northern frontage, is an evocative space with eastward views onto the external southern tower of Christ Church Tom Quad. Pembroke College is an attractive arrangement of post medieval quadrangles and walled garden. Aside from the Pembroke College buildings notable structures include the 17th century 'Old Palace' and Champion Hall, constructed between 1935-7 to a design by Edwin Lutyens.

Most road surfaces are tarmac although areas of cobbles survive on Beef Lane and in Pembroke Square, adding to the character of the area. Pembroke College and the Faculty of Music retain low building density with spacious



Rose Place (Old Palace to the left)

quadrangles and grounds which constitute the only notable areas of open space in the character area.

Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

The area has value as part of the St Aldates thoroughfare forming the southern access to the city. St Aldates is popular with visitors being the link with the centre, the Thames, Christ Church and its public gardens and other attractions such as restaurants, café's and shops located on the western street frontage. Brewer Street and Rose Place provide evocative narrow lane access to the city's west end and access to the medieval town wall. Access to Pembroke College is limited and there are no external viewing points into the quadrangles. The faculty of Music includes the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments which is open to the public.

Version: 18/2/2012

