

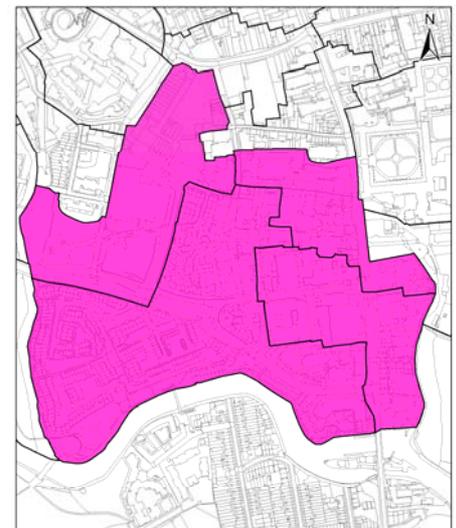
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 10:
THAMES CROSSING - COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITY**

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

Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

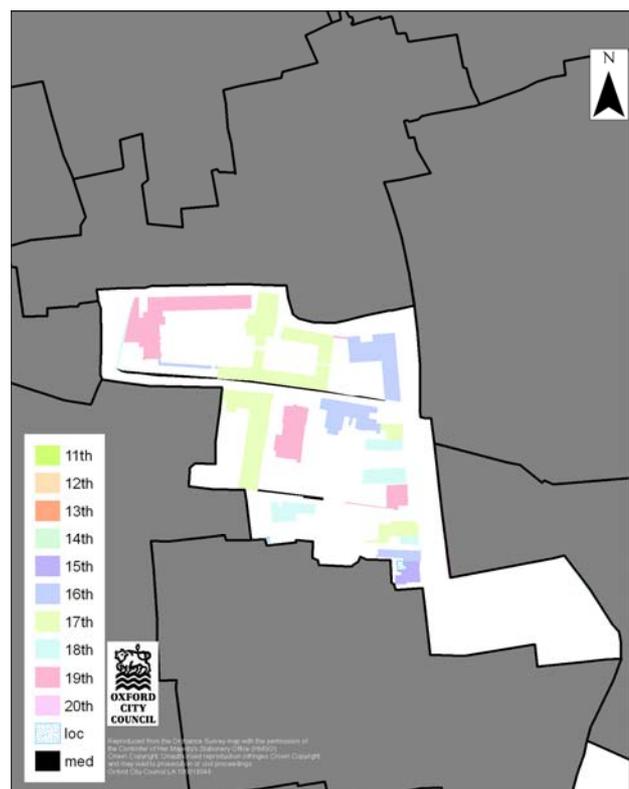
- Road morphology: Straight wide trunk road along route of historic river crossing with narrow historic lanes at right angles.
- Plot Morphology: Poor survival of medieval plots. The area is comprised of the large regular post-medieval quadrangles of Pembroke College, several post-medieval small regular 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 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

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.

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