

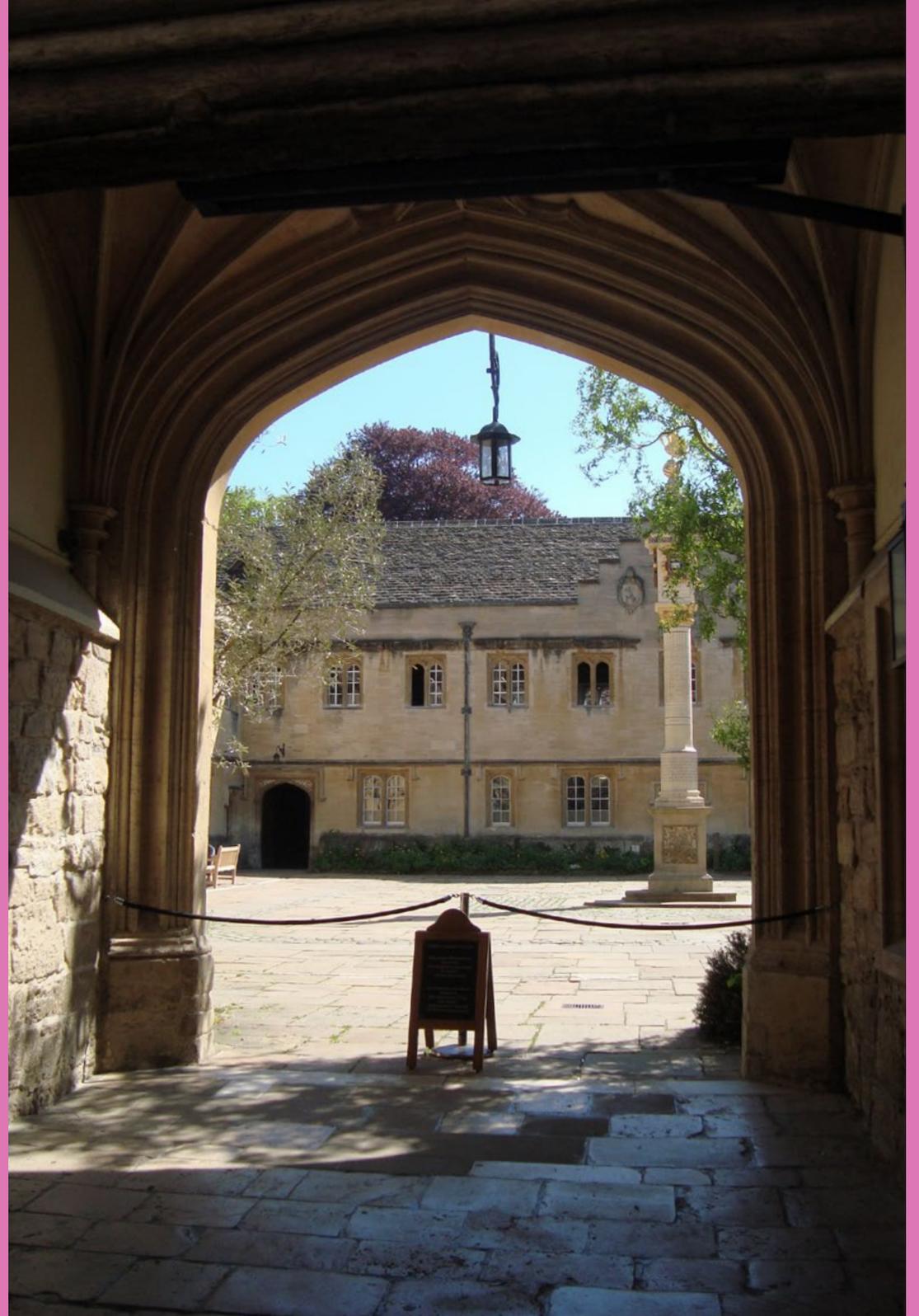
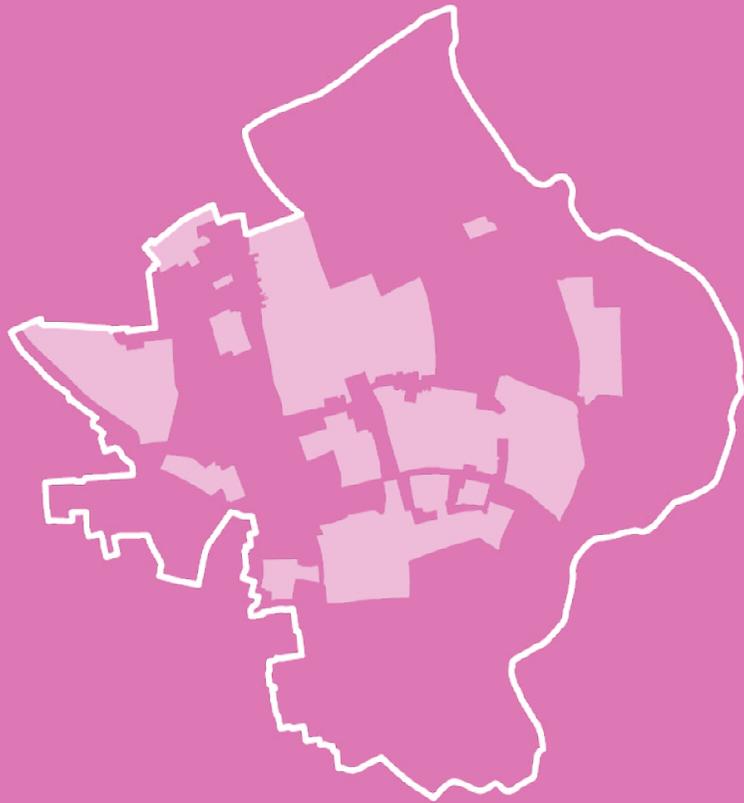
Character Zone Assessment 4

College Architecture

Oxford Central (City & University) Conservation Area

Zone includes:

- Early foundations within the medieval walls (Sub-zone 1)
- Early foundations outside the medieval walls (Sub-zone 2)
- Modern foundations from the mid nineteenth century onwards (Sub-zone 3)



College Architecture Character Zone Oxford Central (City & University) Conservation Area

The Conservation Area Appraisal divides the Conservation Area into nine character zones. This chapter contains a detailed analysis of one of these: the College Architecture Character Zone. It can be used to understand the history, character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, and to inform planning application and development proposals.

This Conservation Area Appraisal aims to promote and support developments that are in keeping with, or enhance, the character of the Central (City & University) Conservation Area. This section is concerned with the reasons for designation, defining the qualities that make up its special interest, character and appearance. It is not possible to describe every facet of the area that contributes positively to its character. The omission of any reference to a particular building, feature, space or positive contributor should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest. Additional positive contributors will be identified through the development management process.

Contents

4.1	An overview of character and special interest
4.2	Early foundations within the medieval walls (Sub-zone 1)
4.3	Early foundations outside the medieval walls (Sub-zone 2)
4.4	Modern foundations from the mid C19th onwards (Sub-zone 3)
4.5	Further useful information

Icons

Throughout, icons direct you to relevant sections of the Conservation Area Appraisal and links to other relevant documents.

-  relevant layers of the conservation area map / GIS mapping
-  relevant character themes in the appraisal
-  relevant sections in the appraisal
-  suggestions for further reading
-  information relevant for planning
-  sources of further information

Maps

The maps below are extracts from the Conservation Area mapping set, which consists of layers of useful information ranging from archaeology and historic maps to green space, listed buildings and street materials. Please note that maps may not show the full extent of listed buildings and do not show curtilage-listed structures. If you are unsure if your building is listed check the National Heritage List for England and seek the advice of the City Council's Urban Design and Heritage Team.

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4.1 Overview of character and significance

The colleges contribute more to the exceptional architecture and world famous townscape of Oxford than any other single factor: through sheer extent, history and continuity of use, range and age of architecture, gardens and distinctive planning.

The vast majority of college are located within the Conservation Area: 34 in all, including all the historic foundations. Taken together they occupy approximately half of the developed land in the Conservation Area. Though inevitably their character varies, there is a consistency across a number of key characteristics which identify these groups of buildings as colleges. These consistent, recognisable identifying characteristics are:

- The arrangement or organisation of buildings - linear ranges set around quadrangles
- A defensive boundary that encloses private space
- Typical recognisable functions
- A common use of materials – a golden limestone typically cut as ashlar blocks
- Extensive, designed gardens including areas of lawn as well as parkland and meadow

Three broad sub-zones have been identified for the purposes of characterising the Conservation Area:

Sub-zone 1: Early Foundations within the medieval walls, which are densely planned and inward looking (building complexes with gardens)

Sub-zone 2: Early foundations outside the medieval walls, with much larger grounds and open aspect (buildings set in grounds)

Sub-zone 3: Modern foundations from the mid nineteenth-century onwards, inserted into the expanded city. Compact and often inward looking.

These zones are shown on the map on the following page.

Other aspects of the zone that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area include:

Townscape and architecture:

- A harmonious and picturesque balance of, on the one hand, commonality - materials, plan form, lawns and gardens – and, on the other, variety – age, style, scale, detail.
- A world famous roofscape and skyline, arguably the most acclaimed and recognised in the UK.

History:

- Exceptional academic and scientific advancement across eight centuries.
- Association with historically significant figures and acclaimed literature and art.

The principal aspects of the zone that harm character and appearance are:

- Restricted public access.
- Lifeless streets.
- Any development that conflicts with the established character described here.

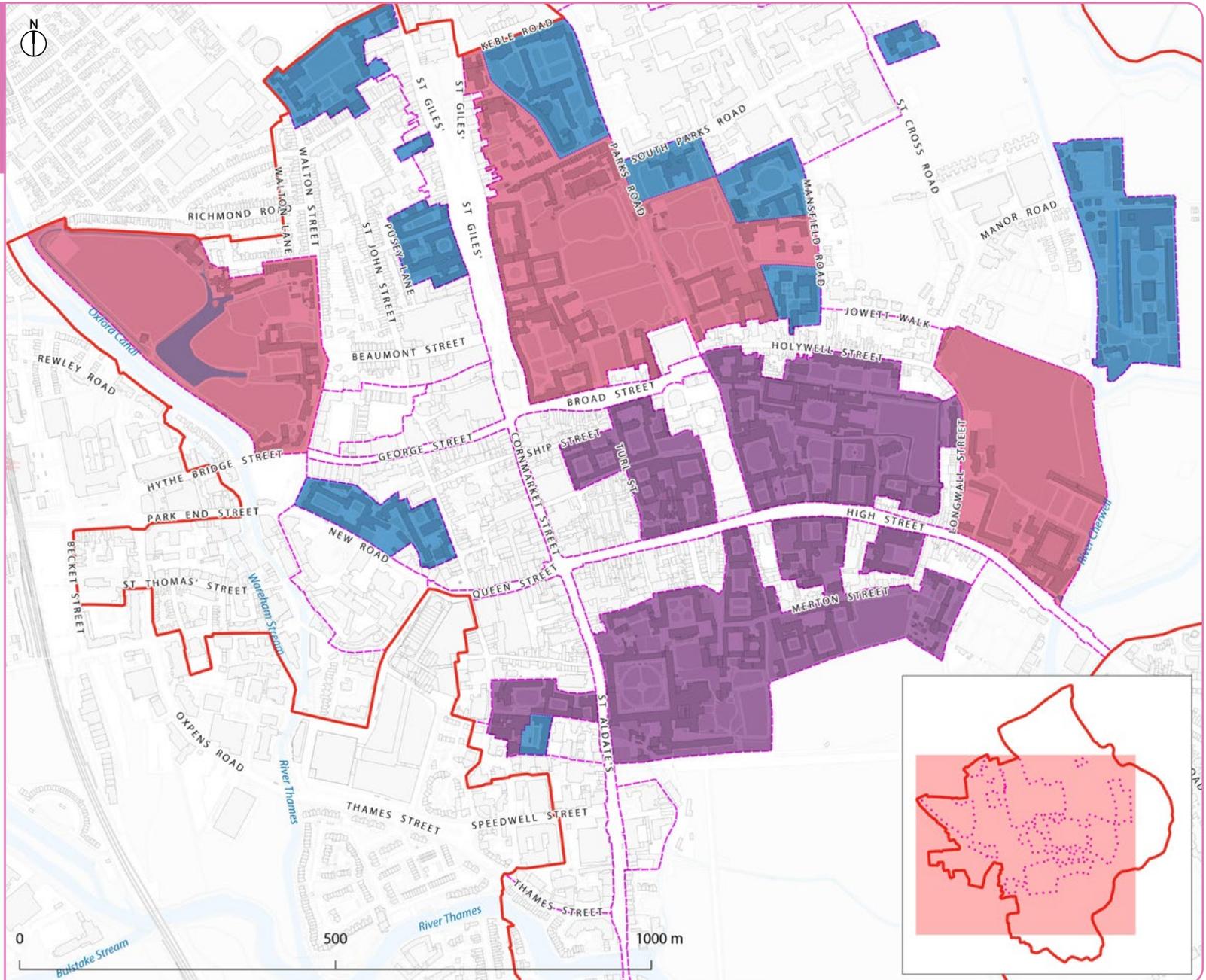


View of Brasenose College Old Quad, showing typical college architecture characteristics of a large urban block with defensive perimeter and tightly controlled access

Overview College Architecture

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls
-  Sub-zone 2: Early foundations outside the medieval walls
-  Sub-zone 3: Modern foundations from the mid nineteenth century onward



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4.2 Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls

4.2.1 History



Medieval defences
Survival of medieval plot outlines
Salters Plan
1879 Ordnance Survey map



Theme 2: university
Theme 5: religion
Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles
Theme 17: post-war architecture

Early history

- Colleges emerged as distinct places in the thirteenth century, gradually replacing the halls which had provided accommodation for students in the town.
- The earliest foundations still extant are University College, Merton College, and Balliol College, all founded in the thirteenth century. They differed from halls because they were endowed, often generously, giving them financial independence and enabling them to develop their sites.
- Colleges were academic communities intended to further the education of groups of scholars by providing them with accommodation, meals, libraries and seclusion for study. They also had a religious function in saying Masses for the souls of Founders and benefactors; therefore the chapel formed a core part of the medieval college and monasteries influenced the development of college form and architecture.

Development of the quadrangle

- Merton College's Mob Quad is the earliest complete example of an Oxford quad, developed piecemeal between c.1300-80 and gradually combining into a quadrangle around a central open space.
- The form was perfected at New College (founded 1379), where the Great Quadrangle was conceived as a coherent architectural whole: chapel and hall were arranged back-to-back on the north side of the quadrangle, with a library at first floor in the east range and a gate-tower containing the Warden's Lodgings forming a focal point over the entrance of the quad, with the remaining ranges providing bedrooms and study cubicles.
- This served as a model for collegiate architecture down to recent times.

Expansion

- The expulsion of the Jewish community in 1290 and the decline of the town following Black Death in the 1340s enabled colleges to buy up cheaper land in the east and south of the walled town, gradually colonising these areas between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.
- Although there was a hiatus in college foundations between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a significant phase of expansion and rebuilding in existing colleges during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries e.g. Oriel College quad (1637-42), Queen's College front quad (1710-19); Christ Church Tom Tower (1681) and Peckwater Quad (1707-14).
- In the nineteenth century, Victorian university reforms and increase in numbers of subjects offered led to a corresponding increase in undergraduates, with numbers doubling in a century. This prompted a significant phase of college building, such as at Exeter College (Broad Street range, Chapel and Rector's Lodgings, all by Scott, 1850s), New College Holywell Street buildings (Scott, 1872) and Brasenose New Quad (T G Jackson, 1889).
- Student numbers expanded again in the twentieth century, with many colleges adding post-war accommodation blocks.
- The desire to provide updated accommodation and new facilities has led to development such as Jesus College (Northgate House) and Lincoln (Berrow Foundation building).

4.2.2 Character overview



College character; Historic urban characterisation



Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

Colleges founded within the walled medieval city are characterised by their compact plan and defensive perimeters.

They contain elements ranging in date from the thirteenth to the twenty-first centuries, exhibiting a corresponding range of architectural styles. Nevertheless, they share core characteristics:

- Occupy large plots, often entire urban blocks.
- Inward looking behind clearly defined boundaries more often formed of long building facades than high stone walls. This creates separation from the town but also other colleges.
- Imposing, institutional buildings with a distinctive architectural language, consistent but limited articulation. There is a principal range usually facing onto the street, but otherwise faces inwards.
- A clearly defined entrance marker, usually a gateway beneath a turret or tower (e.g. Christ Church, Merton, Jesus).
- Core functions of chapel, hall, and library set around a quadrangle, with secondary quads for accommodation clustered around staircases.
- A hierarchy of formal lawns, gardens and yards with degrees of restricted access.



New College Great Quadrangle, the model for subsequent collegiate architecture

4.2.3 Use and access



Public access to green spaces



Theme 2: University

Theme 5: religion

Theme 19: public space

Theme 11: living

- Colleges are educational and residential.
- All have a chapel with regular services which are open to the public.
- Most colleges offer some controlled public access at set times, including for events such as concerts and talks.
- A few colleges have longer opening hours but charge for entry (e.g. Christ Church, New College).
- Some offer summer courses, conferences and accommodation to let.



Clearly defined main entrance to Merton College, with gatehouse and turrets

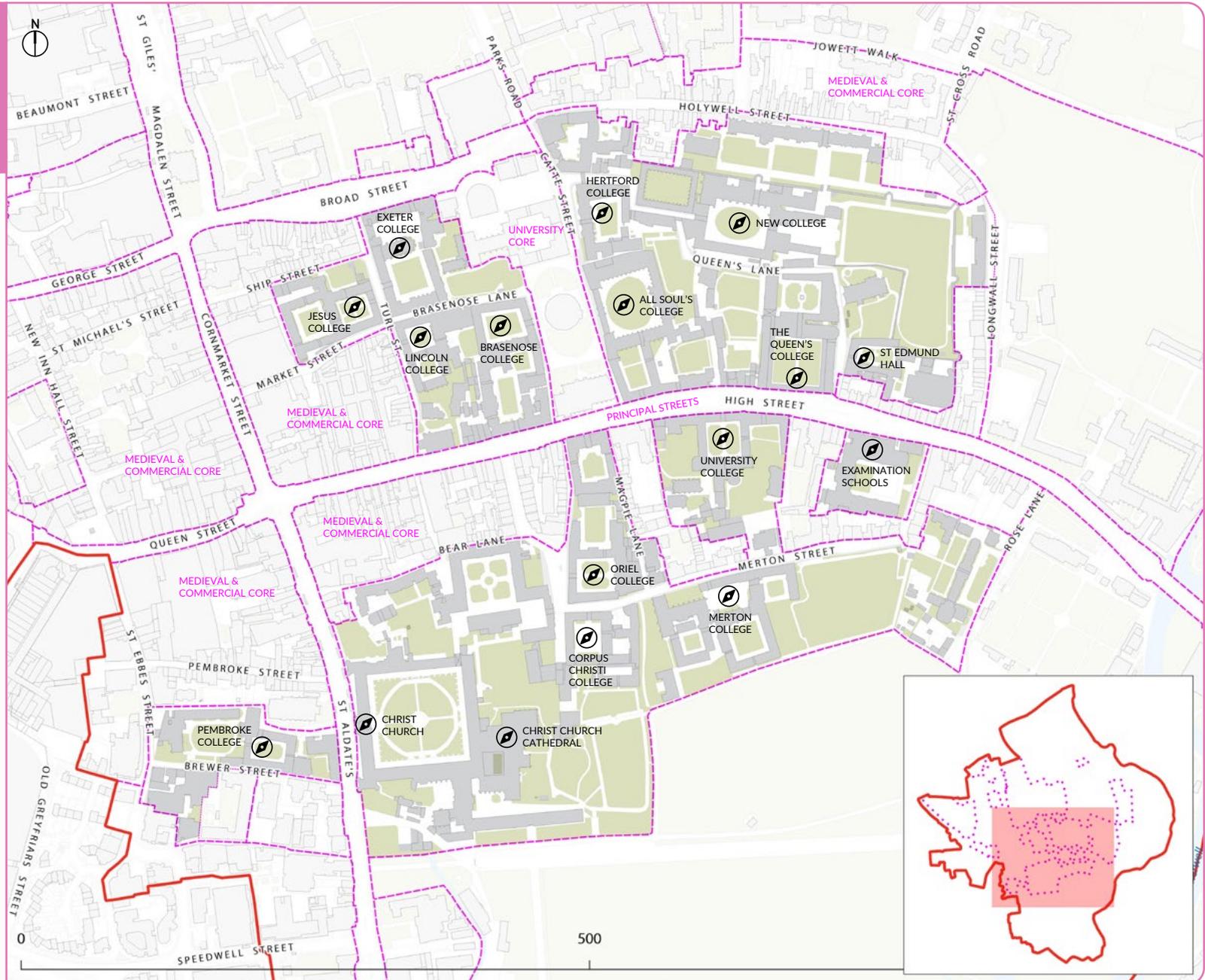
Overview

College Architecture

Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Neighbouring character zones
-  Reference point



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4.2.4 Streets and townscape



Saxon and medieval streets; Public access to green spaces



Theme 18: street layout of the Saxon burh

Theme 19: public space

Theme 20: medieval plots

Street pattern and public spaces

- Some of the most picturesque streets in the city centre are surviving medieval lanes flanked by college buildings or building ranges, such as New College Lane, Magpie Lane and Brasenose Lane. These are restricted to the passage of motor vehicles, enabling the preservation of their tranquil and historic character.
- There are lanes such as Beef Lane and Logic Lane that have been absorbed into college precincts as these have expanded, although Logic Lane is still a public through-route during daylight hours.
- The zone is characterised by the scarcity of public space, but college gardens supply green glimpses.



New College Lane, a historic street

Plots and buildings lines



Medieval plot boundaries; Building lines and gaps



Theme 6: land ownership

Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

Theme 20: medieval plots

- Colleges established within the medieval town have mostly destroyed evidence of the narrow medieval tenement plots by merging them into much larger blocks.
- These blocks are characterised by long unbroken, defensive perimeters consisting of architecturally impressive building frontages, pierced occasionally by gatehouses and gateways and long runs of high wall, enclosing gardens and yard. Typically, they sit at the back edge of the pavement like the medieval tenements they replaced.
- Though the effect at street level can sometimes be lifeless and overpowering, mostly it adds a distinctive charm and texture derived from:
 - architectural animation: gateways and tower, projecting bays, lively rooflines, the arrangement of windows, mouldings and many other details
 - variations in the building line: some colleges are set back c.1-2m, often behind cobbles or railings; some buildings disrupt the prevailing building line such as Merton College's former Warden's Lodging on Merton Street, which occupies a much larger, detached plot than its neighbours and is set back from the street, giving a sense of openness
 - a glimpse of the spaces beyond the college, soften streets and create openings in the skyline such as the view from Merton's walls to the Meadows beyond.

Pavements and street materials



Street materials



Theme 14: materials

- A good survival of historic materials on lanes and squares by colleges contributes strongly to these atmospheric streetscapes, such as:
 - Brasenose Lane (retains the pattern of its medieval central gutter)
 - cobbles along Merton Street
 - stone setts and cobbles in New College Lane and Logic Lane
 - york stone paving, stone kerbs and stone setts with cobbles at west end of Pembroke Square and along Beef Lane (now absorbed into Pembroke's precincts)
 - a mixture of stone setts, cobbles and York stone paving in Oriol Square.
- Some sections are in poor condition. For example, uneven surfaces, missing cobbles and poor quality tarmac repairs in Merton Street detract from the appearance of this Grade II listed street.



The historic street surface of Merton Street is marred by missing cobbles and poor quality repairs

Street furniture

Many of the streets of this zone are narrow and have limited street furniture, but what does exist is often historic and an important contribution to the strong streetscape character:

- Handsome historic examples of wall-mounted street lanterns can be found on streets such as Merton Street and Brewer Street.
- Streets lamps are mostly of appropriate design and many are fixed to buildings, creating picturesque detail and reducing street-side clutter.
- Unightly, excessive and out of date traffic control measures intrude into the historic character of some streetscapes, such as Oriol Square.



The character of Oriol Square is harmed by the unightly traffic control measures

4.2.5 Green space



Public access to green spaces



Theme 25: green space

- The contradiction of Oxford city centre is that a large percentage of it consists of high quality green space, much of which is not freely accessible or only glimpsed in the occasional view. A high percentage of this is college lawns and gardens.
- These private spaces lend the value of their green to the streets and public spaces in glimpsed views and visible street canopies. In this way, college gardens play a vital role by supplying greenness, biodiversity, smells and sounds that soften the predominantly hard urban realm of the city centre.
- There are numerous examples, such as the Fellows' Garden at Exeter which creates a green backdrop to Radcliffe Square, the footpath to the meadows between Corpus Christi and Merton College, Christ Church's mature horse chestnut on St Aldate's and Queen's College's sycamore on the High Street, described by Thomas Sharp in *Oxford Replanned* (1948) as 'one of the most important in the world: without it this scene would suffer greatly'.
- Once inside a college, the gardens are very well tended, usually in the English garden tradition with herbaceous beds and green lawns and the atmosphere is green and tranquil. Changing traditions are enabling individual expression such as the naturalistic gardens at Corpus Christi.



Green glimpses of Exeter's Fellows' Garden from Radcliffe Square soften the streetscape

4.2.6 Buildings



Designations



Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

Theme 14: materials

Theme 15: architectural details

Theme 17: postwar architecture

The architecture of the colleges is an exceptional grouping of internationally important quality, quantity and rarity.

Date

Most colleges are characterised by significant building phases from many different centuries. For example, at Christ Church:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| • Sixteenth century | East, south and west ranges of Tom Quad |
| • Seventeenth century | North range of Tom Quad |
| • Eighteenth century | Peckwater Quad |
| • Nineteenth century | Meadow Buildings |
| • Twentieth century | Blue Boar Quad and Picture Gallery |



Christ Church contains buildings covering five centuries, including this Grade II* listed twentieth-century range along Blue Boar Lane

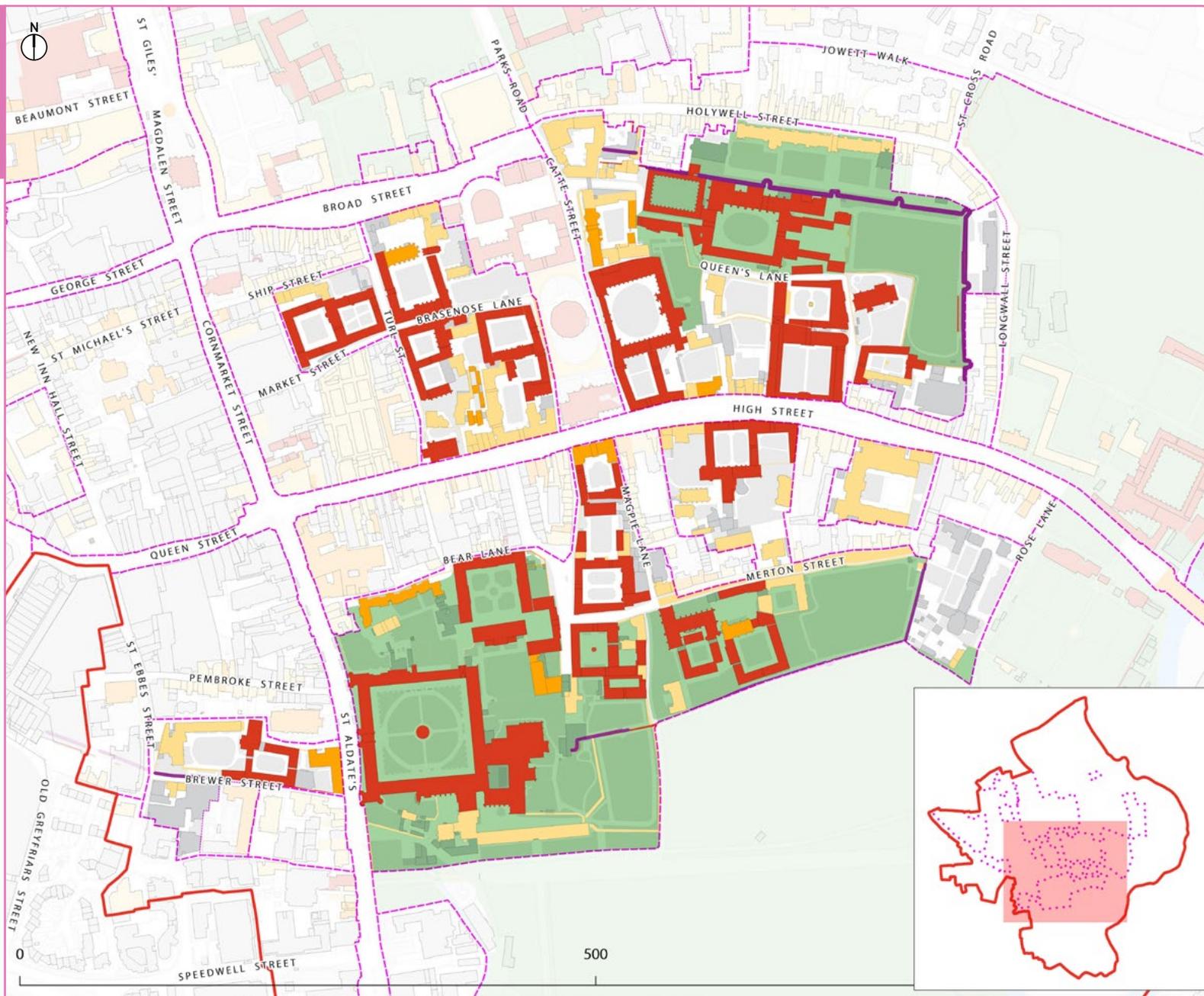
Designations

College Architecture

Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Grade I listed
-  Grade II* listed
-  Grade II listed
-  Scheduled monument
-  Registered parks and gardens



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The Quadrangle

- The medieval quadrangle has endured as the defining layout of college precincts. A principal quadrangle typically contains gateway, chapel, dining hall and library, plus accommodation for Fellows and students. Later quadrangles tend to be almost wholly residential. Each element is identifiable through its expressed architecture with many similarities between colleges:
 - the chapel has large (often Gothic) windows
 - the hall is often similar but secondary to the chapel (for example at New College, where the hall and chapel are arranged back-to-back, but the hall windows are smaller)
 - the medieval library is on the first floor with small, regularly-spaced windows and
 - the accommodation is characterised by the paired windows of 'sets', with a large study and small sleeping alcove.
- The different ways these elements are arranged around quadrangles gives each college its distinctive character.

Twentieth century

- Most colleges have at least one building or range erected since the First World War, to house the significant expansion in student numbers. Most were built on gardens and yards.
- Some colleges were sophisticated architectural patrons, who commissioned leading architects of the day. The best of these have been listed for their architectural interest, such as the Rhodes Buildings at Oriel College (1909–11 by Basil Champneys, Grade II*) and Staircases 16, 17 & 18 at Brasenose College (1961 by Powell and Moya, Grade II*).
- Twentieth century buildings may be an expression of the architectural style of the day or of technological innovation such as the use of structural concrete and the expressed structural frame. However they are frequently an expression of the architectural philosophy of the particular practice or architects and have been chosen by the college or its patron for that reason. A wide variety of architectural styles can be seen in buildings of this period. They tend to be the best examples of their type (collegiate architecture) both nationally and internationally and are given appropriate statutory recognition.

Twenty-first Century

- The use of particular architectural practices has continued into the twenty-first century work. Buildings of this period are usually the result of design competitions involving not only architects but also landscape architects, structural engineers and other team members. The environmental credentials of these buildings plays strongly in the mix both in terms of the building's performance but also the sourcing of materials and the methodologies employed. The demands for new buildings has been in order to update the existing facilities but also to provide new facilities for colleges as the student and fellow cohort demands. (Queens College–Library – Corpus– lecture theatre – Pembroke – new buildings). Designs have been highly inventive making optimum use of very small areas of land with increasing use of basement or semi-basement space.



Historic detail (e.g. pinnacles, oriel windows) and use of warm golden ashlar are defining characteristics of historic college buildings

Materials

- Warm golden ashlar limestone is one of the principal unifying elements of the college townscape. Most colleges were constructed of local oolitic Oxford stone (Wheatley or Headington) with Taynton dressings. By the mid-nineteenth century many buildings were suffering from severe decay and were re-faced in Bath or Clipsham stone (a Lincolnshire limestone).
- The palette expanded enormously in the twentieth century with non-local and newly developed materials, including Portland stone and concrete at Christ Church, exposed concrete frame and sheet glass at Corpus Christi (Magpie Lane block), copper roofing at Oriel College (Rhodes building extension) and buff brick at Queen's College (Carrodus Quad).
- The twenty-first century has seen a return to the use of more traditional materials now used in less conventional ways. For example, expensive stone, which was often used as a facing material, has now been hung on metal cladding frames. Sourcing materials has become more environmentally responsible and advances in materials technology has created greater efficiency in use and performance.

Details

- Historic detail (normally of functional origin) creates a joyfully rich texture, including pinnacles, gargoyles, oriels, etc.
- The best modern buildings are detailed just as carefully in order to create a similar aesthetic enjoyment. This includes the use of the expressed structural frame through the work of Powell and Moya in a number of colleges.
- Windows are hugely important to articulating and animating façades: mullioned (either original or nineteenth century recreations), timber sliding sashes (from c. 1700) and more recently sheet glass. The reflectivity of glass has a considerable impact on character and the setting of adjacent buildings.
- Sheet glass, where windows are a principal element of the building façade and the use of gaps between the buildings and building frames has become more common.

4.2.7 Positive contributors



Theme 14: materials

Theme 15: architectural details

- The majority of college buildings are listed, many at a high grade, reflecting their outstanding historic and architectural interest.
- Unlisted buildings that contribute to character typically use sympathetic materials and massing and have good detailing (e.g. New College Library (1939, Sir Hubert Worthington); the Berrow Foundation building at Lincoln College (2016, Stanton Williams)).
- Due to the constraints of their sites, most colleges within the medieval walled city have very limited space for new buildings. Some buildings are of lesser architectural interest, making an insignificant contribution to the street, the significant surroundings or simply fail to respect the value of the existing college buildings, (Pembroke College library – Martin 1974) abutting hard against east range of Old Quad.

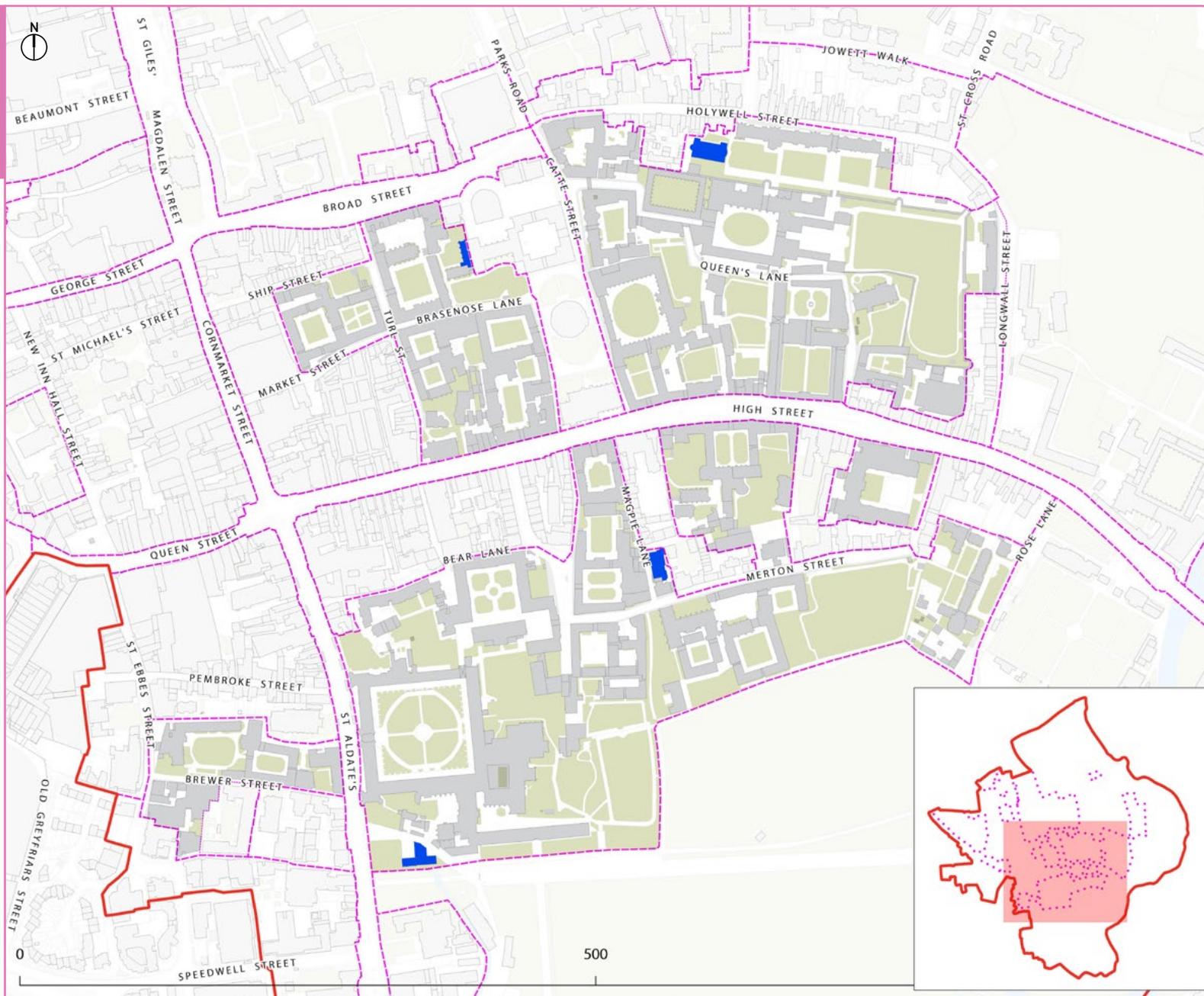
Positive contributors

College Architecture

Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Positive contributor (non-designated)



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Roofscape

College Architecture

Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls

Key

Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary

Building heights

0m

5m

10m

15m

20m

Flat roofs

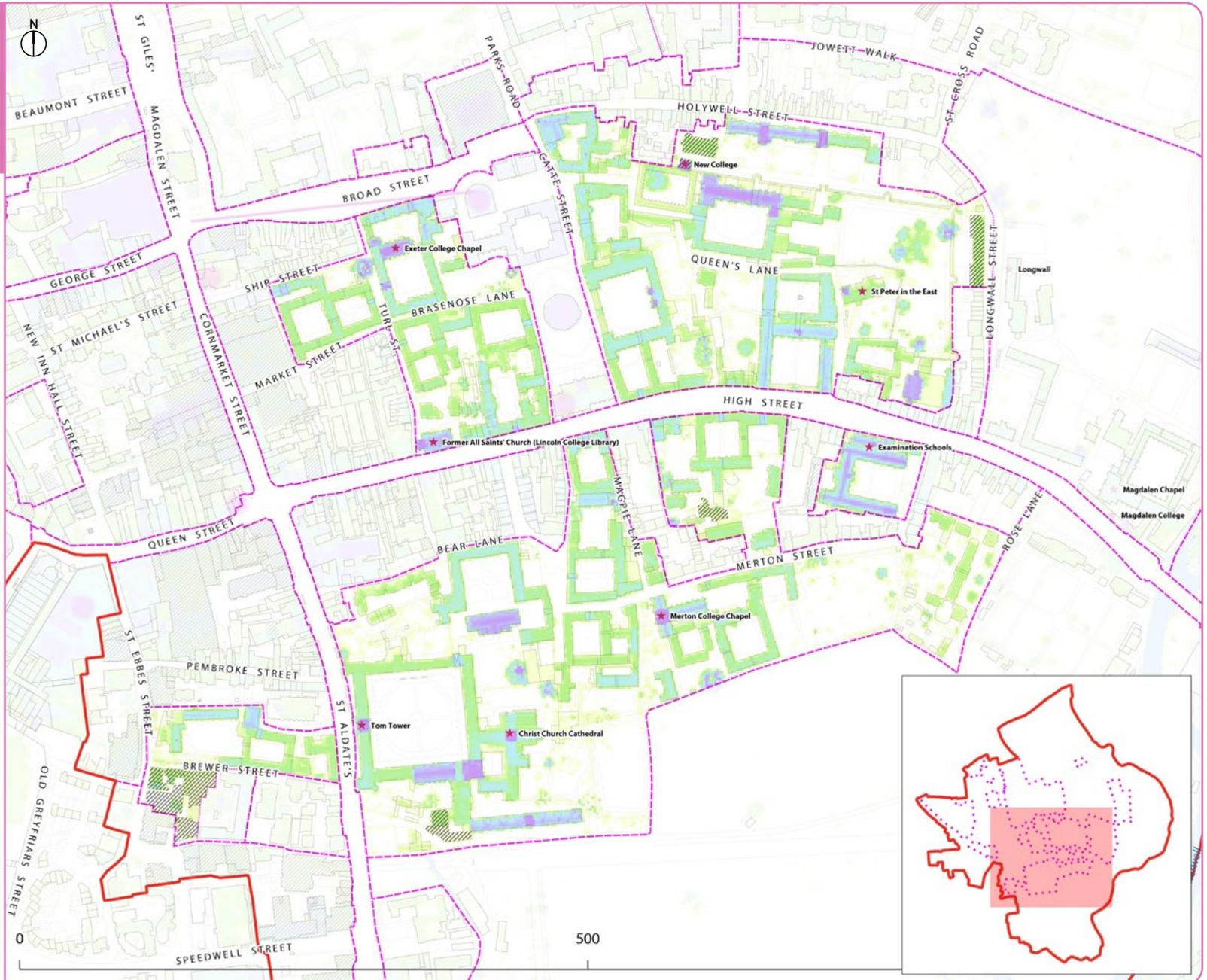
Elevated panorama

Designed public view

Focal point

Landmarks

Source: Building height data based on environment agency lidar DTM and DSM 2m



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4.2.8 Roofscape



Roofscape



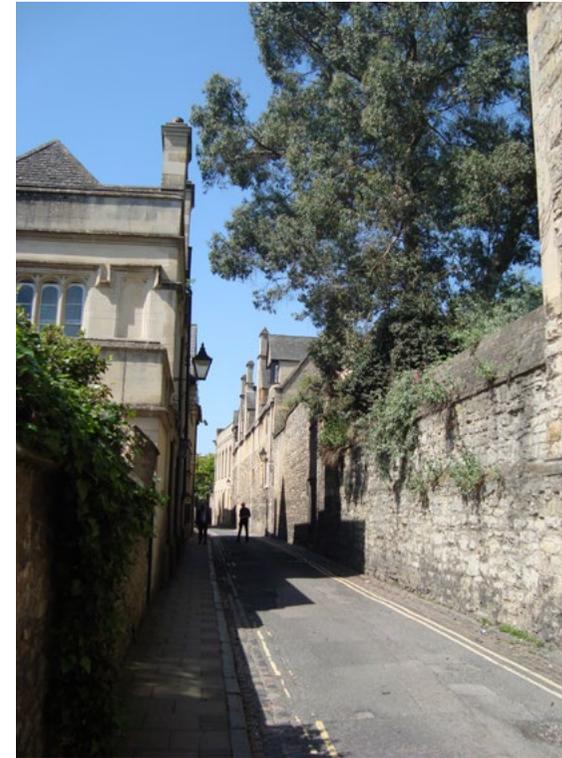
Theme 21: roofscape, skyline and landmarks

Building heights

- College building heights are typically two to three storeys with dormers, punctuated by chapel towers (e.g. Merton) and gatehouses, which gives a focal point to the main elevation (e.g. Christ Church Tom Tower, New College gatehouse).
- Most medieval colleges buildings were raised a storey (e.g. New College Great Quadrangle) or had dormers added to increase the accommodation available. Lincoln's front quad is unusual in retaining its two storey medieval appearance.

Roofscape and skyline

- The roofscape of the colleges is one of the great glories of Oxford: the lively roofline punctuated with chimneys, gables and dormers and enlivened with crenellations.
- The spires and towers of the colleges are of great significance to the roofscape and skyline of Oxford, contributing greatly to its renowned and recognisable profile and rising above the collection of decorative finials, gables, dormers and parapets that adorn the college roofs .
- Roofs are generally pitched slate or tile, sometimes hidden behind crenellated parapets that reinforce the impression of defence.
- Some late medieval and sixteenth century buildings retain low pitch lead roofs behind parapets or balustrades e.g. Christ Church elevation to St Aldate's, Hertford College main elevation, Pembroke College chapel.



Unfolding views of Pembroke College, Brewer Street, with high boundary walls and glimpses of garden greenery



Christ Church Tom Tower is a defining landmark along St Aldate's

4.2.9 Views and landmarks



Roofscape
Landmarks
Views



Theme 21: roofscape, skyline and landmarks
Theme 22: views in the conservation area
Theme 27: setting of the conservation area

The colleges contain most of the fabled towers and steeples that are part of the identity of the city, and contribute so fundamentally to the skyline in long views from outside the city and close views within it.

Landmarks within the character zone

- All Saints Church (now Lincoln College library, Turl Street).
- Christ Church College Tom Tower, St Aldate's.
- Merton College Bell Tower, Merton Street.
- New College Chapel Tower, Holywell Street.
- Entrance to New College, Queens Lane.
- Exeter Chapel Spire and Fleche, Turl Street.



Exeter College fleche and All Souls College amongst the Oxford skyline (OCC)

Landmarks outside the character zone

- Clarendon Building, Broad Street.
- Sheldonian Theatre, Broad Street.

Views

- **Unfolding views along streets:** such as New College Lane, that are characteristic of the distinctive medieval street patterns and the college quads. These combine long boundary walls and glimpses of garden greenery with dominant façades, often detailed with carving and with a gatehouse tower as a punctuation mark.
- The combination of formal college frontages with picturesque rendered townhouses creates the distinctive Oxford streetscape (e.g. along Holywell Street, the High Street and Oriel Square).
- **Glimpsed views:** Glimpsed views into the hidden world of colleges, through gateways and railings, and over walls. These are picturesque and illustrative of the two sides of the city centre: the public and the private.
- **Stop end views:** Views that are terminated by a landmark, such as Exeter Chapel Fleche at the east end of Ship Street, Lincoln Library at the south end of Turl Street and Tom Tower at the east end of Pembroke Square.



New College Lane (OCC)

4.2.10 Movement and activity



Theme 26: tranquillity

Traffic

- The volume and nature of traffic can be harmful to the setting of several colleges in this zone. For example, Christ Church and Queen's College, because of the constant pressure of buses waiting at stops and queueing at traffic junctions.
- Conflict between traffic and pedestrians on some of the narrow streets leading from the High Street, for example Turl Street, where pavements are narrow and there is limited space for vehicles to pass.
- Parking inside colleges, such as New College or Corpus Christi, which can harm the character and appearance of colleges and the setting of their listed buildings, depending on the location and quantity of vehicles. This includes visible parking in the yards off the roads.

Cycling

- The main entrance to a college often attracts clusters of parked bicycles on the street – this gives the street an attractive sense of activity and is one of the characteristic sights of Oxford, but large numbers are an impediment to pedestrians on narrow pavements e.g. on Turl Street.
- disorganised cycle parking can also result in damage to historic building fabric when they are leaned against it.

Cultural activity

- Advertising boards for concerts, recitals and other events. These are iconic features outside colleges, but need careful management to ensure they do not negatively contribute to visual clutter.

Pedestrian

- Areas around the main entrance to a college tend to be busy with a regular footfall.
- Streets around the perimeter of colleges often lack activity because the buildings face inwards and there is limited footfall. This is particularly pronounced where townhouses have been absorbed into colleges and the front doors have been sealed up e.g. Holywell Street, Longwall Street and Pembroke Street.

4.2.11 Archaeology



Theme 12: archaeology



Oxford Archaeological Action Plan further detail and guidance

- The colleges occupy land that was once streets and town houses. This has both created an archaeological character of its own, and also to some degree preserved beneath gardens and paving remains of the earlier occupation of their sites. This land can remain undisturbed for centuries, preserving earlier urban deposits to an unusual degree.
- The below-ground archaeological potential of these areas to reveal evidence of the Saxon and medieval occupation that predated the colleges is considered to be very high. For example, a recent major excavation in the Provost's Garden at Queen's College uncovered a late-Saxon trackway and associated buildings. Elsewhere the well-preserved remains of fourteenth century town houses were identified below Peckwater Quad at Christ Church in 2003.
- Below ground remains including those of earlier college garden designs, structures and waste pits preserving artefactual and ecofactual evidence of college life are also of significant archaeological value.

4.3 Sub-zone 2: Early foundations outside the medieval walls

4.3.1 History



Medieval defences

Survival of medieval plot outlines

Salters Plan

1879 Ordnance Survey map



Theme 2: university

Theme 5: religion

Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

Theme 17: postwar architecture

- Colleges outside the city walls tended to be monastic foundations set in extensive precincts, in contrast to those constrained within the bounds of the city walls. These include Gloucester College (c. 1283), Durham College (1286) and St Bernard's College (1437) that were re-founded following Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries as Worcester College (1714), Trinity College (1555) and St John's College (1555). Being situated outside the city walls gave these colleges a greater sense of seclusion from the town and allowed them to occupy larger sites with gardens and parks, often with symbolic meanings.
- There was a significant phase of expansion and rebuilding in extra-mural colleges during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries e.g. Wadham Front Quad (college founded 1610), St John's College Canterbury Quad (1631–36), Trinity College chapel (1691–94) and Garden Quad (1668–1728) and Worcester College hall, library and chapel (c. 1720–90).
- This continued in the Victorian period, as university reforms and an increase in the number of subjects studied led to a corresponding increase in undergraduates. Balliol College was substantially rebuilt in the nineteenth century including the chapel (Butterfield, 1856–57), the Broad Street range (Waterhouse, 1867–77) and Salvin's Buildings on St Giles (Salvin, 1852–53), while at Trinity College, the Front Quad and President's Lodgings (Jackson, 1883–87) were constructed.

- The generous sites that these colleges occupy have enabled more extensive on-site expansion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries than colleges within the walls. For example, at St John's College, post-war buildings on the college site include: Dolphin Quad (Sir Edward Maufe, 1948); the Beehive Building (by Michael Powers of the Architects' Co-Partnership, 1958–60); Sir Thomas White building (Philip Dowson of Arup Associates, 1972–75); Garden Quadrangle (Sir Richard MacCormac of MacCormac, Jamieson and Prichard, 1991–94); Kendrew Quadrangle (Sir Richard MacCormac of MJP Architects, 2010); New Study Centre and Archive (Wright and Wright Architects, 2019).
- Worcester is unique in Oxford for its lack of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings, but has also experienced a significant phase of post-war building on the college site including: Casson Building (Sir Hugh Casson, 1961); Wolfson Building (1971); Linbury Building (Maguire and Murray, 1991); Sainsbury Building (MacCormac, Jamieson and Prichard, 1983); Nash Building (2007); Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre (Niall McLaughlin Architects, 2017).



Views of Trinity College lawns provide a green backcloth to Parks Road

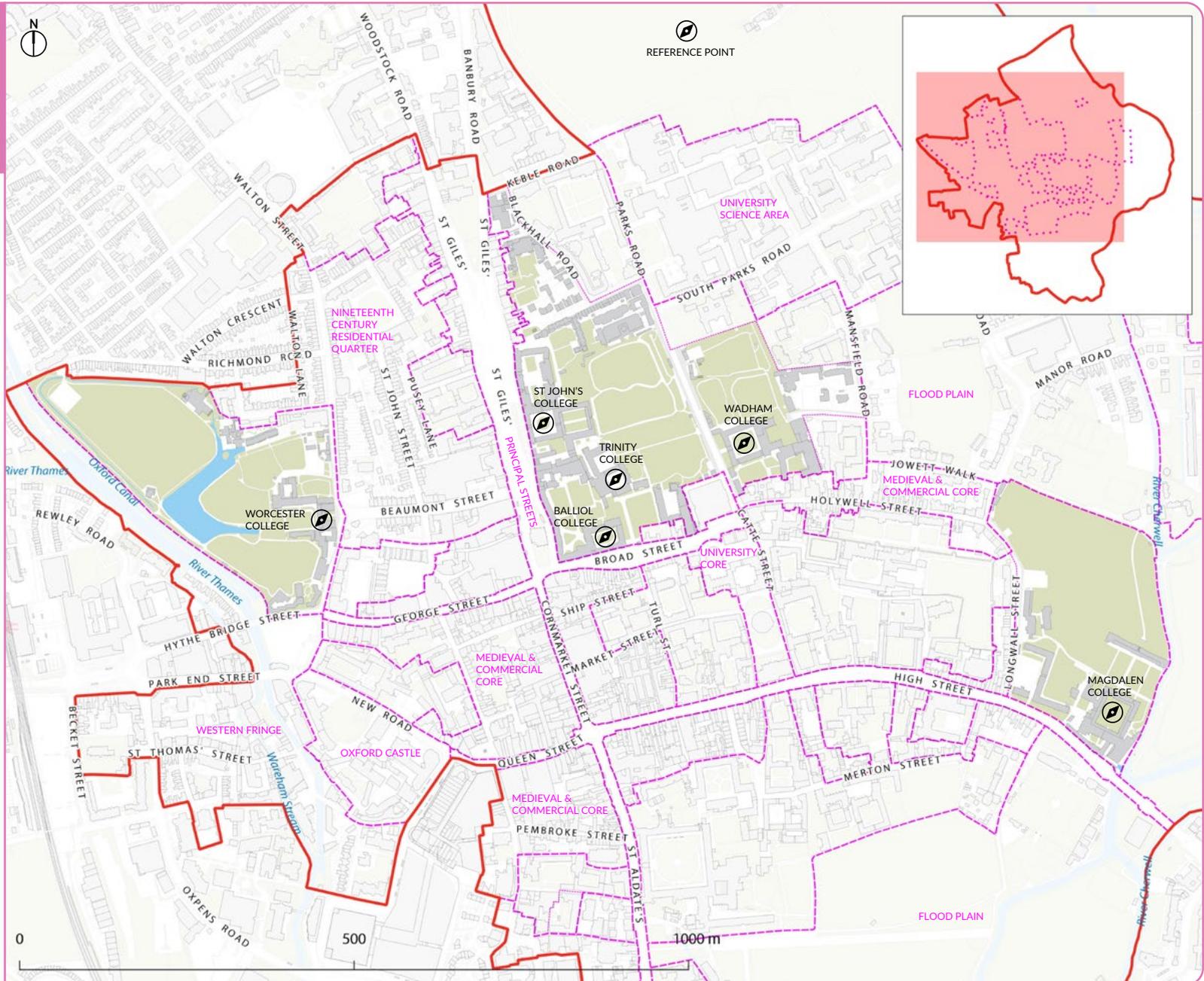
Overview

College Architecture

Sub-zone 2:
Early foundations outside the
medieval walls

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Neighbouring character zones
-  Reference point



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4.3.2 Overview of character



College character; Historic urban characterisation



Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

- Colleges founded outside the medieval walls ('extramural'), share many of the characteristics of the colleges within the walls, but occupy more extensive grounds with larger gardens and more open aspect (buildings set in grounds). Their sites are consequently less densely developed than colleges within the city walls. Key characteristics are:
 - an architectural set piece as the building entrance range (e.g. Worcester, Balliol, Wadham)
 - imposing, institutional buildings with a formal principal frontage to the street, but otherwise facing inwards
 - clearly defined boundaries, often formed of high stone walls, with tightly controlled access
 - core functions set around an early front or main quad with later quads providing additional functions, such as libraries and accommodation based around staircases. More recent buildings may have a looser interpretation of this model
 - large plots, extensive gardens, with some lawn, extending to parkland and including specific planting such as orchards or woodland gardens. The simple green lawns are retained in the principal quad(s) with more extensive and elaborate gardens beyond.

4.3.3 Use and access



Public access to green spaces



Theme 2: university

Theme 5: religion

Theme 19: public space

Theme 11: living

- Colleges are educational and residential.
- All have a chapel with regular services which are open to the public.
- Most colleges offer some degree of access. Some on a daily or weekly basis, some with booked visits and some cultural events or celebrations.



The Sainsbury Building at Worcester College, which uses sympathetic massing and detailing in a modern idiom

4.3.4 Streets and townscape



Saxon and medieval streets; Public access to green spaces



Theme 18: street layout of the Saxon burh

Theme 19: public space

Theme 20: medieval plots

Street pattern and public spaces

- Colleges outside the walls address principal thoroughfares, offering a more generous setting than those within the walls. St Giles and Parks Road are wide streets and have mature street trees, creating an open and leafy streetscape. Parks Road is distinctive for its peaceful, green character, lined with college gardens with mature trees behind high stone walls. There are fewer small through-streets than in the town centre because of the extensive college grounds. Lamb and Flag Passage is a good example of a narrow lane outside the medieval walls.

Plots and building lines

- The larger plots offer the possibility of making a greater contribution to the presence of green streetscape through glimpsed views. Colleges are often set back from the street edge and fronted by lawns or planting behind low walls or railings e.g. Worcester, Magdalen or Wadham.
- Gardens are more easily perceived from the public realm thanks to large overhanging trees visible within areas of open space and giving a greater appreciation of open sky in views.
- The larger plots of the historic extramural colleges result in more open and green streetscape. Colleges are fronted by lawns or planting e.g. Worcester, Magdalen and Wadham. Trinity is unusual in the extent to which it is set back from the street in extensive lawns and gardens, with perimeter ironwork gates and railings instead of walls allowing generous views into the grounds from Broad Street and Parks Road, with a stop end view along Turl Street.
- Colleges have expanded in the twentieth century by colonizing adjoining domestic houses and plots, e.g. St John's on St Giles' and Wadham and New College on Holywell Street. This has had the effect in some locations of blurring the boundary between college and street.

Pavements and street materials

- Lamb and Flag passage is a notable surviving historic thoroughfare with a good survival of stone setts, York stone flags, and historic street lanterns.
- The majority of street surfaces and pavements in this zone are modern. There is a small stretch of York stone paving outside the entrances of St John's and stone setts to college driveways along St Giles and outside Worcester College lodge.

Street furniture

- There are tall and handsome streetlights along St Giles and Broad Street.
- There are historic street lanterns along Lamb and Flag passage, which reinforce its character as an earlier street pattern.
- Parks Road and Walton Street are lined with modern street lights, of less character.

4.3.5 Green space



Public access to green spaces



Theme 25: green space

- The distinct character of the historic extramural colleges comes from the amount of green space that surround the buildings and how the buildings are placed within that space. This brings a sense of space and leafy tranquillity to these areas. Magdalen and Worcester merge with the Cherwell and Isis flood plains respectively; St John's, Trinity and Wadham create an open and green backcloth to Broad Street and Parks Road.
- This green space makes an important contribution to views of buildings which can be seen across parkland or at the end of formal gardens, much as the "Country House" was seen, or in a woodland setting (the later buildings at St John's).
- These green spaces also bring biodiversity to the wider environment of the city, sounds (birdsong) movement and smells.

4.3.6 Buildings



Designations



Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

Theme 14: materials

Theme 15: architectural details

Theme 17: postwar architecture

- The architecture of the colleges is an exceptional grouping of internationally important quality, quantity and rarity.

Date

- Most colleges are characterised by significant building phases from many different centuries. For example, at Magdalen College:
 - fifteenth century Chapel, cloister and bell tower
 - sixteenth century Third storey to cloister, east range fronting High Street
 - seventeenth century Kitchen Staircase, Grammar Hall
 - eighteenth century New Buildings
 - nineteenth century St Swithun's Quadrangle, President's lodgings, High Street gate
 - twentieth century Longwall Quadrangle, Grove Buildings.

The Quadrangle

- As with the intra-mural colleges, the medieval quadrangle has endured as the defining layout of college precincts. The different ways the traditional elements of the chapel, hall, library and accommodation are arranged around quadrangles gives each college its distinctive character.

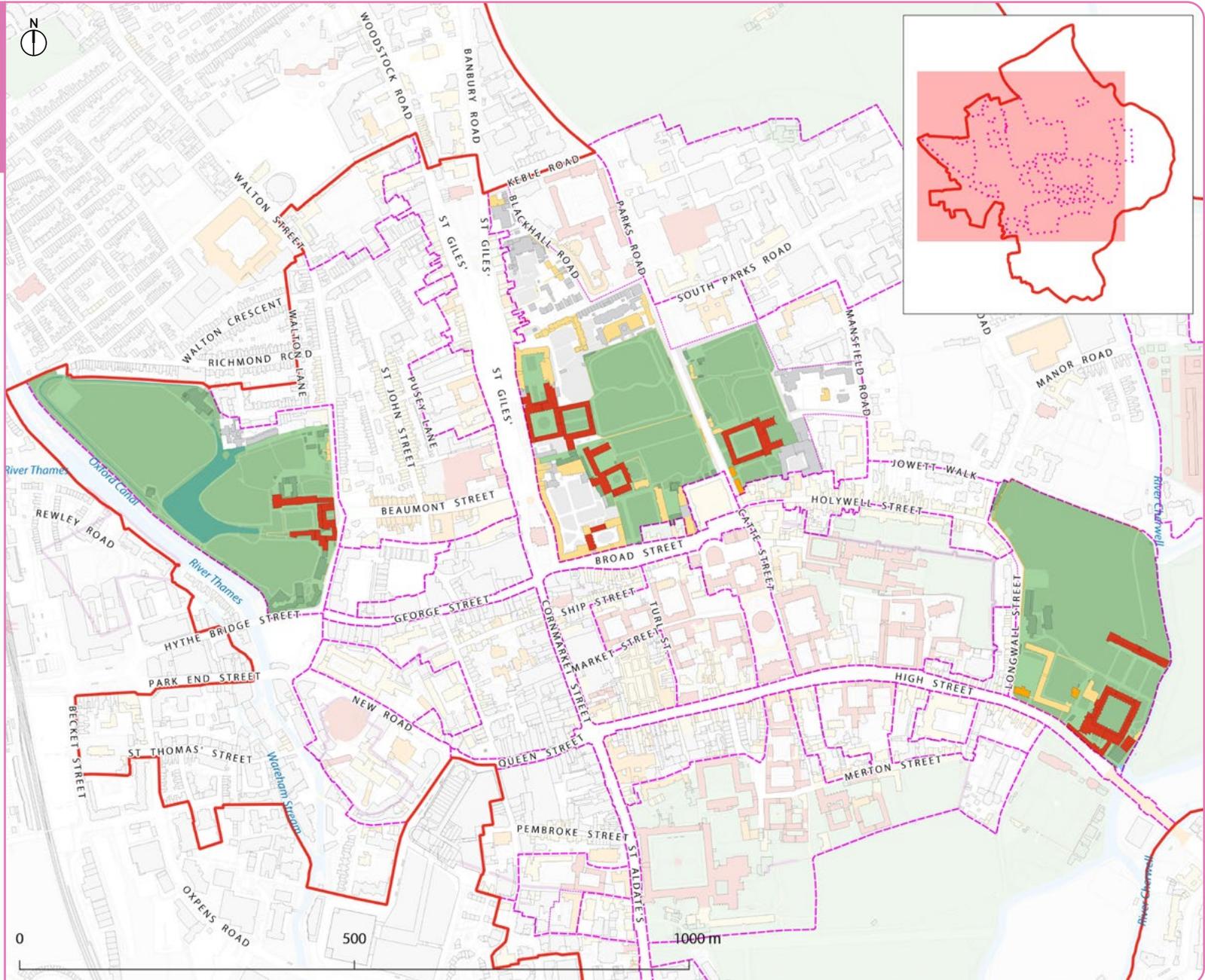
Designations

College Architecture

Sub-zone 2:
Early foundations outside the
medieval walls

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Grade I listed
-  Grade II* listed
-  Grade II listed
-  Scheduled monument
-  Registered parks and gardens



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Twentieth century

- Most colleges have at least one building or range erected since the First World War, to house the significant expansion in student numbers. Most have been built on gardens and yards.
- Some colleges were sophisticated architectural patrons, who commissioned leading architects of the day, such as Powell and Moya, Maguire and Murray, MacCormac Jamieson and Prichard and Architects Co Partnership. Each of whom developed their own identifiable approach to the, 'student room.'
- The best of these have been listed for their architectural interest, such as the Beehive Building (1958–60 by Michael Powers of the Architects' Co-Partnership, Grade II) and Sir Thomas White building (1972–75 by Philip Dowson of Arup Associates, Grade II) at St John's College and Dolphin Gate (Sir Hubert Worthington, 1948) at Trinity College.
- Twentieth-century buildings are as stylistically varied as the rest of the college corpus: neo-Georgian, Modern Movement, Brutalism, Post-Modernism, etc.

Twenty-first century

- The use of particular architectural practices has continued into the twenty-first century work. Buildings of this period are usually the result of design competitions involving not only architects but also landscape architects, structural engineers and other team members. The environmental credentials of these buildings plays strongly in the mix both in terms of the building's performance but also the sourcing of materials and the methodologies employed. The demands for new buildings has been in order to update the existing facilities but also to provide new facilities for colleges as the student and fellow cohort demands.

Materials

- Warm golden ashlar limestone is one of the principal unifying elements of the college townscape. Most colleges were constructed of local oolitic Oxford stone (Wheatley or Headington) with Taynton dressings. By the mid-nineteenth century many buildings were suffering from severe decay and were re-faced in Bath or Clipsham stone (a Lincolnshire limestone).
- The palette expanded enormously in the twentieth century with non-local and newly developed materials, including light brown brick, yellow brick and painted stucco at Worcester College and exposed reinforced concrete frame, sheet glass (Sir Thomas White building), and timber cladding (Kendrew Quad) at St John's.

Details

- Historic detail (normally of functional origin) creates a joyfully rich texture: pinnacles, gargoyles, oriels, etc.
- The best modern buildings are detailed in a different way, but with just as much care.
- Windows are hugely important to articulating and animating façades: mullioned (either original or nineteenth century recreations), timber sliding sashes (from c. 1700) and more recently sheet glass. The reflectivity of glass has a considerable impact on character and the setting of adjacent buildings.

4.3.7 Positive contributors



Theme 14: materials

Theme 15: architectural details

Theme 17: postwar architecture

- The majority of college buildings are listed, many at a high grade, reflecting their outstanding historic and architectural interest.
- Unlisted buildings that contribute to character typically use sympathetic materials and massing and have good detailing e.g. the Sainsbury Building at Worcester College (1983, MacCormac, Jamieson and Prichard); Grove Buildings at Magdalen College (1999, Porphyrios Associates); the Garden Quad at St John's College (1991–94, MacCormac, Jamieson and Prichard).

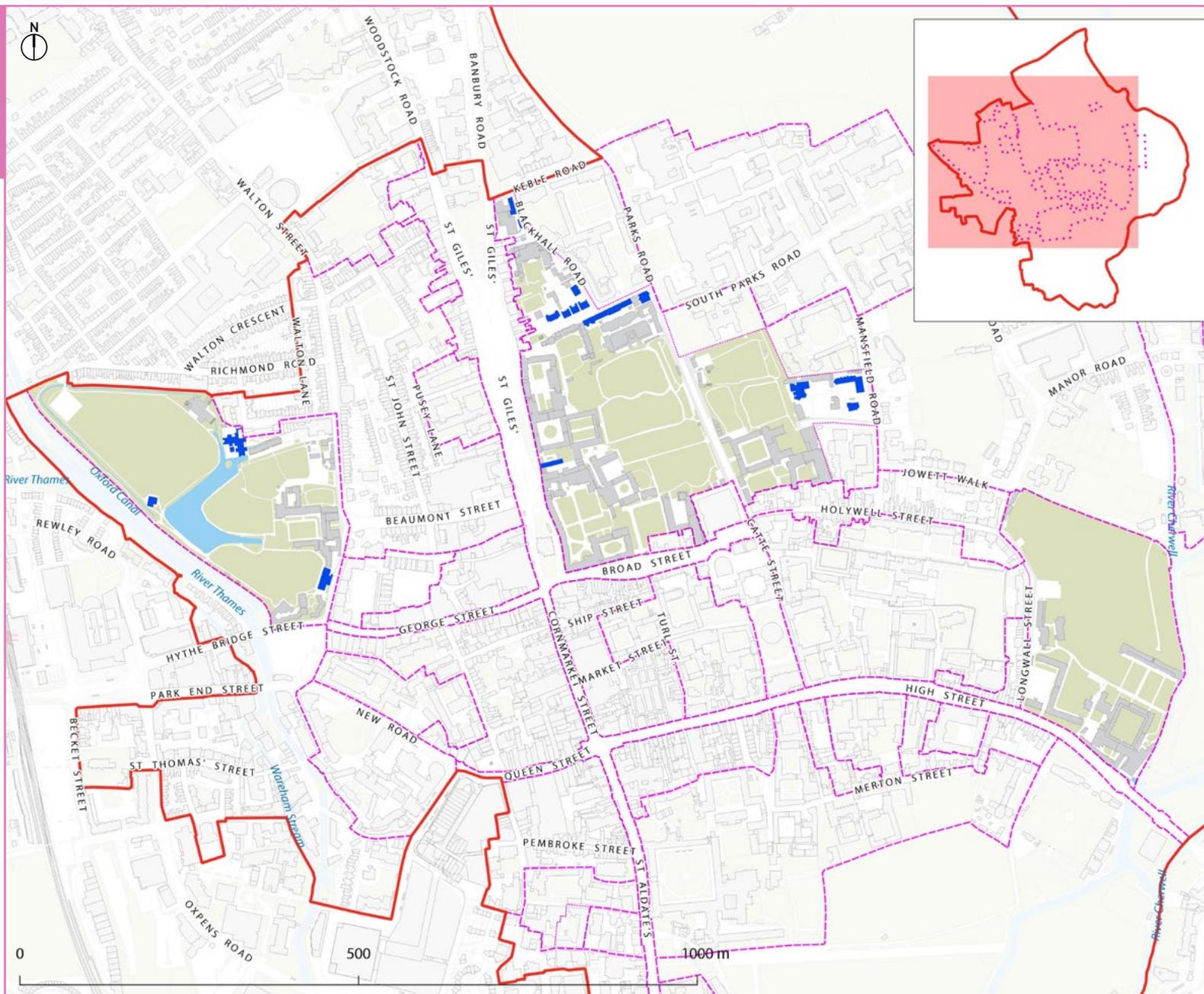
Positive contributors

College Architecture

Sub-zone 2:
Early foundations outside the
medieval walls

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Positive contributor (non-designated)



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4.3.8 Roofscape



Roofscape



Theme 21: roofscape, skyline and landmarks

Building heights

- College building heights outside the town walls are typically three to four storeys with dormers, with chapel towers (e.g. Magdalen, Trinity) and gatehouses, which provide punctuation and offer a focal point to the observer (e.g. Balliol, Wadham).
- Many older colleges buildings were raised a storey (e.g. Magdalen College cloister; Trinity College Garden Quad) or had dormers added to increase the accommodation available.

Roofscape and skyline

- The roofscape of the colleges is one of the great glories of Oxford: they create a lively roofline punctuated with chimneys, gables and dormers and enlivened with crenellations.
- The distinctly identifiable towers and spires that make such an important contribution to the skyline are significant elements within the broader category of roofscape. It is these elements that have provided the iconic subject matter for painting, poetry and prose throughout the history of the city.
- Roofs are generally lead or slate covered with the occasional use of stone slates providing a distinctive tone in longer views and pattern in closer views of them. The crenelated parapets reinforce the defensive architecture of the buildings.
- Individual seventeenth and eighteenth century set pieces display a classical architectural preference for more decorative, pierced or balustraded parapets which contribute to the complexity of the overall roofscape in views.
- Some seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings retain low pitch lead or slate roofs behind parapets or balustrades, adding a layer of complexity in views (e.g. Trinity College chapel; Magdalen College New Buildings).



The main range of Balliol facing Broad Street is four storeys, rising to five over the gatehouse



Magdalen College tower contributes greatly to Oxford's distinctive skyline

Roofscape

College Architecture

Sub-zone 2: Early foundations outside the medieval walls

Key

Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary

Building heights

0m

5m

10m

15m

20m

Flat roofs

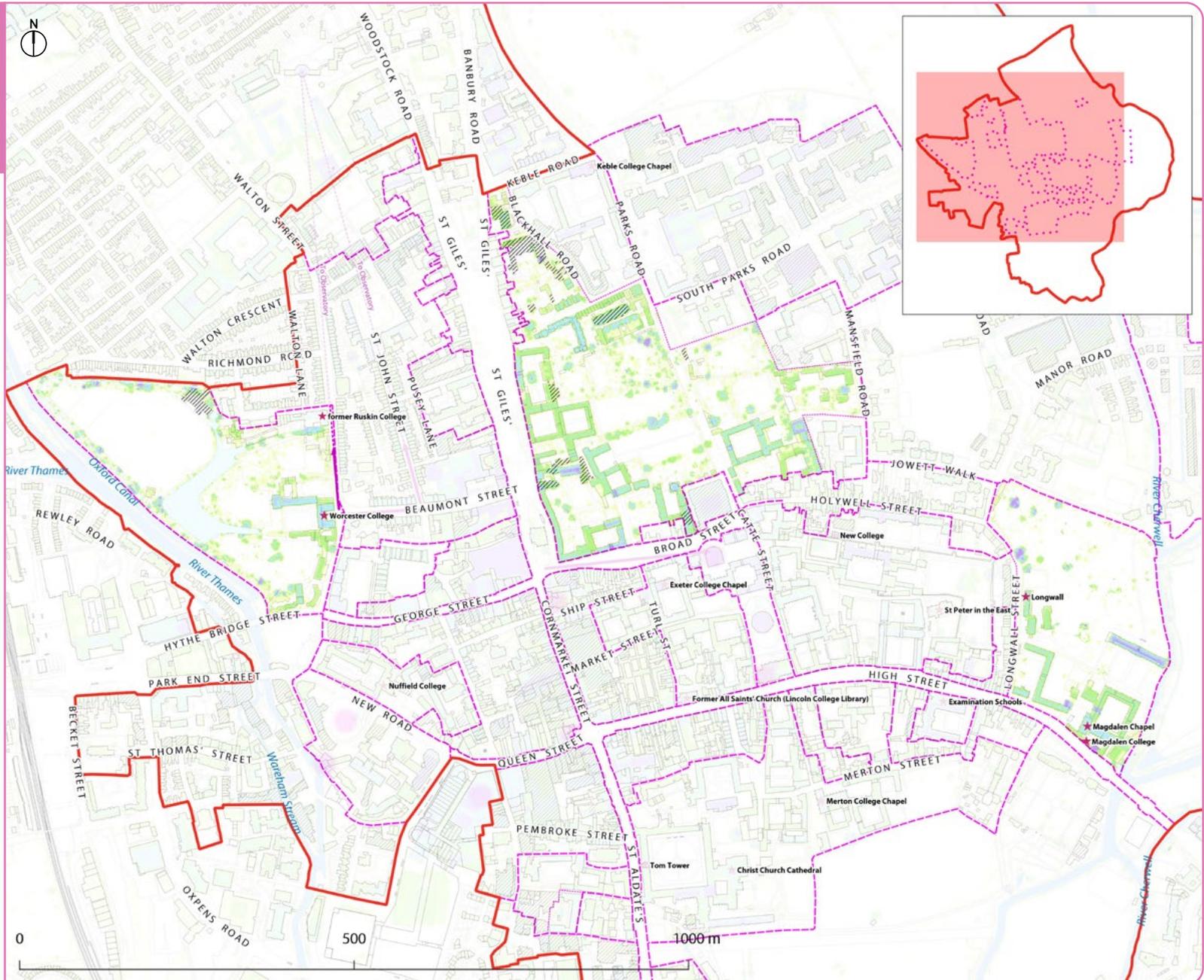
Elevated panorama

Designed public view

Focal point

Landmarks

Source: Building height data based on environment agency lidar DTM and DSM 2m



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4.3.9 Views and landmarks



Roofscape
Landmarks
Views



Theme 21: roofscape, skyline and landmarks
Theme 22: views in the conservation area
Theme 27: setting of the conservation area

The colleges contain most of the fabled towers and steeples that are part of the identity of the city, and contribute so fundamentally to the skyline in long views from outside the city and close views within it.

Landmarks within the character zone (queries in red)

- Magdalen College Bell Tower, The High Street
- Magdalen College library (former chapel), the High Street
- St. John's Kendrew Quad, entrance from St. Giles
- Trinity College chapel, Broad Street
- Trinity College, Parks Road view through the gate
- Worcester College back lodge, Worcester Street
- Worcester College main range, Walton Street



Glimpse view into St John's College from St Giles'

Views

- **Unfolding views along streets:** These combine long, high, stone boundary walls and glimpses of garden greenery. Clearer views of specimen trees are possible within the college gardens and grounds, with architectural set pieces such as Wadham's main front on Parks Road. The combination of formal college frontages with picturesque rendered townhouses creates the distinctive Oxford streetscape (e.g. along Broad Street and Holywell Street).
- **Vistas to landmarks:** views towards buildings which were designed to be focal points in the streetscape, such as Worcester College terminating the view along Beaumont Street, views of Magdalen College tower along the High Street, or views north along Turl Street towards Trinity College Chapel.
- **Glimpsed views:** Glimpsed views into the hidden world of colleges, through gateways and railings, and over walls. These are picturesque and illustrative of the public versus the private as they entice the observer with a sense of the gardens and open spaces behind the walls and through the gates. These include the view of St. John's Kendrew Quadrangle from St. Giles, the view inside Wadham College from Parks Road or the view through Trinity College gates also from Parks Road.

4.3.10 Movement and activity



Theme 26: tranquillity

Traffic

- The setting of several colleges is harmed by the volume of traffic. For example traffic queuing at junctions, e.g. outside Worcester College on the junction of Walton Street and Beaumont Street; car and coach parking on St Giles and Magdalen Street outside St John's College and Balliol.

Cycling

- The main entrance to a college often attracts clusters of parked bicycles on the street – this gives the street an attractive sense of activity and is one of the characteristic sights of Oxford, but large numbers can be an impediment to pedestrians on pavements e.g. outside Worcester College.

Pedestrian

- Areas around the main entrance to a college tend to be busy with a regular footfall.
- The High Street, Broad Street and St Giles are very busy with pedestrians, sometimes spilling into the road because of narrow pavements.
- Streets around the perimeter of colleges often lack activity because the buildings face inwards and there is limited footfall. This can add to the tranquil character of some streets such as Parks Road.

Cultural activity

- Advertising boards for concerts, recitals, and other events. These are iconic features outside colleges, but need careful management to ensure they do not negatively contribute to visual clutter.

4.3.11 Archaeology



Theme 12: archaeology



Oxford Archaeological Action Plan further detail and guidance

- Some colleges occupy land that was once fields on the outskirts of the town or formerly occupied by medieval religious institutions for example Magdalen College which occupies the site of St John's Hospital, Wadham College which is located over the remains of the Austin Friary and Christ Church which occupies the site of St Frideswide's Priory.
- This has both created an archaeological character of its own, and also preserved beneath quads and gardens remains of the earlier occupation of their sites. This land can remain undisturbed for centuries, preserving earlier urban deposits to an unusual degree.
- Therefore the below-ground archaeological potential of these areas to reveal evidence of the pre-historic, Saxon and medieval occupation that predated the colleges is considered to be very high.
- For example, in 2008 a major excavation on the site of the new Kendrew Quad at St John's College uncovered part of a large pre-historic henge monument along with later Viking burials.



Magdalen College occupies spacious grounds which were previously the site of St John's Hospital



St John's Kendrew Quad, the site of a major excavation which uncovered a pre-historic henge monument and Viking burials

4.4 Sub-zone 3: Modern foundations from the nineteenth-century onwards

4.4.1 History



Medieval defences
Survival of medieval plot outlines
Salters Plan
1879 Ordnance Survey map



Theme 2: university
Theme 5: religion
Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles
Theme 17: postwar architecture

Modern college foundations

- The nineteenth century witnessed a new wave of college foundations, beginning with Keble College (founded 1870). Keble was ground-breaking both architecturally, in the use of polychromatic brickwork rather than ashlar, and in layout, as it pioneered accommodation on a corridor plan, rather than the traditional Oxford staircase plan form.
- New foundations responded to the growth in student numbers, but also reflected social and religious changes. For example, religious foundations such as Manchester College (now Harris Manchester) and Mansfield College were established in response to the relaxation of Anglican dominance of the University; colleges for women were founded, including Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville; Nuffield, St Cross and Linacre were founded to cater specifically for graduate students.
- Late nineteenth and twentieth century foundations were typically inserted into the expanding city, such as Nuffield College and Somerville College, and therefore occupy constrained plots with little opportunity for further expansion. Some colleges took over existing buildings and adapted them for college use, such as St Peter's College and Linacre.

- St Catherine's is an exception in that it was built as the relocation of an existing, early twentieth century foundation on an open, green field site at the eastern edge of the historic settlement of Holywell (later subsumed into the city by its nineteenth century onward expansion). It does however present a modernist interpretation of the quadrangle with the geometric formality of green space evident within the central 'quad' as well as used to provide a distinctive setting for the designed entrance to the College.
- Many modern colleges have added post-war accommodation blocks in response to the expansion in student numbers during the twentieth century, including Keble, Somerville and St Peter's.
- The early twenty-first century has seen a further phase of building (e.g. Somerville, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter buildings, 2011).



St Catherine's College is a modern interpretation of the traditional Oxford quadrangle

Overview

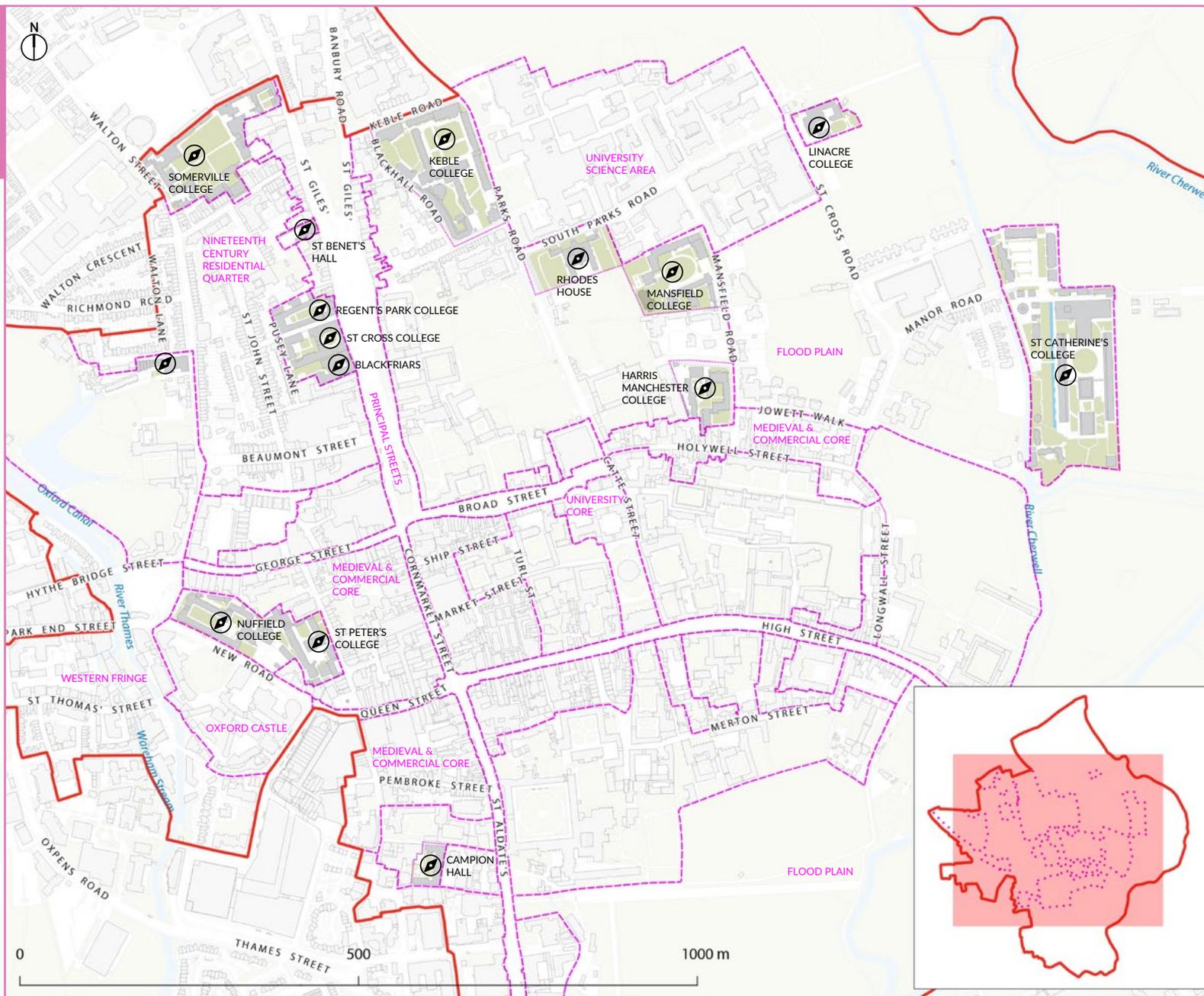
College Architecture

Sub-zone 3:

Modern foundations from the mid C19th onwards

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Neighbouring character zones
-  Reference point



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4.4.2 Overview of character



College character; Historic urban characterisation



Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

- More recent colleges foundations have been inserted into the expanding city. Purpose-built colleges have generally followed the Oxford quadrangle plan, such as Keble, Nuffield and St Catherine's, adapting it to modern requirements.
- Several modern foundations occupied buildings and sites which were originally designed for another purpose, such as Linacre (occupied Cherwell Edge, a former house) and St Peter's (occupied buildings including former church of St Peter-le-Bailey, former Rectory and former Canal House).
- Characteristics include:
 - modern colleges tend to occupy compact sites with limited space for further development
 - they display a wide range of architectural styles and materials with greater freedom of expression and less dominance of the classical styles
 - inward looking behind clearly defined boundaries, with controlled access
 - the quadrangle is less rigidly followed and has been more freely interpreted in the later colleges, making careful use of the available space
 - buildings are set around lawns or courtyards; their gardens and grounds are generally more restricted than the older colleges
 - buildings include use as conference venues and for concerts and other events.



Keble College - greater freedom of expression (OCC)

4.4.3 Use and access



Public access to green spaces



Theme 2: university
Theme 5: religion
Theme 19: public space
Theme 11: living

- Colleges are educational and residential.
- Almost all have a chapel with regular services which are open to the public (although St Catherine's college was built without a chapel, reflecting the secular post-war social trend).
- Religious foundations, such as Campion Hall (Jesuit), Blackfriars (Dominican friary) and St Benet's Hall (Benedictine) also house residential religious communities.
- Most colleges offer some controlled public access at set times, including when used as a conference venue and for other events.



St Peter's College took over and adapted existing buildings, including this Georgian former Rectory

4.4.4 Streets and townscape



Saxon and medieval streets; Public access to green spaces



Theme 18: street layout of the Saxon burh
Theme 19: public space
Theme 20: medieval plots

Street pattern and public spaces

- Modern college foundations have been inserted into the existing street pattern. For example, a very early landscape feature surviving in the form of Bulwarks Lane, itself a surviving medieval street and cutting through the middle of the St. Peter's College estate.
- There is a scarcity of public space in this zone, but college gardens supply green glimpses.

Plots and building lines

- Purpose-built colleges such as Keble and Nuffield, and religious foundations such as Campion Hall and Blackfriars, continue the medieval college tradition of defensive perimeters with inward-looking buildings and walls enclosing gardens and yards.
- Colleges which have taken over existing sites are often more permeable, such as St Peter's College on New Inn Hall Street combining buildings and spaces of different ages and resulting in unplanned and inherited edge conditions.
- Several colleges have colonised formerly domestic houses (e.g. St Benet's Hall on St Giles; Linacre on St Cross Road), blurring the boundary between town and gown.

Pavements and street materials

- Street materials are mainly new and appropriate for the ages and styles of the college they provide a setting for.
- Some historic materials survive in alleyways and streets off the principal streets and on lanes by colleges:
 - york stone paving and stone sets in Bulwark's Lane between St Peter's and Nuffield Colleges
 - some surviving stone setts in Brewer Street by Campion Hall
 - many streets have long sections of characteristic granite sett gutters.

4.4.5 Green space



Public access to green spaces



Theme 25: green space

- These colleges generally have a lower proportion of green space because of the dense development on their sites. There are some exceptions: Keble has extensive lawns; St Catherine's has a green, semi-rural setting in the Cherwell flood plain; and there are glimpses into Nuffield's green lawns and pool in the lower quad.
- Some colleges buildings are set back from the street with an area of lawns or shrubs in front e.g. St Peter's, which helps to soften the streetscape.
- College gardens provide charm and pleasure to public streets, as glimpses through gates and railings and over walls, and in the form of overhanging trees. In these ways college gardens play a vital role by supplying greenness to soften the predominantly hard urban realm of the city centre.



Blackhall Street lacks animation and activity because the Keble college buildings turn their backs on the street

4.4.6 Buildings



Designations



Theme 13: colleges and quadrangles

Theme 14: materials

Theme 15: architectural details

Theme 17: postwar architecture

The Quadrangle

- In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the quadrangle was interpreted formally (Keble, Nuffield), or constructed informally by colonising and adapting existing buildings and developing a college around them (St Peter's, Somerville).

Twentieth century

- Most colleges have continued building and expanding during the twentieth century, where their sites enable this.
- Some colleges were sophisticated architectural patrons, who commissioned leading architects of the day. The best of these buildings have been listed for their architectural interest, such as the Emily Morris Building at St Peter's College (1935 by R Fielding Dodd with Sir Herbert Baker, Grade II) and the De Breyne and Hayward buildings at Keble College (1971-7 by Ahrends, Burton and Koralek, Grade II*). The De Breyne and Hayward buildings are high quality and innovative buildings, but they continue the college tradition of buildings facing away from the street into the college site, leading to a lack of animation along Blackhall Street.
- Gardens and landscapes of a modern design need to emphasise the significance of gardens – the ephemeral nature of gardens and landscape and therefore the importance of changing traditions. The different landscape traditions evident at St Catz and those now evident at St Peters College which follow a sustainable, naturalistic tradition, with prairie planting and drought tolerant plants
- Twentieth and twenty-first century buildings are as stylistically varied as the rest of the college corpus: neo-Georgian, Modern Movement, Brutalism, Post-Modernism, etc.

Materials

- Modern college foundations are characterised by the wide range of materials used on their sites.
- Keble College broke radically and controversially with the Oxford college tradition of building with golden limestone by using bright red brick with yellow and black banding. Other colleges followed suit, with red brick buildings constructed at Somerville and St Peter's.
- The palette expanded enormously in the twentieth century with non-local and newly developed materials, including concrete, yellow brick and large expanses of glazing at St Catherine's College, squared rubble stone at Rhodes House, exposed concrete frame and timber cladding at Somerville and board-marked concrete at St Peter's.
- In the twenty-first century stone has been used as an engineered material rather than in its traditional ashlar or rough-cut form.

Details

- The best of the modern college estate is carefully detailed, sometimes reinterpreting traditional Oxford college architecture in a new way (e.g. Keble's use of polychromatic brick; Nuffield's bookstack tower).
- Windows are important for articulating and animating façades: Nineteenth and twentieth century college buildings have a variety of window types, including metal casements at Keble College and Nuffield College, traditional timber sashes at Somerville (main elevation to St Giles') and sheet glazing (St Catherine's College). The reflectivity of glass has a considerable impact on character and the setting of adjacent buildings.
- In the twenty-first century, environmental performance has become a key consideration and a challenge for the colleges.



Keble College broke radically with the Oxford tradition in its use of polychromatic brickwork



Board-marked concrete used at St Peter's College Latner Building

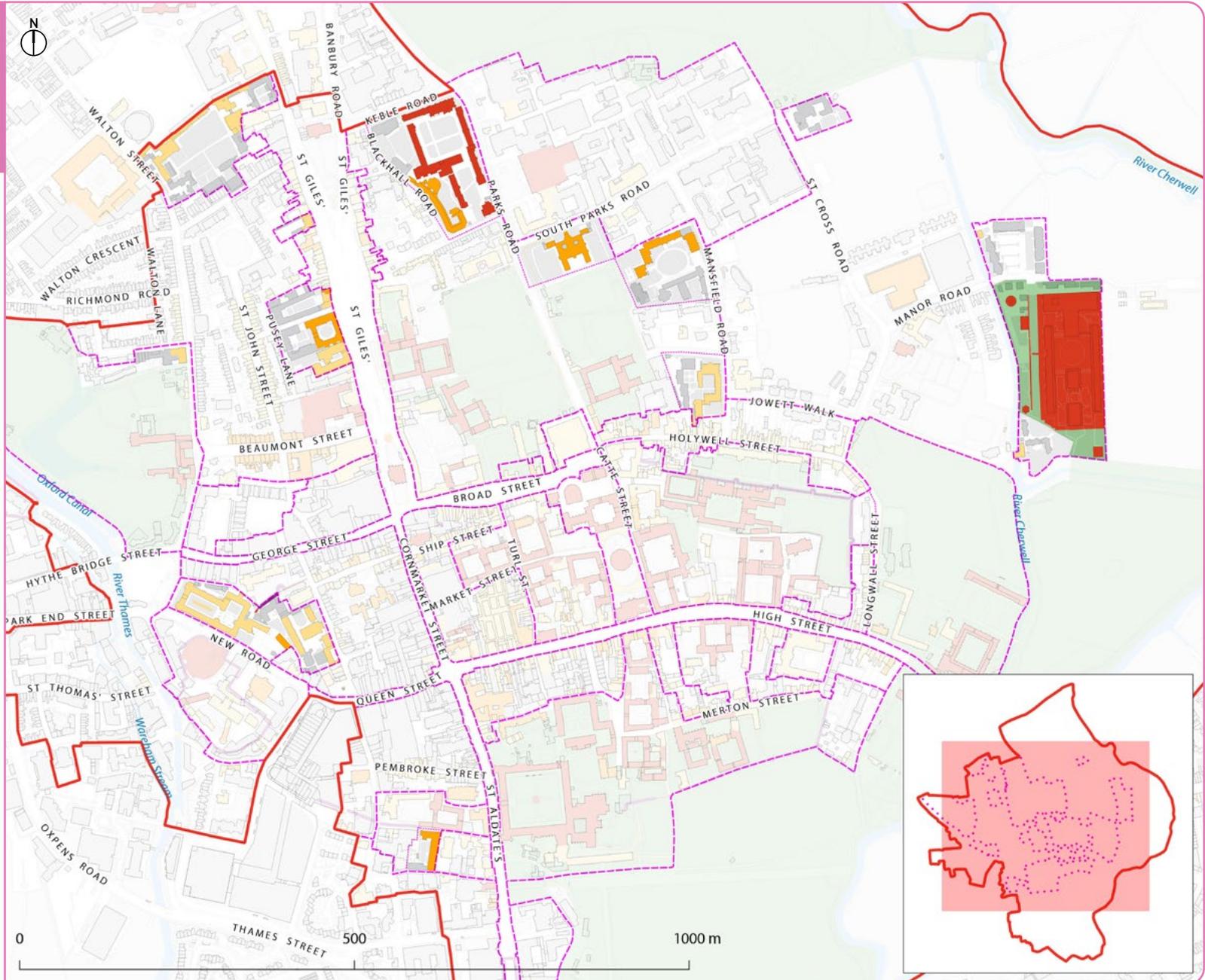
Designations

College Architecture

Sub-zone 3:
Modern foundations from the mid C19th onwards

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Grade I listed
-  Grade II* listed
-  Grade II listed
-  Scheduled monument
-  Registered parks and gardens



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4.4.7 Positive contributors



Theme 14: materials

Theme 15: architectural details

Theme 17: postwar architecture

- Many college buildings have been listed, reflecting their architectural quality (e.g. Keble College: Butterfield, 1868–82, Grade I; Campion Hall: Lutyens, 1937, Grade II*; Nuffield College: Harrison, Barnes & Hubbard, 1949–60, Grade II; St Catherine's: Jacobsen, 1966, Grade I). But modern colleges contain a larger number of unlisted buildings than older foundations.
- Unlisted buildings that contribute to character typically use sympathetic materials and massing and have good detailing e.g. St Cross College West Quad (Niall McLaughlin Architects, 2017); St Peter's College Latner Building (which combines high quality board-marked concrete with a modernist interpretation of the oriel window).
- Environmentally responsive twenty-first century buildings such as the Perrodo Building (Design Engine Architects, 2018)

4.4.8 Roofscape



Roofscape



Theme 21: roofscape, skyline and landmarks

Building heights

- Modern college domestic building heights are typically three to four storeys frequently articulated with dormers or plant.
- Their street presence is often more modest than the older colleges, but some have continued the tradition of a landmark focal point, e.g. Keble gatehouse; Nuffield bookstack tower; Harris Manchester clock tower.



Nuffield College bookstack tower



Unfolding view down New Inn Hall Street, with St Peter's College on one side co-existing with the commercial townscape on the other

Positive contributors

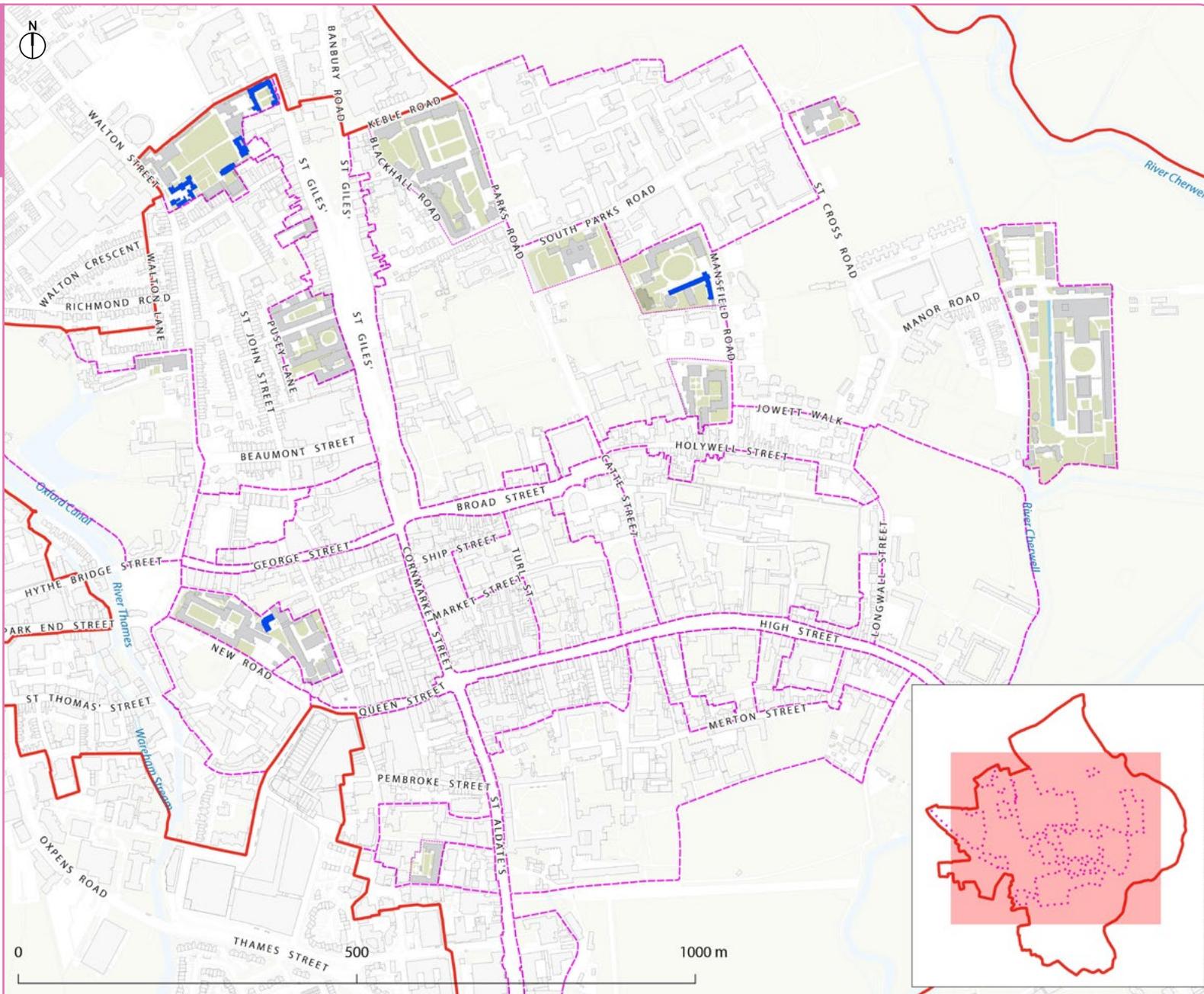
College Architecture

Sub-zone 3:

Modern foundations from the mid C19th onwards

Key

-  Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary
-  Positive contributor (non-designated)



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Roofscape and skyline

- The modern colleges generally have a traditional, pitched and tiled roofscape. Post-war buildings are more likely to have horizontal profiles and flat roofs, such as the de Breyne and Hayward buildings at Keble; the Wolfson and Margery Fry buildings at Somerville; and St Catherine's college, which has a starkly modernist roofline.
- In the twenty-first century, new interpretations of the traditional roofscape have been made such as Exeter College's Cohen Quad (Alison Brookes Architects).

4.4.9 Views and landmarks

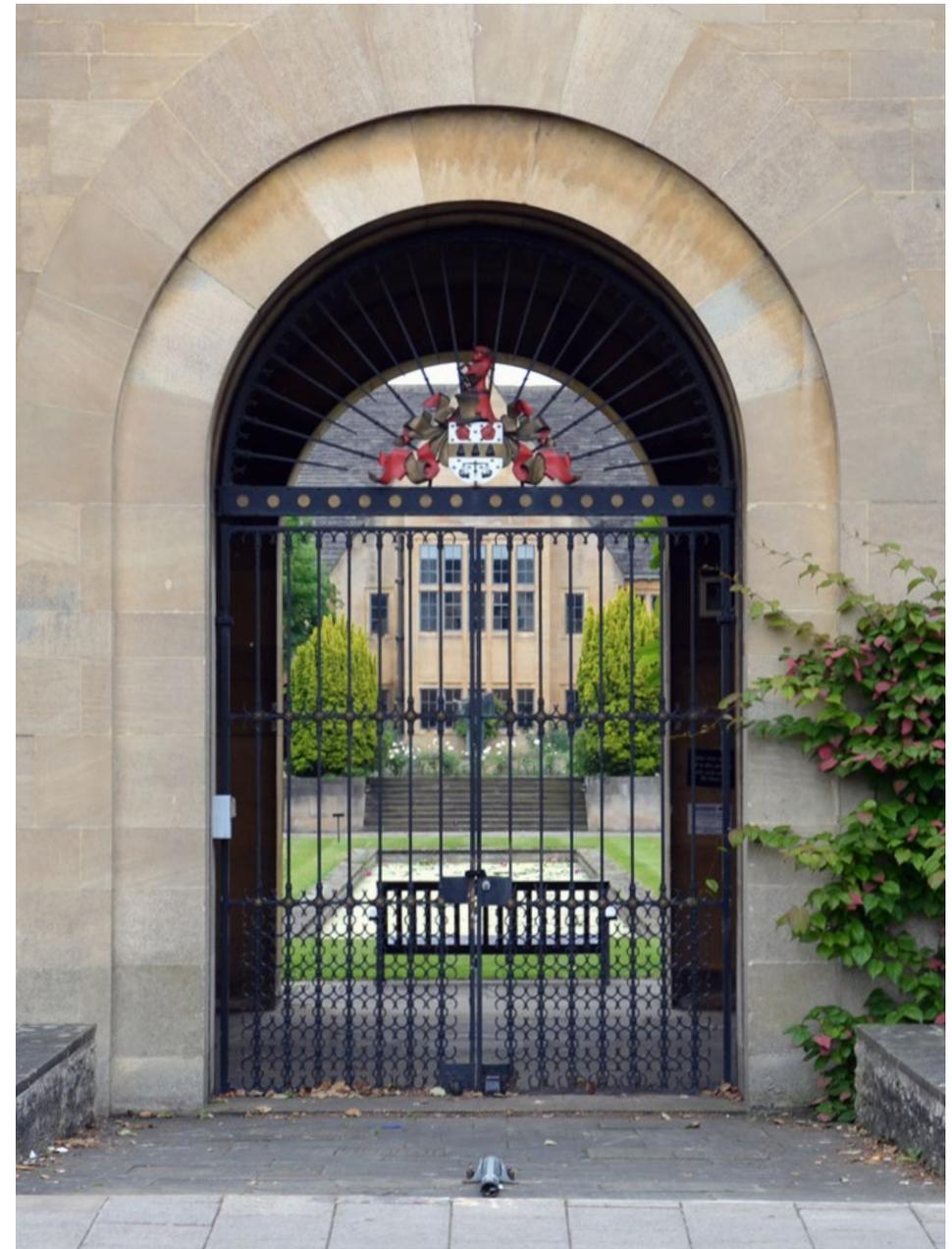
- The modern colleges are generally less likely to contain landmark buildings, with the notable exception of Harrison's steeple at Nuffield, which forms a focal point at the gateway to the city centre from the station, and Keble's gatehouse and front range along Parks Road.

Landmarks within the character zone

- Keble College gatehouse and chapel, Parks Road
- Nuffield College, bookstack tower

Views

- **Unfolding views along streets:** such as New Inn Hall Street and Mansfield Street, where college buildings co-exist with the commercial and residential townscape.
- **Glimpsed views:** Glimpsed views into the hidden world of colleges, through gateways and railings, and over walls, such as at Nuffield, Keble and Harris Manchester. These are picturesque and illustrative of the two sides of the city centre: the public and the private.



Glimpsed view into the courtyard of Nuffield College (OCC)

Roofscape

College Architecture

Sub-zone 3:
Modern foundations from the
mid C19th onwards

Key

Oxford Central Conservation Area boundary

Building heights

0m

5m

10m

15m

20m

Flat roofs

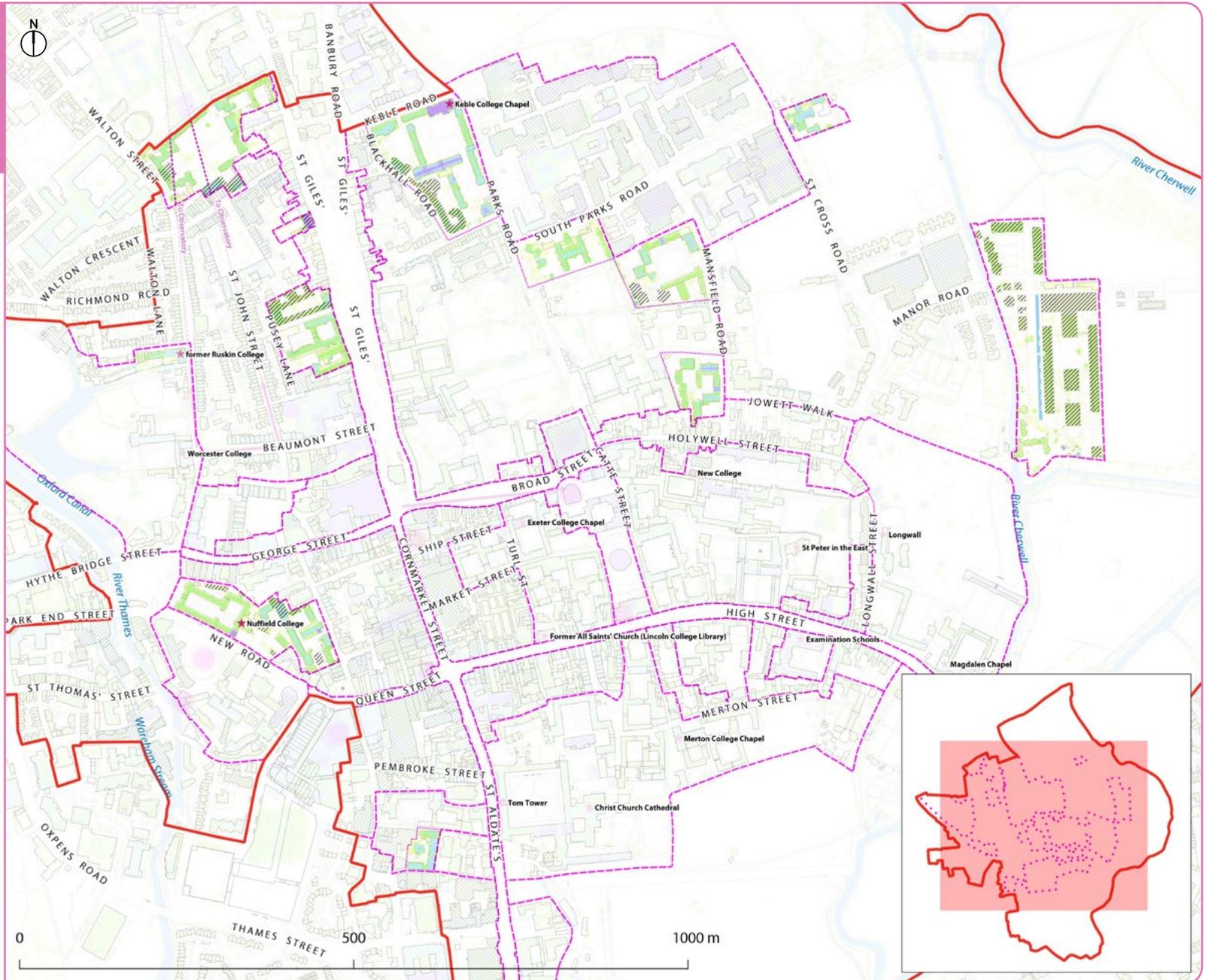
Elevated panorama

Designed public view

Focal point

Landmarks

Source: Building height data based on environment agency lidar DTM and DSM 2m



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4.4.10 Movement and activity



Theme 26: tranquility

Traffic

- The setting of several colleges is harmed by the volume of traffic. For example, traffic queuing at junctions, e.g. outside Nuffield College and Rhodes House, deliveries along New Inn Hall Street and a sharp bend outside Linacre College.

Cycling

- The main entrance to a college often attracts clusters of parked bicycles on the street – while this gives the street an attractive sense of activity and is one of the characteristic sights of Oxford, large numbers are an impediment to pedestrians on narrow pavements as well as preventing full appreciation of several listed buildings e.g. on New Inn Hall Street outside St Peter's.

Pedestrian

- Areas around the main entrance to a college tend to be busy with a regular footfall. Pinch points include the north end of Parks Road by Keble, where there is a steady stream of pedestrians moving towards the Parks and very narrow pavements by the college's main entrance.
- Minor, secondary streets around the perimeter of colleges often lack activity because the buildings face inwards and there is limited footfall.
- Some colleges occupy secluded sites on the periphery that receive little passing traffic e.g. St Catherine's College.



Busy traffic queuing outside Nuffield College harms the setting of listed buildings

4.4.11 Archaeology



Theme 12: archaeology



Oxford Archaeological Action Plan further detail and guidance

- The modern colleges were built upon land that was once streets and town houses, or open fields (e.g. Keble and St Catherine's), while Nuffield occupies the former canal basin.
- The more recent date of their architecture means that the grounds of modern college sites have sometimes experienced a greater degree of disturbance than many earlier colleges; nevertheless, undeveloped parts of the college sites are highly likely to preserve evidence of earlier occupation.
- Therefore the below-ground archaeological potential of these areas to reveal evidence of the pre-historic, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval occupation that predated the modern colleges is considered to be high. For example, twenty-first century excavations at Somerville College and Mansfield College have uncovered parts of the Royalist Civil War defences.



Surviving section of the Civil War defences in the garden of Rhodes House

4.5 Useful documents and further guidance



Refer to the following Historic Urban Character Assessments on the Oxford City Council website for more detailed accounts of the character zone. The keyplan shows their boundaries.

Sub-zone 1: Early foundations within the medieval walls

- HUCA 8 Thames Crossing and Floodplain: Thames Waterfront.
- HUCA 10 Thames Crossing: Colleges and University.
- HUCA 32 The Eastern Colleges: Turl Street Colleges.
- HUCA 34 The Eastern Colleges: South of the High Street.
- HUCA 37 The Eastern Colleges: North of the High Street.

Sub-zone 2: Early foundations outside the medieval walls

- HUCA 23 Worcester College and Gloucester Green: Worcester College.
- HUCA 30 St Giles': St John's College Expansion.
- HUCA 31 St Giles': Medieval Colleges.
- HUCA 41 The Eastern Suburb: Magdalen College.

Sub-zone 3: Modern foundations from the mid nineteenth century onwards

- HUCA 13 Castle and Periphery: Nuffield College.
- HUCA 17 City Centre Commercial Core: New Inn Hall Street.
- HUCA 28 St Giles': Ashmolean Museum and Colleges.
- HUCA 29 St Giles': Townhouses.
- HUCA 38 Holywell and Northeast Expansion: Mansfield Road.



Other useful documents include:

Oxford Heritage Walks Book 1: On foot from Oxford Castle to St Giles', Malcolm Graham 2013

Oxford Heritage Walks Book 2: On foot from Broad Street, Malcolm Graham 2014

Oxford Heritage Walks Book 3: On foot from Cattle Street to Parson's Pleasure, Malcolm Graham 2015

Oxford Heritage Walks Book 4: On foot from Paradise Street to Sheepwash, Malcolm Graham 2016

See also section 9.0 of the Conservation Area Appraisal for a full list of useful sources and publications

