

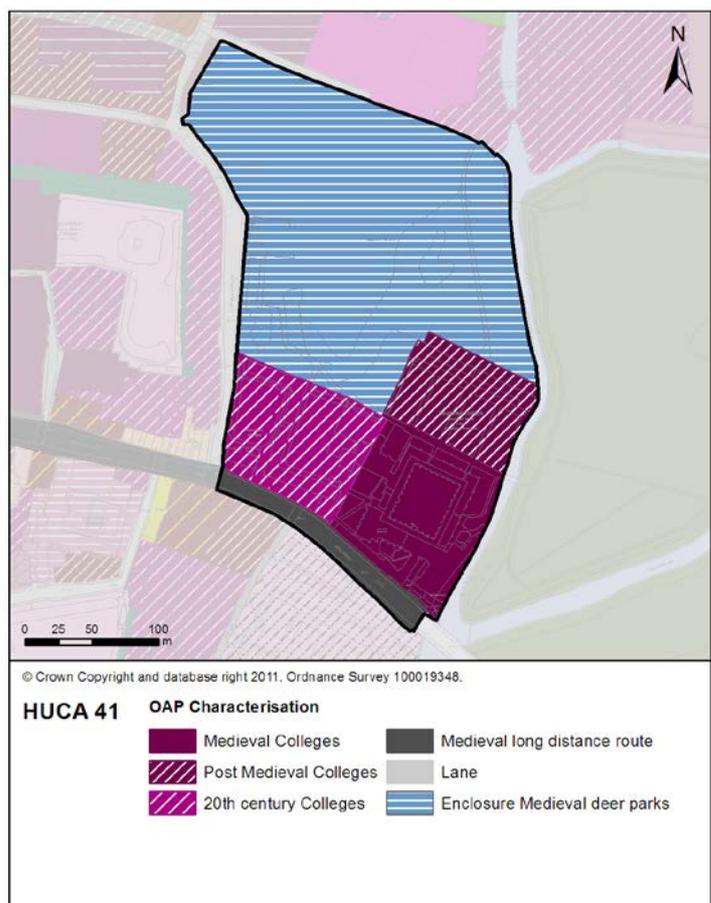
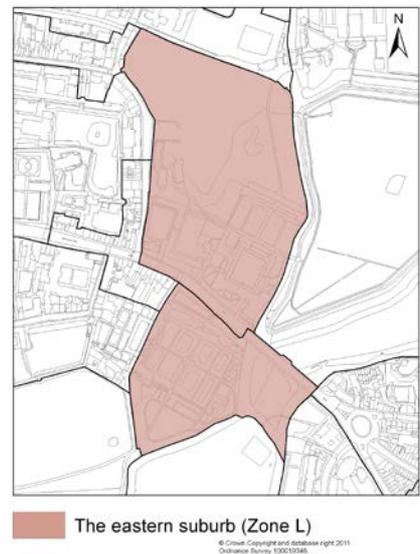
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 41:
EASTERN SUBURB- MAGDALEN COLLEGE**

The HUCA is located within broad character Zone L: The eastern suburb.

The broad character zone is comprised of the area beyond the former medieval Eastgate dominated by Magdalen College and the Botanic Gardens.

Summary characteristics

- Dominant period: Late medieval with substantial 18th and 19th century architecture.
- Designations: Eight Grade I, five Grade II*, eleven Grade II listings. Grade I Registered Park and Garden Garden. Central Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Potential: Potential for important remains relating to medieval suburban development, the 12th-13th century Jewish Burial Ground, the two sites of the medieval St John's Hospital, medieval and post-medieval tenements fronting onto High Street and later Gravel Walk, also college and college garden archaeology.
- Character: Medieval, 18th and 19th century college quads and precincts, post-medieval deer park.
- Spaces: Significant green space comprising of formal quad and precinct lawns and informal lightly wooded deer park.
- Road morphology: medieval extra-mural wide, sinuous streets.
- Plot morphology: Large regular plots located within extensive 15th century walled precinct. No medieval tenement plot survival but a number of historic boundaries reflected in later building lines.
- The natural topography is primarily Northmoor First Terrace rising gradually from a height of around 56m OD on the banks of the Cherwell to a height of around 60m OD at Holywell.
- Survival of townscape elements:
 - Late medieval and post-medieval college buildings and 15th century perimeter wall.



Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

- Line of gravel walk and historic tenements reflected in Longwall Quad Library.
- Medieval fabric survives from the Hospital of St John.
- Designed landscape and post medieval Deer Park.
- Late Saxon and medieval High Street (formerly Bridge Street).

Description

This character area is formed by the enclosed walled precinct of Magdalen College located outside the former historic Eastgate of the city. The area is comprised of a primary 15th century medieval quadrangle with ancillary ranges and with later 18-20th century quadrangles and ranges. The college contains a series of designed landscapes incorporating formal lawns and a post-medieval deer park. The extensive college water meadows and walks located further east fall outside the study area.

The college buildings fronting onto the High Street, notably the 15th century Bell tower, dominate the eastern approach to Oxford over the Magdalen Bridge. The high 15th century precinct wall forms the eastern frontage of Longwall Street and dominates the street. The river Cherwell forms the eastern boundary of the character area.

The college buildings are grouped broadly into three blocks, the 15th century two storey cloistered Great Quadrangle and adjacent ranges centred around the remaining fabric of the medieval hospital of St John. The 18th century simplified neo-Palladian range and lawns of the New Buildings to the north, and the Victorian gothic buildings of St Swithins Quadrangle and Longwall Quadrangle that represent the westward extension of the college

over former High Street tenements and the former 19th century site of Magdalen College School.

The morphology of the area is a mixture of large formal designed spaces and small irregular spaces representing remnant medieval plot alignments. The disjuncture in the frontage alignments represents the orientation of the former Hospital of St John onto the High Street and to the west the alignment of former medieval tenements that were rebuilt in the 15th century and set back from the current road to allow a gravel walk to form an approach to the college gate.



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

Historical value- means of connecting with the past

The area is located outside of the Late Saxon defended burh and medieval walled city, on the eastern approach, next to the site of the historic crossing point over the River Cherwell. Some form of crossing has existed here from at least 1004, although as the eastern end of the High Street noticeably curves south to meet the Magdalen Bridge which may indicate that the crossing post-dates the laying out of the burh. By the late 12th century tenement plots, a medieval hospital and a

Jewish burial ground had been established on the site of the current college. Subsequently in 1231 part of the Jewish burial ground was granted to the hospital by the King and a new hospital was established near the river crossing. The Jewish burial ground moving south of the High Street (formerly Bridge Street). By this time the urban morphology of the north side of the High Street had largely been set, comprising a series of domestic tenements between the Eastgate and the hospital with a large open space to the rear, probably open fields although some small plots may have fronted onto Longwall Street. The hospital site and land was granted to William Waynfleet in 1458 who founded Magdalen College.

Much of the medieval hospital was subsequently demolished, although some structures were retained and incorporated into the college. Agas' map of 1578 illustrates the 15th century Great Quadrangle with a smaller quad underlying the present President's Lodgings to the west. The college gardens at this point comprised a series of enclosed spaces with formal designs as well as orchards, pastures and avenues. During the Civil War the college became a Royalist garrison with gun emplacement and armoury. Ordnance and cannons were placed in the College Grove. Trees were cut down in the college walks and a battery was set up to defend the river crossing. Preparations were also made to flood the meadows. By the time of Loggan's map of 1675 the impact of the Civil War had already been ameliorated. Formal designed gardens had been extended and a bowling green had been inserted into the grove. Davis' map of 1797 depicts a less complex garden arrangement with the parterres of the 16th and 17th century replaced by lawns and the enclosed gardens replaced by the monumental 'New Buildings'. The tree lined avenues of The Grove had also been removed and the deer park had begun to take its present shape. In the mid-19th century the row of domestic tenements and the Greyhound Inn located outside the Eastgate were replaced by Magdalen College school and stables. This area was later incorporated into the college with the school building retained as the New Library.



The late 15th century Magdalen College Bell tower viewed from Magdalen Bridge

The character area provides an exceptional illustration of periods of medieval and post-medieval investment in higher education and notable developments in collegiate architecture and garden design. The large crenellated 15th century precinct wall along Longwall Street can be seen as a distinct statement of independence from the authority of the adjacent walled town.

Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence

The character has notable potential for medieval and post-medieval remains, including the late 12th-13th century Jewish burial ground, the 1st and 2nd site of the medieval Hospital of St John the Baptist and related cemetery, medieval and post-medieval tenements along High Street and later Gravel Walk and also water supply systems for the hospital sites including the Crowell Channel (known to run along Longwall Street). The character area also has the potential to preserve evidence of structural remains, garden archaeology, material culture and environmental remains relating to the evolution of the medieval and post-medieval college. The Urban Archaeological Database records twenty-seven archaeological events in the character area. Previous investigations have revealed elements of the second medieval hospital and cemetery, the remains of Gravel Walk and the medieval and post-medieval tenements located to the rear. To the east of Longwall Street 13th century pits and traces of medieval ridge and furrow have been recorded. An extensive magnetometer survey has revealed elements of past garden design. Post-medieval features and finds include wig curlers, clay pipes and domestic pottery. A substantial ditch recorded in the deer park may have formed part of the Royalist Civil War defences.

Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation

The character area has exceptional aesthetic value. It contains nationally important designed spaces and buildings and important views to and from the college along the eastern approach to Oxford and from the flood meadow. The significance of the college gardens and deer park are reflected in its status as a Grade I Registered Park and Garden. The 15th century college tower is a strong visual feature, far taller than any of the associated structures of the college, dominating the High Street scene. The college is predominately styled in medieval and Victorian Gothic however the New Buildings, built 1733-4, are a notable classically designed addition in neo-Palladian style. The 1990s Grove Building on the western edge of the college deer park is also notable for the conscious revival of Tudor-Gothic design and stone construction.

The Headington and Taynton stone used in the construction of the 15th century college has been extensively replaced by Clipsham and greyish French stone in the 1970s and 1980s because of pollution damage.

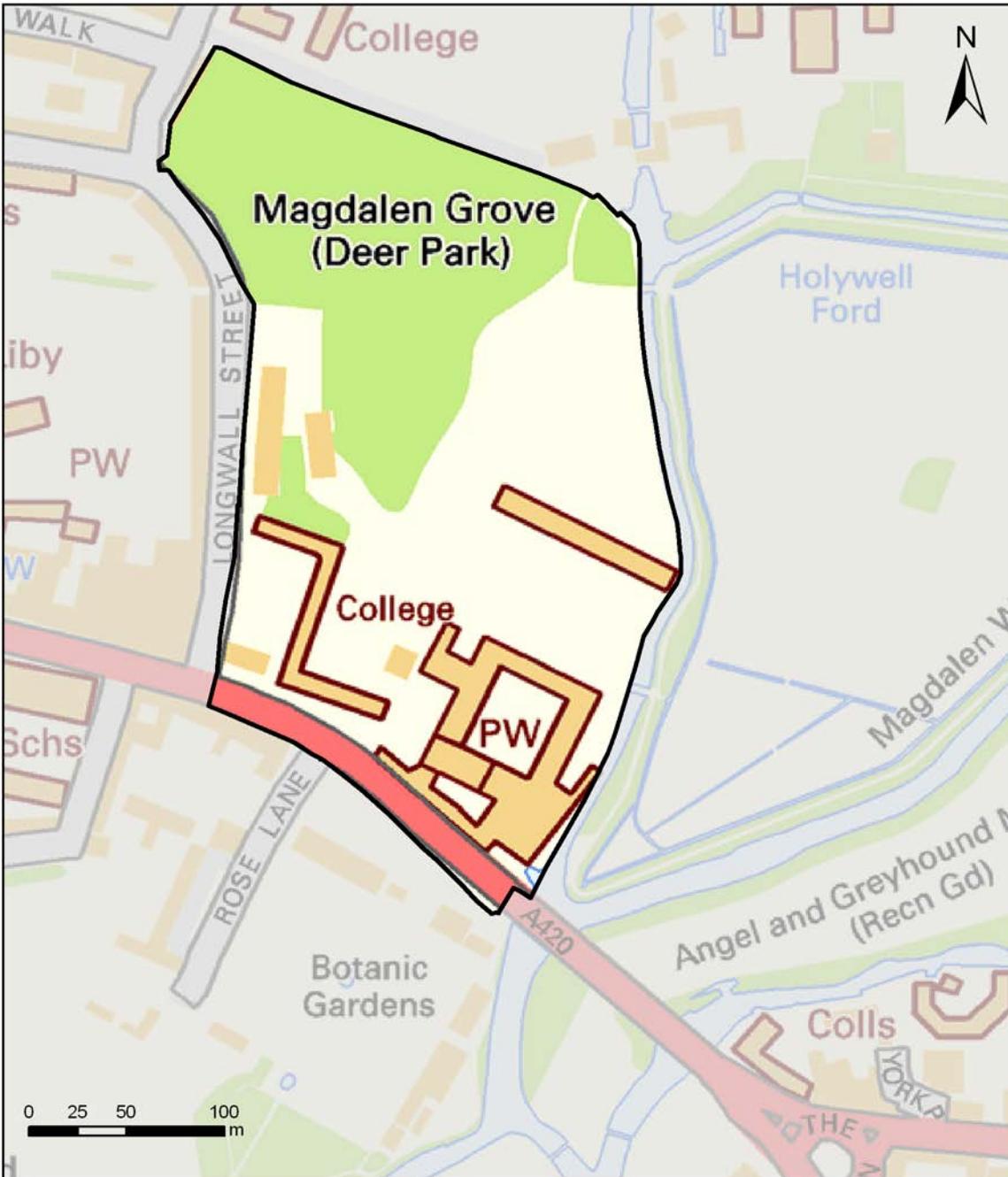
Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

There is controlled public access to the college and its grounds. The college is an important and iconic element of the public space along the eastern approach. A punting stage is located adjacent to the college.

Version: 8/2/2013



Part of the Grove Building to the left and Victorian Longwall Quadrangle to the right.



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HUCA 41 Orientation map