

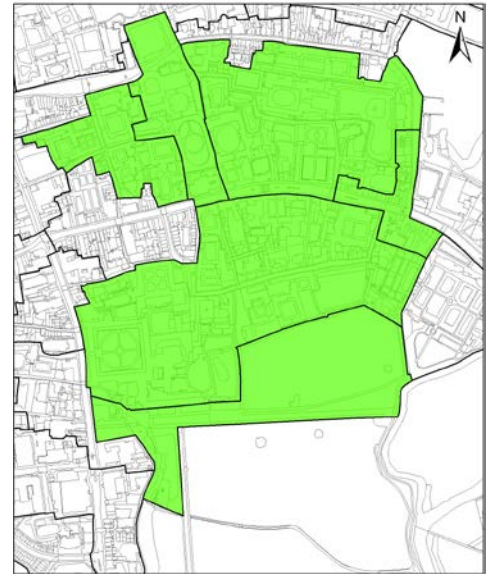
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 36:  
THE EASTERN COLLEGES- FORMER EASTGATE**

**The HUCA is located within broad character Zone K: The eastern colleges.**

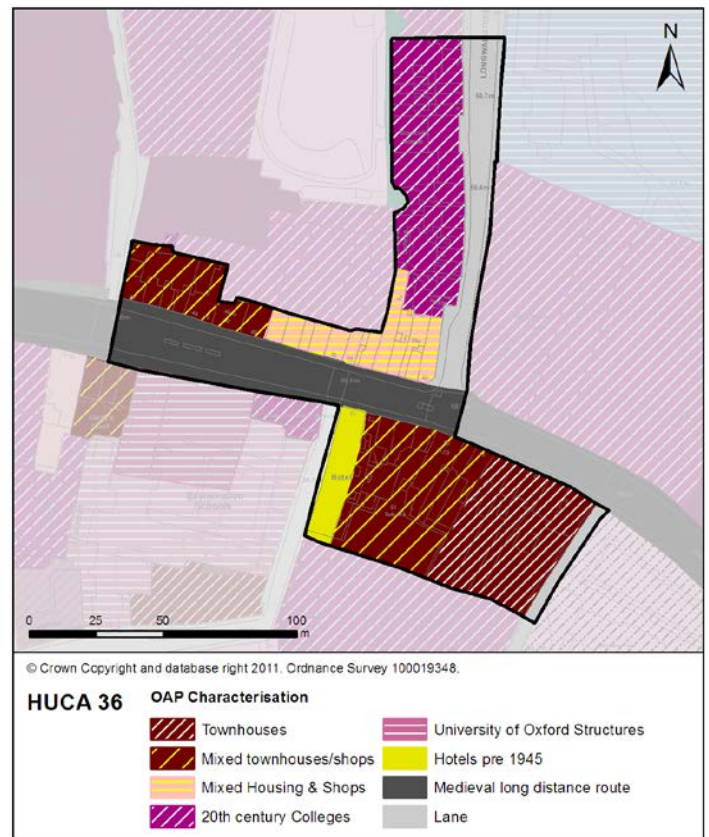
*The broad character zone comprises of the eastern part of the historic city which is dominated the by enclosed quadrangles, gardens and monumental buildings of the medieval and post medieval University and colleges.*

**Summary characteristics**

- Dominant period: Post-medieval.
- Designations: Two Grade I, three Grade II\*, twenty-one Grade II listings. Central Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Interest: The area has high potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. It includes part of the line of the medieval town wall and the site of the former medieval Eastgate as well as areas of historic tenements..
- Character: Townhouses, Narrow plots, mixed houses and shops, modern college accommodation.
- Spaces: The principal open space is provided by the street network with the wide High Street and the side streets leading of it. Building density is high and the frontages are continuous.
- Road morphology: Curving Late Saxon thoroughfare, extra-mural and intra-mural side streets.
- Plot morphology: Short, narrow truncated plots
- **The character area is located on the Northmoor First Terrace at a height of around 60m OD.**
- Survival of townscape elements:
  - Medieval and post-medieval tenement plots.
  - Medieval street network.
  - Late medieval -19<sup>th</sup> century listed buildings.



**The eastern colleges (Zone K)**  
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**Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.**

## Description

This character area is comprised of three and four storey shop fronted and residential townhouses, purpose built college accommodation and the Eastgate Hotel. The area is formed by properties located either side of the former Eastgate on High Street and along the east frontage of Longwall Street. A second building line of college properties to the rear of Longwall Street forms an enclosed yard. The buildings in this area mostly used for retail, the hospitality industry and for student accommodation

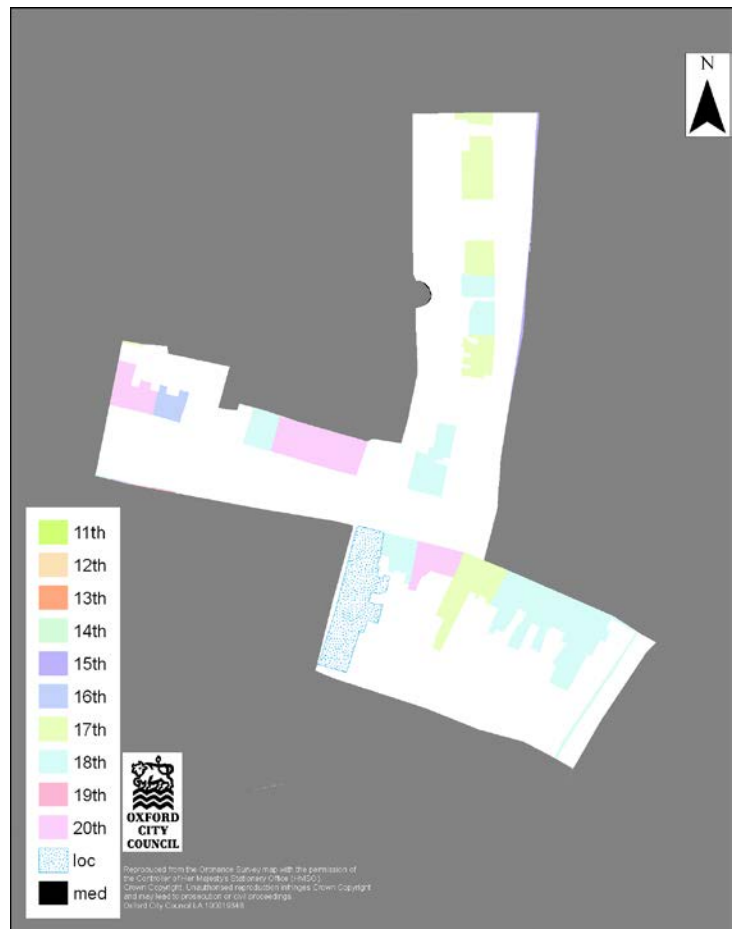
The dominant buildings fronting onto the High Street are substantial four storey Georgian townhouses often with stuccoed fronts and shops on the ground floor. The land to the rear of the southern High Street frontage contains a hotel car park and three large garden lawns. The road junction is a busy pinch point for buses, cyclists and cars avoiding the restricted access section of the High Street.

The character area forms a coherent area of largely post-medieval to 18<sup>th</sup> century town houses and shops that contrast with the monumental University and college architecture to the east and west. The buildings occupy medieval and post-medieval narrow plots. The street frontages are continuous, with properties opening onto the street. Building density is general high with little green space and intensive development to the rear of the plots.

## Historical value- means of connecting with the past

The character area is located either side of the former Eastgate of the medieval town. The date and character of the defences in this part of town are not well understood. The original Saxon burh may have been smaller with the original eastgate located further to the west. The current defensive line was reinforced with a wall and bastions in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The northern part of the character borders a surviving stretch of wall and bastion in the grounds of New College. To date presence of the in-filled city ditch has not been confirmed south of the Eastgate.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Crutched Friars established a site outside of the Eastgate but this foundation is



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



Longwall Street looking north

poorly understood. The Eastgate would have controlled entry into the walled town and Longwall Street is notable for being used by Royal visitors in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century to bypass the walled town when travelling to the Royal Beaumont Palace located to the north-west. The medieval Eastgate itself was demolished in 1771.

The built character of the area allows for the appreciation of economic revival and redevelopment of Oxford in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century when many of the frontage townhouses were built or re-fronted.

**Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence**

This character area has high archaeological potential for Late Saxon, medieval and post medieval remains. Of particular interest would be information relating to the character of the Late Saxon settlement and defences. The area also has the potential to preserve information about the medieval defences, the east gate, the character of medieval and post-medieval settlement and the poorly understood precinct of the Crutched Friars. The Urban Archaeological Database records

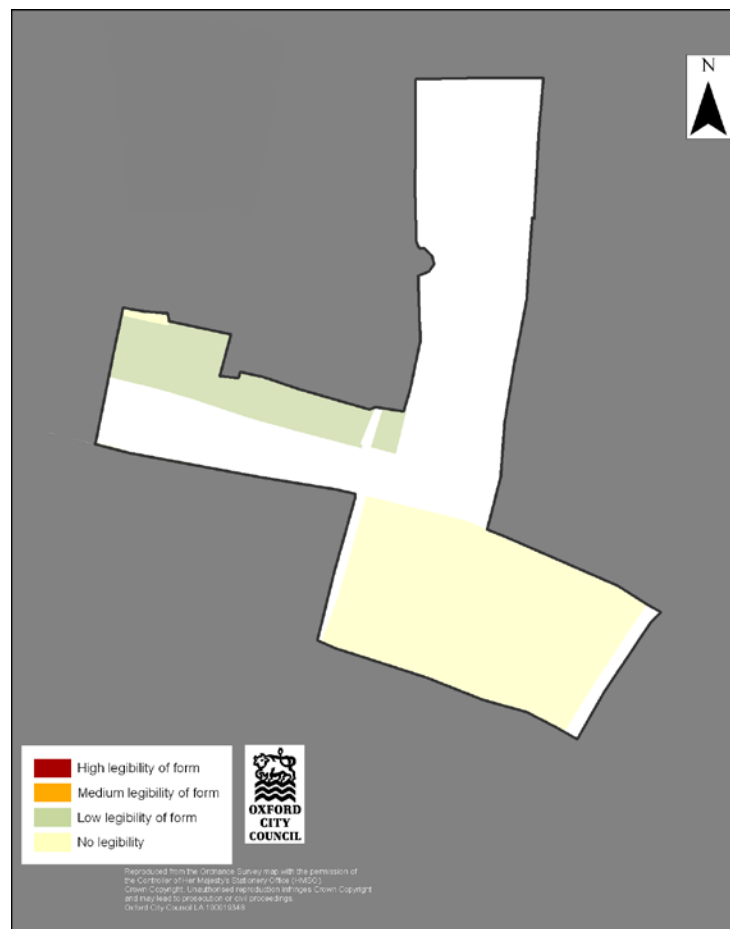


**High Street and Longwall Street junction looking west**

twenty-four archaeological events for this area. Previous investigations in this area have examined parts of the medieval Eastgate, a bastion of the city wall at the Eastgate Hotel and part of the medieval central road drain known as 'the Kennel'. Samples of poppy from the Kennel along the High Street indicated the presence of areas of waste ground nearby in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Excavations to the east of the Eastgate have recorded 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> domestic activity and evidence for a hiatus of activity until the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation**

This character area contains a number of attractive shop fronts with canopies and coherent rows of townhouse that provide a strong contrast to the surrounding monumental college and University architecture. The character area is strongly influenced by the imposing stone built structures of the adjacent Magdalen College and the 15<sup>th</sup> century college retaining wall along Longwall Street.



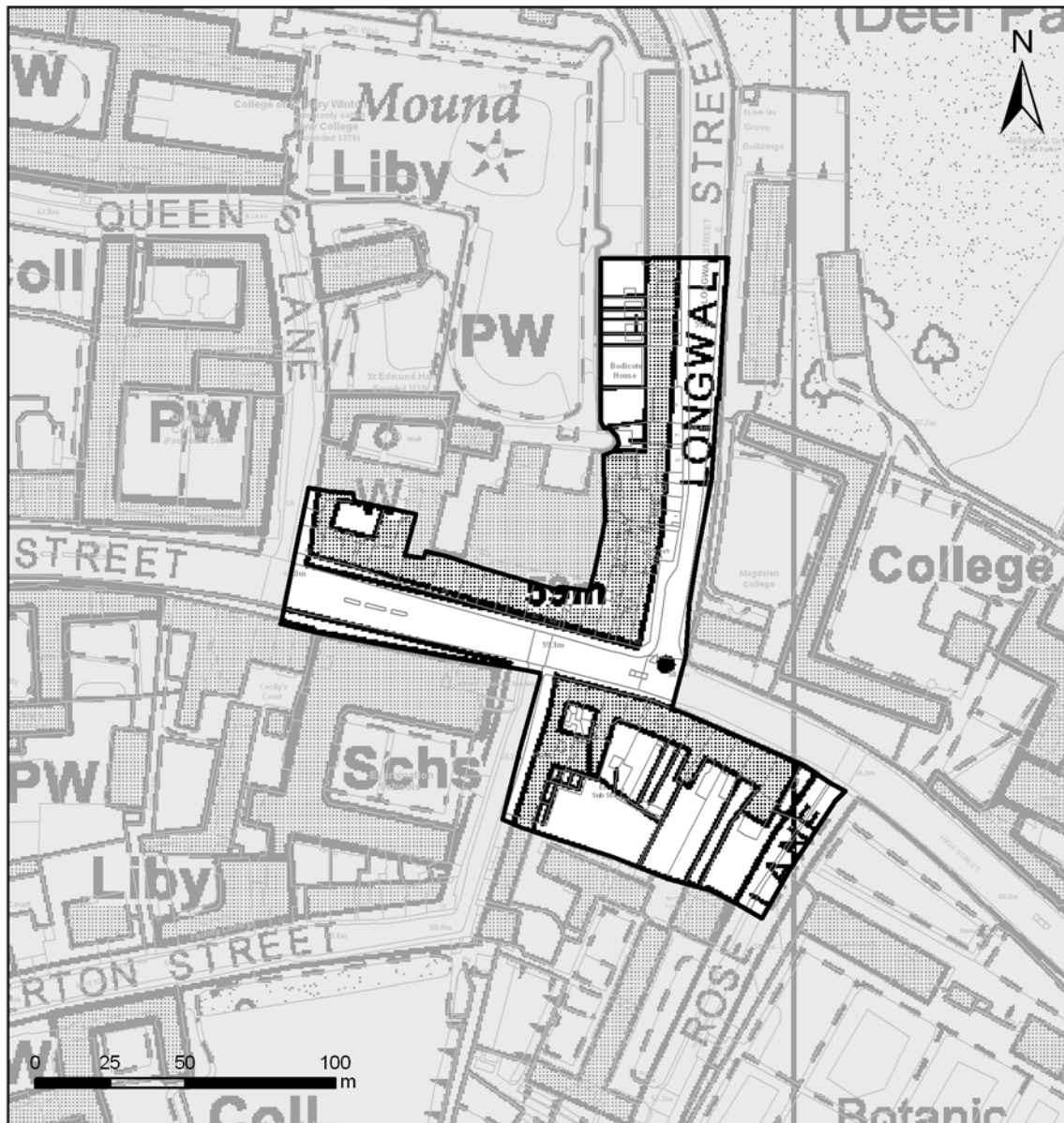
**Assessment of medieval tenement survival.**



### Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

The character area has communal value as a detached area of small shops and as the eastern approach, where visitors from this direction first experience central Oxford. The road junction is a busy one for cars navigating the controlled traffic system and for student cyclists approaching Magdalen Bridge and Longwall Street.

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**HUCA 36** Orientation map

