

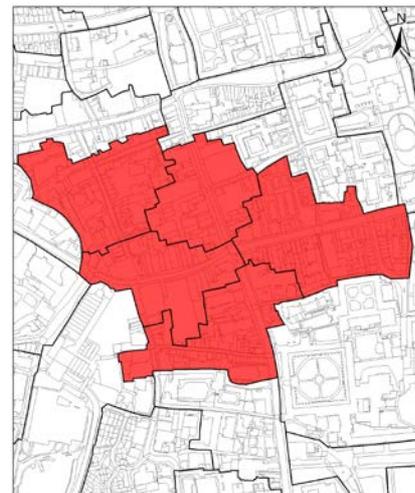
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 17:
CITY CENTRE COMMERCIAL CORE- NEW INN HALL STREET**

The HUCA is located within broad character Zone E: City centre and commercial core.

The broad character zone consists of the central historic core around Carfax crossroads linking main axial north-south and south-west Late Saxon streets. The zone forms a coherent central area in the city where the roads, lanes and tenements broadly reflect a history of medieval to modern commercial activity.

Summary characteristics

- Dominant period: 19th century.
- Designations: Four Grade I and twenty-two Grade II listings. Part of 13th century town wall (Scheduled Ancient Monument County No 26). Central Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Potential: There is previous archaeological evidence for a Bronze Age Barrow on St Michael's Street. The area has potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement remains, including remains of the town defences and the 'failed' college of St Mary's. It has been suggested that an early line of the Saxon burh defences may lie along the break of slope west of New Inn Hall Street. There are extant parts of the 13th century town wall and its bastions in the northern part of the character area, with rebuilt sections incorporated into the properties along St Michael's Street.
- Character: Post-medieval town houses, 19th and 20th century college buildings, University faculty building and the Oxford Union precinct.
- Spaces: St Peter's College, Frewin Hall and the Social Studies faculty all retain enclosed gardens that are not publicly accessible.
- Road morphology: Late Saxon rectilinear planned grid with Victorian extension through to George Street
- Plot morphology: The rectangular block formed by St Michael's Street, New Inn Hall Street and Shoe Lane are Late Saxon and medieval in origin. The eastern side of New Inn Hall Street and southern side of St Michaels Street retain some medieval tenement morphology on the street frontage which large irregular



City Centre and Commercial Core (Zone E)
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HUCA 17 OAP Characterisation			
	Townhouses		Offices/Commercial
	Mixed townhouses/shops		Mixed Shops/Offices
	Narrow plots		Offices post 1945
	Victorian Townhouses		Inns pre 1800
	Victorian Terraces 1850-1900		Leisure
	Mixed Housing & Shops		Medieval long distance route
	Church pre 1086		Medieval medium distance route
	non conformist chapel		Lane
	Civic		Alley
	19th Century Colleges		Modern Roads
	20th century Colleges		Square or Place
	Modern shopping centre		Transport infrastructure/links

Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

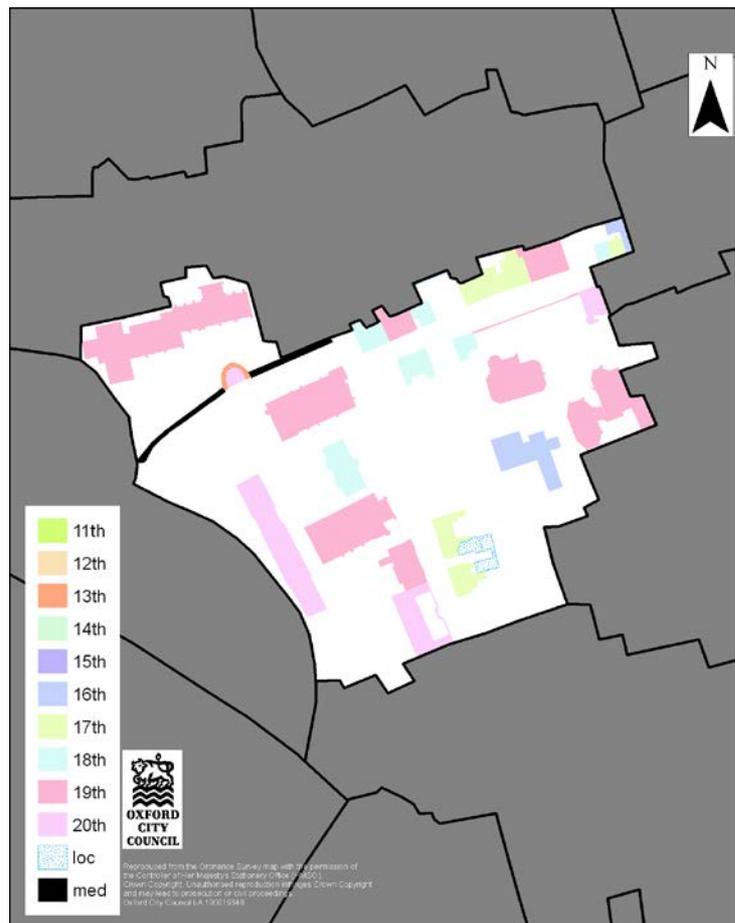
amalgamated precincts behind. The narrow plots on the north side of St Michaels Street represent the post-medieval colonisation of open space between the intra-mural road and the town wall. The area contains a mixture of small regular narrow plots and larger regular and irregular plots.

- The character area is located on the Summertown-Radley Second Terrace at a height of 61-64m OD.
- Survival of townscape elements:
 - Multiple listed buildings.
 - Medieval town wall and bastion (RCHME bastion No 1 and rebuilt parts of further bastions within properties on St Michael's Street).
 - Rebuilt sections of town wall in properties along north side of St Michael's Street.
 - Late Saxon street plan.
 - The curve of castle ditch and related siege works are preserved in line of Bulwarks Lane.
 - The 16th century Gateway to Frewin Hall.
 - The 12th century vaulted cellar at Frewin Hall.
 - Post-medieval tenement plots north of St Michael's Street.
 - Plaque to John Wesley 30-32 New Inn Hall Street.
 - Part of the stone chimney of Trillocks Inn is visible on the western New Inn Hall Street frontage.
 - The 19th century Oxford Union buildings.
 - Early 20th century college (St Peters).

Description

The character area is located the north western part of the Saxon and medieval town and follows two narrow streets of the Late Saxon street grid. The area is comprised of small and medium sized post-medieval town houses and mixed college and commercial buildings including the precinct of Frewin Hall (Brasenose College), the former Oxford Boys' High School (now the University Social Studies Faculty which incorporates a well preserved section of the medieval town wall and bastion), most of modern St Peters College, the Oxford Union complex and further shops, offices, and churches.

The built character is a combination of 17th-18th century small townhouses and larger Victorian and modern collegiate buildings and late built churches. There are some structures built originally for residential or religious purposes which are now used as ancillary college buildings or for commercial use. Buildings are mostly three storey, with near continuous frontages that open



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

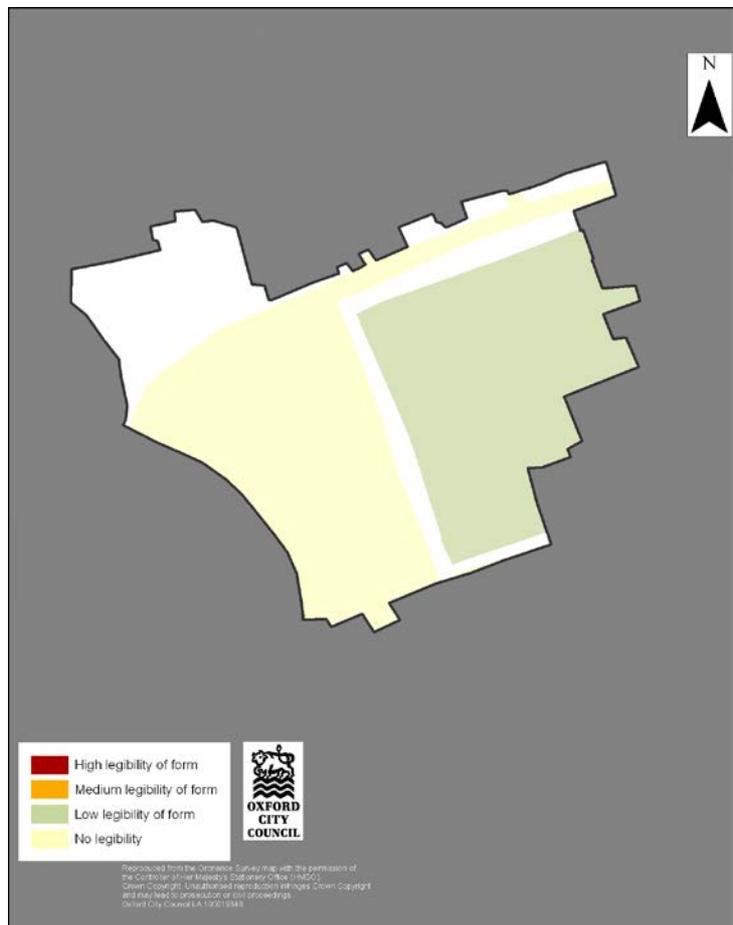
directly onto the street (with the notable exception of the lawn enclosed by railings in front of St Peters College and wooded low walled garden in front of the Oxford Union).

Historical value- means of connecting with the past

The character area is located within the western part of the Late Saxon burh, known to have been established by the early 10th century. The Norman Conquest saw infrastructure investment and expansion of Oxford with the cloth and leather trade driving the 12th and early 13th century growth. Tenement patterns evolved with the growth of the town with subdivision of Late Saxon and Norman plots as the town expanded, especially along the street frontages associated with the market centred of the Carfax crossroads. From the late 13th century and 14th century the economy faltered the halls and colleges of the University who took advantages of low property prices especially in the north and eastern parts of the city.

Documentary evidence from the 13th century has allowed the reconstruction of medieval tenement pattern which comprised of large regular plots with some subdivision. Two 13th-14th century academic halls are recorded in the area along with 15th century monastic college of St Mary's. This was founded in 1435 for Augustinian monks and incorporated the 12th century Frewin Hall. St Mary's is notable for being one of the few medieval colleges to have been demolished without later re-foundation. The vaulted cellar of an earlier stone house dated to the 11th-12th centuries still survives within the modern Frewin Hall, along with a 16th century gateway. The college was not formally dissolved in the 16th century and continued as a secular hall for a short time. By 1562 it had become a charity school. The monastic college chapel survived until the mid-17th century when Brasenose College was given permission to build their own college chapel using material from the earlier structure. Brasenose students began to use Frewin Hall from the 1940s.

This character area comprises of backstreet located away from the main market area and Agas' 1578 map shows only a few structures fronting onto New Inn Hall Street at this time the remainder being orchards and gardens and an intra-mural space along the southern part of the 13th century town wall. By Loggan's 1675 map a near continuous street frontage of town houses



Assessment of medieval tenement survival



The 16th century gateway to Frewin Hall

had been established with the intra-mural space occupied by truncated town house plots. Fire was a constant threat to the medieval and post medieval town and in 1644 a fire started in George Street affected much of the western half of the town between Cornmarket and New Inn Hall Street as far as St Aldates, destroying perhaps 300 houses.

St Peter's College is a 20th century foundation which occupies the site of two 13th century halls, Trillock's Inn later New Inn Hall, and Rose Hall. The college also includes Linton House (built 1794), once a headquarters of the Oxford Canal Company. Trillock's Inn, was rebuilt in the 15th century and renamed New Inn Hall. It maintained the status of hall until 1887, when it passed to Balliol College, subsequently becoming part of St Peter's College. The west range of Trillock's Inn was demolished and the east-wing along New Inn Hall Street has been rebuilt, although part of a stone chimney remains visible on the street frontage.

The character area is also notable for being the location of the first Methodist Meeting House in Oxford, this was the building now numbered 32-34 New Inn Hall Street. A plaque on the wall commemorates the fact that John Wesley preached there on 4 July 1783, and on several later occasions. A replacement meeting-house, The Wesley Memorial Chapel and Hall, was subsequently built further down the street, opening in 1818. The first Quaker meeting place in Oxford was also located on New Inn Hall Street in the home of the surgeon Richard Bettris from around 1654. The meeting place was later moved to 63-64 St Giles.

The character area includes the building and grounds of the former City of Oxford High School for Boys which fronts onto George Street and retains a scheduled section of the medieval town wall in the garden behind. The school was built in 1881 and designed by Thomas Jackson, it closed in 1966 and the building is now the History faculty of the University. The Oxford Union Society, a University debating society, was founded in 1825, moving its premises to St Michael's Street in 1857. The original buildings were designed by Alfred Waterhouse and opened in 1879. A north wing, designed by Walter Mills and Thorpe, was added in 1910-11. The buildings are not formerly part of the University but are run by a charitable trust.

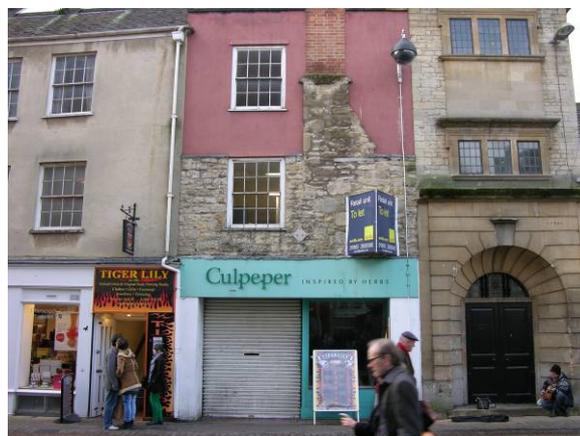
New Inn Hall Street was extended north in 1872 to join George Street. It originally turned right along what in 1899 became St Michael's Street, representing the intra-mural street next to open space along the inside the town wall.

The fragments of medieval academic halls along New Inn Hall Street are illustrative of the growth of educational establishments in the west as well as the east and northern parts of the medieval town, although these establishments failed to thrive like their eastern counterparts. The tightly packed town houses along the north side of St Michael's Street are illustrative of the 17th and 18th century expansion of the town.. The former Oxford School for Boys on George Street and Central School for Girls on New Inn Hall Street are illustrative of the 1870s Education Act which led to the formation of a school board for Oxford. The extensive Oxford Union Debating Society complex allows for an appreciation of the Victorian political ascendancy of Oxford trained bureaucrats, military personnel and politicians in national and world affairs.

Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence

The character area has good potential for prehistoric, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains subject to the extent of later cellars and disturbance. The Urban Archaeological Database records forty-seven archaeological events within the character area.

The medieval city lies within an extensive Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age monumental ritual and funerary landscape located on the 2nd gravel terrace between the Thames and Cherwell Rivers. A substantial curving ditch, thought to be part of a Bronze Age barrow was recorded during excavations at 24a St Michael's Street. Previous



Former Trillocks Inn Chimney breast on New Inn Hall Street

archaeological investigations have also recovered Late Saxon pottery and street surfaces, Late Saxon or medieval pits and evidence for the Saxon and medieval defences. The Frewin Hall complex retains part of a 16th century Frewin gateway and 17th century doorway. Behind the gateway there is a long rubble-built east west range that incorporates likely 17th century fabric. An important excavation at Frewin Hall investigated the under-croft of a Norman stone house located beneath the current 16th century building. Excavations also identified a 13th-14th century construction trench for the former college chapel. Little is now known the layout and design of St Mary's except from documentary sources. The results of the archaeological investigations at Frewin Hall suggested that it had similar plan-form to contemporary sites at Christ Church and Corpus Christi with a main quadrangle on the street frontage, the college chapel to the north and ancillary buildings nearby.

Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation

Both New Inn Hall Street and St Michael's Street have strong aesthetic appeal and are pleasing streets with an interesting mix of architectural styles. The tower of the Wesleyan Memorial Church on Decorated Gothic Style (1877-8) is a notable landmark, visible from along St Michael's Street. Several other distinctive buildings contribute the architectural distinctiveness of the area, these include the former Oxford School for Boys (1879-81) in Elizabethan and Jacobean style and the former Central School for Girls on New Inn Hall Street (now part of St Peter's College) built 1901, notable for its arts and crafts design. The courtyard in front of the Old Girls School and lawn enclosed by iron railing in front of St Peter's College break up the otherwise mostly continuous street frontage and create a sense of openness.

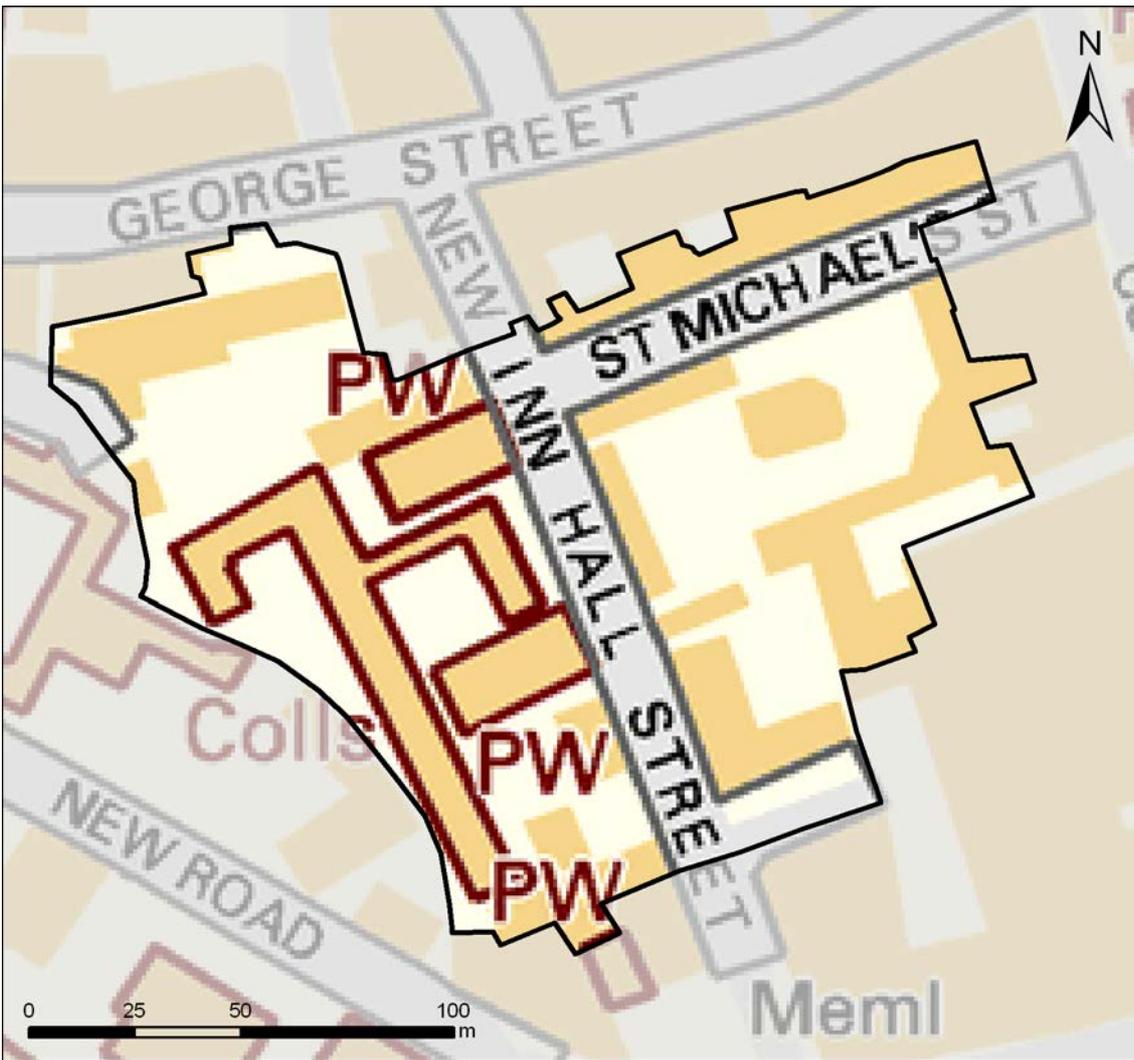
Other notable buildings include Victorian St Peter le Bailey Church (now part of St Peter's College), the former Oxford Canal Headquarters Linton House (also part of St Peter's College), the 16th century stone gateway to Frewin Hall and the polychromic brick of the Oxford Union Debating society (1856-7).

Mature and semi-mature tree cover is largely restricted to the gardens of the Oxford Union, Frewin Hall and St Peter's College, although a notable mature trees are located in front of St Peter's College and in front of the Social Sciences Faculty on George Street.

Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

The character has value as an architecturally stimulating and pleasant route between busier shopping areas of the town. The area has a strong link with non conformist meeting places and contains the Oxford Union which has played a distinctive role in the collective experience of generations of student members and speakers and maintains an international resonance in terms of perceptions of Oxford. .

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HUCA 17 Orientation map