



Oriel College, Oxford

BARTLEMAS, OXFORD

Conservation Plan – Assessment

Rev D - November 2005

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0. Executive Summary.

0.1. Bartlemas is an important green space for east Oxford, surrounded by dense suburban development, in an area where provision of local parks and public open space is relatively poor. The site currently comprises playing fields, with hedgerows, well-used allotments, and a nearby wood. The majority of the Area is in the ownership of Oriel College.

0.2. This report, commissioned by Oriel College, describes the Conservation Area and its surroundings in detail. It suggests that appropriate management strategies should be put in place to enhance the qualities of the space, and to achieve an appropriate balance between protecting the area in its current suburban seclusion, enhancing its rural origins, and opening up access and views from the surrounding city.

0.3. History. The Hospital and Chapel of St Bartholomew were founded c 1236 by Henry 1 to accommodate 12 lepers and a warden/chaplain, in 6 acres of cultivated land, in a well watered plateau within Cowley marsh. In 1329 ownership of the hospital was transferred to Oriel College. Historic elements which survive include:

- The Chapel, early 14th Century, Grade I Listed, in its own plot with south and west boundary defined by an old hedge
- Bartlemas House, rebuilt on the approximate site of the almshouse in 1649, Grade II* Listed
- Bartlemas Farmhouse, mainly 16th and 17th century with an earlier core, Grade II* Listed

Hedges and stone walls, showing historic boundaries.

0.4. Landscape. Principal vegetation features include:

- Mixed broadleaf/coniferous semi-natural woodland at Southfield Wood,
- A premium oak on Cowley Road,
- A sequence of ash swamp cypress and chestnut which line the track to Bartlemas Hamlet,
- Hedgerows which are currently species poor,
- A small orchard in the churchyard.

0.5. Wildlife. Habitats of interest include:

- The woodland, of particular interest with respect to protected species, bats badgers and reptiles.
- The buildings with potential to support bat roosts.
- Hedgerows, grassland and ditches which are relatively species poor at present.

0.6. Risks. Risks to the conservation area include:

- Inappropriate planting or management of landscape,
- Degradation of the boundaries,
- Disused buildings
- Erosion of its quality due to inappropriate development.

0.7. Opportunities for the site include:

- Improving the boundary to Cowley Road
- Improving the authenticity and habitat diversity of the surviving rural landscape
- Improving access and links to the surrounding city, whilst preserving the Area's secluded character.

1. Introduction

1.01. Purpose

This report was prepared for Gerald Inns, Master of Works of Oriel College, Oxford. Its purpose is to assess the Bartlemas Conservation Area at Cowley Road, Oxford.

The appraisal seeks to establish the baseline landscape and visual characteristics of the Bartlemas Conservation Area and its wider urban landscape context, whilst assimilating the complex historic evolution of the hamlet's landscape setting.

The Conservation Plan will assess the whole area within the ownership of Oriel College as an entity, to ensure the integrity of the core of the Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings.

1.02. Methodology

The appraisal begins with an overview of those planning policies and designations, which currently apply to the wider site, including the emerging Open Space Strategy for Oxford. This is followed by an assessment of the sites baseline landscape context, including its urban landscape, land use and access, landform and natural drainage, vegetation and ecology, based on site visits made during February and March 2005. A definition of discrete Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) and visual receptors who currently have views of the site is followed by an Outline Conservation Plan which, inter alia, defines areas of new public open space, development areas, access and circulation, views, bio-diversity/wildlife corridor enrichment and presentation/interpretation of the Bartlemas hospital hamlet.

1.03. Consultation.

Consultations have taken place with Nick Worlledge and Gemma Smith of Oxford City Council's Conservation Team, who have reviewed drafts of this report during 2005. It is envisaged that consultation will be widened to include the local community, which may lead to further revision.

2. Planning Policies and Designations

2.01. Land use planning in England is guided by and controlled through a framework of legislation, statutory guidance, case law and other supplementary documentation, produced by central, regional and local government. The purpose of this section is to briefly review those guidance notes, policies and designations, which relate to landscape issues and apply to the wider Bartlemas site.

2.02. Policy Guidance

Within the legislative framework provided by the various Planning Acts, Government has issued a number of policy guidance notes (PPGs) which outline the way the planning system should respond to objectives are broadly identified as sustainable development, a prosperous economy, reducing the need to travel, economic growth and social inclusion, alongside the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

2.03. PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (ODPM July 2002).

This guidance note provides the most recent guidance in relation to open space, sport and recreation matters and is of particular

relevance to the Bartlemas site in view of its current sport/allotment usage. This new guidance places emphasis upon the quality of open space, rather than the quantity and the setting of local standards. The emerging Oxford Open Space Strategy is a response to the requirements of PPG 17. Paragraph 33 of the guidance note proposes that planning obligations (i.e. Section 106 Agreements) should be used to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity and quality of local open space provision.

2.04. Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG 17 published by the ODPM in September 2002

The guide reflects the Government's policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation and sets out how local authorities can use the planning system to help deliver accessible, high quality and sustainable open spaces which meet local needs and are valued by local communities.

2.05. Local Planning Policy

The second draft Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 deposited in February 2003 sets out local planning policies in respect of open space provision. The vision aims to build on the high quality built and natural environment and as such, seeks inter alia, to conserve important open spaces and the conserve and enhance bio-diversity in Oxford. (Reference: paras 2.2.1 – 2.2.3).

Appendix 1 comprises an extract from the Local Plan, which identifies those planning policies, which apply to the wider Bartlemas site as follows:

2.06. Policy SR 2 – Protection of Open Air Sports Facilities

Both the Oriel College playing fields and the abandoned bowling green/tennis courts adjacent to the Cowley Road, are designated under this policy, which states that “.....*permission will not be granted where loss of open air sports facilities is involved*” Exceptions to this policy are possible, however, where there is a demonstrable need for the development or where there is no alternative non-greenfield sites available.

2.07. Policy NE 19 – Nature and the Environment

The copse to the north of Oriel College Sports Ground is designated a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). Under Policy NE 19 the City Council aims to protect SLINC's and Local Nature Reserves from the development that would have a significant adverse impact.

2.08. Policy NE 20 – Wildlife Corridors

Under policy NE 20 the City Council will not grant planning permission for development that would sever or harm the viability of wildlife corridors, unless the corridor can be replaced. The emerging Oxford Open Space Strategy examined opportunities for additional wildlife corridors linking between existing open spaces.

2.09. Policy SR 7 – Public Open Space

This policy requires suitable public open space to be provided on large scale business, commercial and institutional developments. The policy states that provision will be sought where there is a shortage of public open space in the vicinity, or the development would create a significant demand for such space. This policy further advises that as part of major new commercial developments contributions towards

the provision, or enhancement, of public squares will be sought by the Council.

2.10. Policy SR 8 Allotments

The Links Allotments off Bartlemas Close are subject to Policy SR 8 of the Local Plan, which states that the City Council will protect allotments in active cultivation from development.

2.11. Policy HS 29 Housing and Open Space

This policy states that the Council will require the provision of a minimum of 10% of a new residential site as public open space, when considering residential developments involving 20 or more dwellings or on a site of more than 0.4 hectares. The policy will only apply where there is a shortage of open space, or where the site contains, or adjoins, a feature of recreational, ecological, visual or historic interest, which it is desirable to conserve or enhance.

2.12. Making the Difference, a Cultural Study for Oxford

Published in May 2002, the strategy has two key objectives: the first, to make sure that Oxford and its surroundings remain as culturally rich for decades to come and the second, to break down boundaries, which restrict access to this culture for some of Oxford's residents and visitors.

2.13. Bartlemas Conservation Area

The Bartlemas Conservation Area, designated on 16th July 1976, extends from the southern boundary of the Oriel College playing fields southwards to the Cowley Road and Bartlemas Close – capturing the allotments, bowling green site, the Bartlemas Nursery School site and those recently constructed houses to the south of Bartlemas Cottage.

2.14. Oxford Open Space Strategy

The emerging Oxford Open Space Strategy has identified the fact that whilst the city is relatively well endowed with open space there are:

- gaps in the provision of access to local parks in East Oxford,
- the eastern part of the city generally has lower standards of open space provision per thousand population than the west of the city (i.e. 2.7 hectares per 1000).

The Strategy has also identified that the Links allotments, off Bartlemas Close, are well used. In 1997 100% of the plots were under active cultivation.

3. Historic development

3.01. Mediaeval

The hospital and chapel of St Bartholomew were founded c 1126 by Henry I, three years after St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. Originally built to accommodate 12 lepers plus a warden/chaplain, it was situated 'in quarantine' outside the eastern city walls of Oxford. The land belonged to the Manor of Headington, and provided 'a treeful grove with its own well' on a well watered plateau within Cowley Marsh. The original enclosure of cultivated land as set out in the

Hundred Rolls was 6 acres, together with some uncultivated woodland near the hospital.¹

The hospital foundation was endowed by King Henry, who redirected his rents from the town. His Royal Patronage also attracted gifts from wealthy land owners so that by the end of the 13th Century the foundation possessed a range of houses, rents and land over a considerable area. The hospital buildings comprised a simple stone chapel, the hospital itself and possibly a farmhouse, which was occupied by the chaplain/ warden.

The residents of Bartlemas were known as brethren, and lived, ate and prayed together. They worked in the garden that surrounded the hospital, which was set in meadows held as grazing by the butchers of Oxford for bullocks, cows, sheep and geese. In 1238 Pope Gregory conferred immunity on the Brethren from paying tithes on their garden produce, copse wood and livestock.

From its earliest days, there were problems with the administration of the Trust and from 1312 -1315 a succession of short lived appointments of wardens were variously accused of fraud and mismanagement. For example it is recorded that that in 1312, Adam de Weston was accused of selling rye, malt, hay and straw, without consent of the brethren and keeping the money for himself. In response Edward II drew up new regulations in 1316 for the hospital, reducing the number of brethren to 8 to include 2 in good health to work the farm, and appointing a chaplain's clerk - all to receive 9d a week, plus 5s a year for clothing. The Warden or master was to receive £4 a year and any surplus to be used to repair the buildings.²

3.02. Transfer to Oriel College and the 'Town versus Gown'

When in 1326 the wardenship was granted to Adam de Brome for life, the course of Bartlemas' history altered. De Brome was almoner to Edward II and had extensive connections in both the secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies. Already Rector of St Mary's Church (now the University Church), he had been granted authorisation by Edward to found a college of scholars (Oriel College) and became first provost of the college.³ The Chapel was either restored or rebuilt by Oriel College in early 14th Century.

Edward III transferred the hospital revenue (and its problems) to Adam's new College in 1329, in order that scholars could enjoy its wholesome air during times of pestilence. This meant that the hospital was no longer independent - the college held the purse strings and a Town versus Gown conflict was set in motion that continued intermittently for next 150 years with successive mayors refusing to pay their dues to College unless they designated the beneficiaries rather than the College. In 1536 the College had to obey a settlement agreed between it and the City: in return for its yearly rent, the city could nominate freemen to vacancies in the brethren - i.e. Bartlemas effectively became an almshouse for Oxford City.⁴

Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, frequent complaints were made that the College was profiting by the increase in value of the landholdings, but was not increasing stipends accordingly - although the brethren's income had been supplemented by a small increment for fuel in compensation for the Grove cut down in the Civil War, it had remained unchanged at 9d. They could no

¹ Case prepared on behalf of the St Bartholomews Committee of Oxford City Council, 1896

² Victoria County History, Vol 2

³ D W Price

⁴ Victoria County History Vol 4

longer afford to live at Bartlemas and moved to Oxford City to seek work. Various complaints on their behalf were dismissed by Commission for Charitable users in 17th Century, in 1840's and the 1850's, and by the Charity Commission in 1868. Finally they were investigated at length following pressure from the new City Council in 1890's. The Scheme of 1900 made the charity a municipal charity, and Oriel retained the chapel and its immediate surrounds. By 1970 only 4 pensioners remained, and in 1972 the Foundation was incorporated into Oxford City Charities.⁵

3.03. Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries - changes in use

The surroundings of Bartlemas are depicted on the 1605 map "*The description of certaine landes, leaes and meadowe groundes lieinge in Cowley in the Countye of Oxon*" (**Figure 1**). Bartlemas is indicated as "St Bartholomewes", **A**, Cowley Marsh, **B**, and "*The waye from Oxforde to Bartholomewes*", **C**, is shown terminating at the Chapel. (The causeway was constructed to the hospital from Oxford in about 1342, as a bequest from John of Oxford – vintner and Mayor of London.)⁶

⁵ Victoria County History Vol 4

⁶ Victoria County History Vol 4

By this time leprosy had virtually disappeared from Europe and the hospital had evolved into an almshouse. By the early 17th Century the farmhouse was on offer 'to anyone who could provide the almsmen with beer and bread'.⁷ The Chapel was restored by the College in 1600 and 1635 (there is documentary evidence that a weekly service was still being held in the Chapel in 1617)⁸ and survived undamaged until the Civil War and the siege of Oxford. During the war the Royalists cut down the grove of elm trees, and in 1646 the Parliamentary army occupied the site, stopped up the holy well and destroyed the hospital. The chapel was later used as a stable by Cromwell's soldiers, who stole the bell and stripped lead from the roof for shot.

The hospital was re-built by Oriel in 1649 as two separate buildings either side of a central passageway, to form 4 tenements. The chapel was re-roofed and an oak chancel screen added in 1651. The farmhouse, possibly also restored or re-built, was let around 1645 and served as an alehouse, until it was leased in 1758 in a run down state by a local surgeon, Samuel Glass to use as an 'Elabatory for making his magnesia so much famed'.

"A Survey of an Estate belonging to the Dean and Canon of Christ Church, lying in the Parish of Cowley in the County of Oxford, 1777" **(Figure 2)** shows the strip farms of the area around Bartlemas at the time. Bartlemas is again indicated by a small label to the edge of the field, **A**. The form of Cowley Marsh, **B**, is clearly shown with an extended causeway, **D**, leading across the marsh from the termination of the old Oxford Way to Bartholomew, **C**.

⁷ Len Clark 1987?

⁸ Peta Dunstan 2002

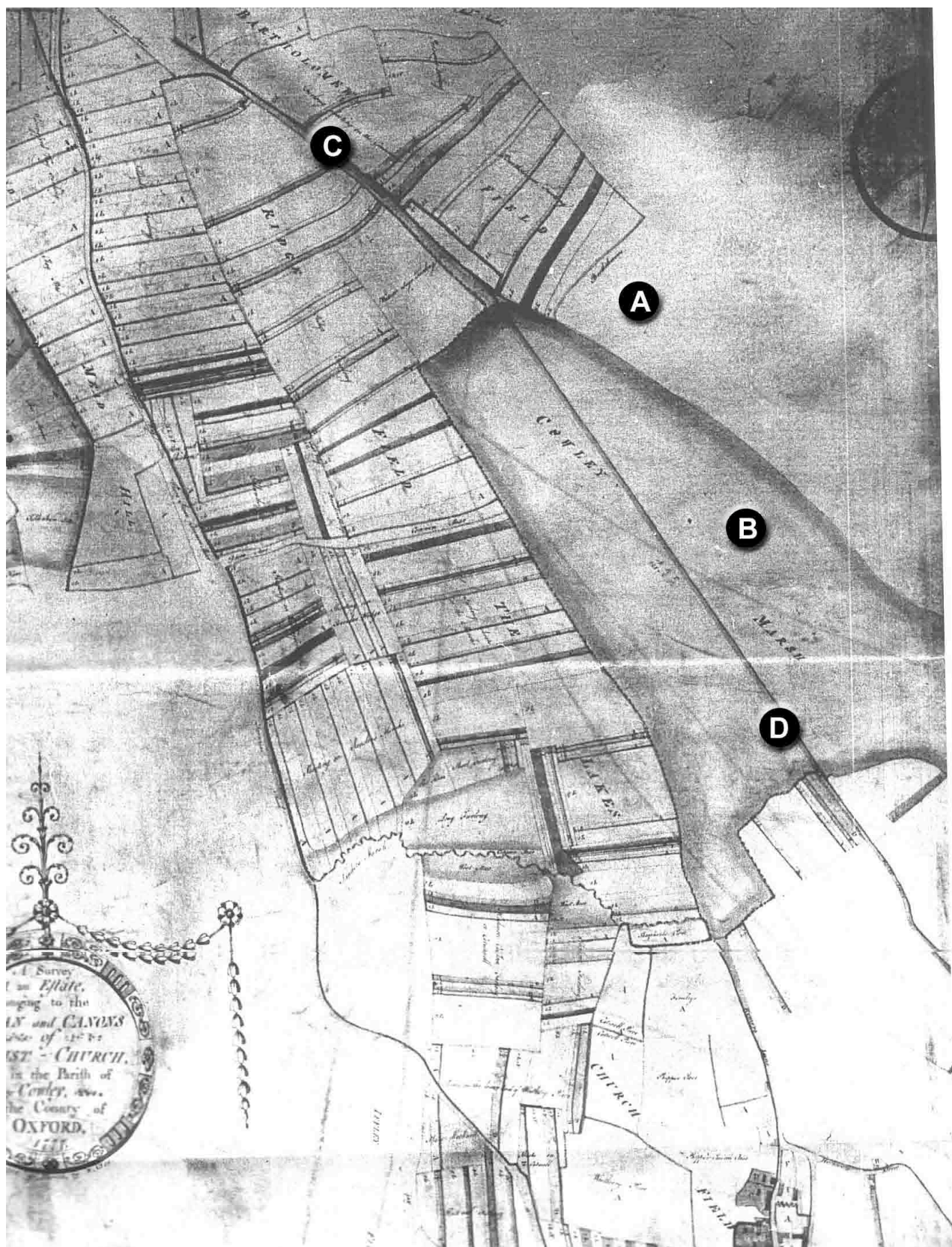


Fig. 2. A Survey of an Estate belonging to the Dean and Canon of Cristchurch lying in the Parish of Cowley in the County of Oxford, 1777

The undated "Cowley, Iffley and Littlemore – Sketch Map before the Inclosure" (**Figure 3**) shows the system of roads and tracks and the exact position of St Bartholomew's hospital at the time. The pattern of routes shown on this plan is still reflected in the present day road layout: the causeway, **C**, is now Cowley Road, a track runs northeast from this to the hospital, before turning southeast towards Bullingdon following the line of present day Barracks Lane, **E**.

COWLEY, IFFLEY & LITTLEMORE SKETCH MAP BEFORE THE INCLOSURE

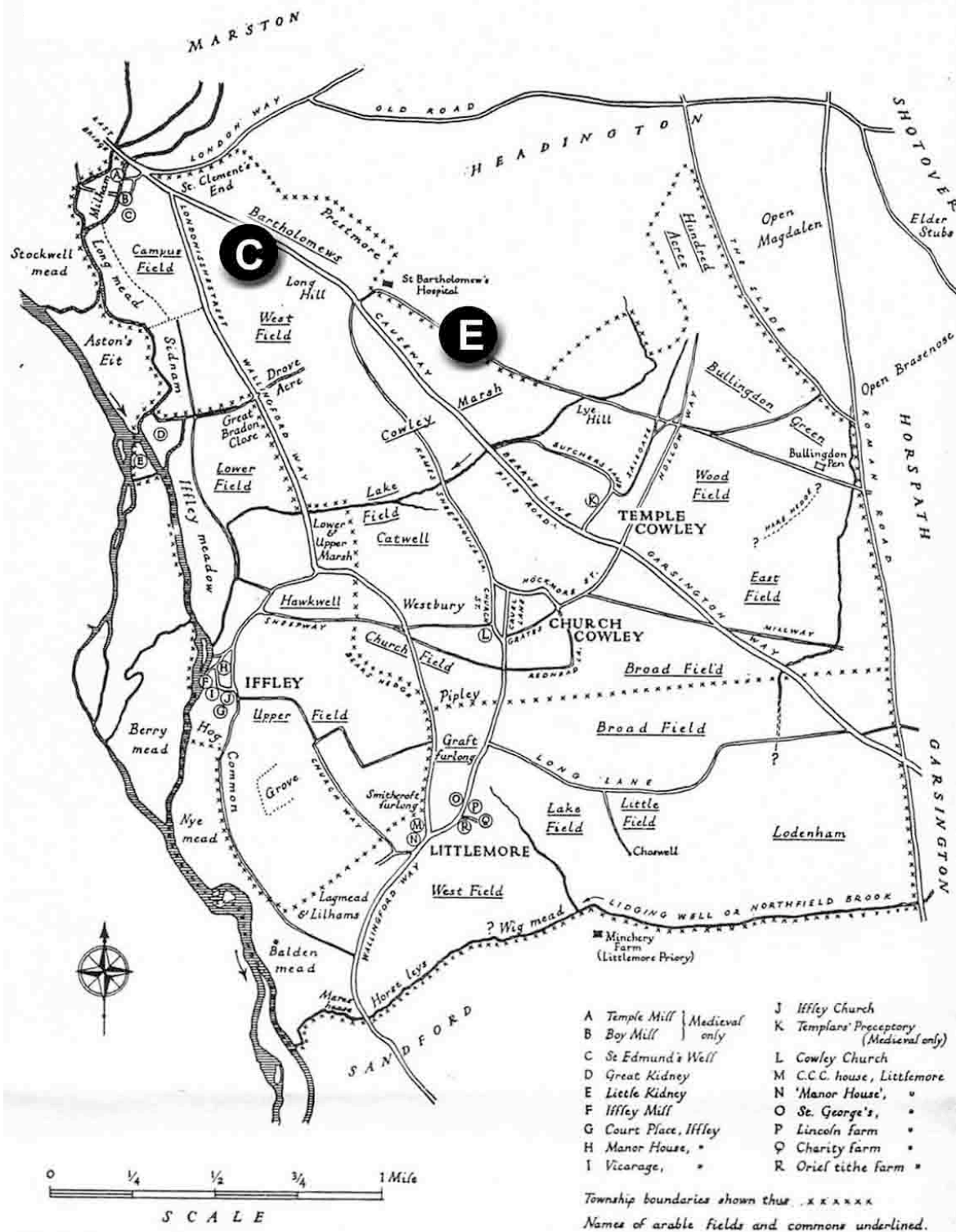


Fig. 3. Cowley, Iffley and Littlemore before Enclosure

3.04. Nineteenth Century – Bartlemas Farm and the development of Oxford suburbs

During the cholera outbreaks of 19th century, the almshouse was used for convalescents. Following that it was leased by Oriel as a farm to the Pethers family - Richard Pether was the grandfather of William Morris, who founded the car company.⁹

The extent of the farm is depicted on plans drawn in 1837 and 1840, held by Oriel College (**Figures 4 and 5**). Figure 4, ‘*Bartlemas Farm, Cowley, Oxford*’ 1837 clearly shows the farm buildings and the pattern of roads around the farm. The Almshouses, farmhouse and Chapel are all clearly labelled, with several large outbuildings between them. A large, linear pond, **F**, which may have been for drainage, fishing or washing the lepers runs almost east-west from the almshouses to the farm boundary. The track to Bartlemas is shown leading off Cowley Road into the farmyard, **G**. A parallel road to the southeast, Occupation Road, then turns east and picks up the old road to Bullingdon (present day Barracks Lane) **H**, from this point a track follows the farm boundary towards Southfield Farm. A dotted boundary line or footpath, **J**, marks the line of the old way to Bullingdon passing to the south of Bartlemas. The parcel of land to the south of this line, **K**, is not coloured up as part of the farm, despite being within the red line boundary. Bartlemas Cottage, **L**, also lies outside the extent of the farm, adjacent to the farm track – a smithy was associated with the cottage.

Figure 5, the 1840 ‘Plan of an estate called St Bartholomew, in the County of Oxford’ also indicates that the Bartlemas Complex did not include the land to the south west, which lies adjacent to Cowley Road, **K**. This plan also gives an indication of land use and tree cover. The present day woodland to the north of the site, **L**, is not shown apart from a small copse depicted in the extreme northern corner. Trees are shown lining the linear water body, **F**, and hedgerows divide the farm into 4 fields. A wall, **M**, divides the Chapel and almshouse as a separate parcel of land and it would also appear that a number of the outbuildings between the chapel and almshouse have been removed. A further parcel of land, **N**, comprises a formally laid out kitchen garden to the rear of the farmhouse and to the front of the farmhouse is what appears to be an ornamental courtyard garden, **O**.

⁹ Victoria County History Vol 4

Figure 5

Plan of an Estate called **ST BARTHOLOMEW** in the County of Oxford,

Belonging to Oriel College, Oxford,

1840.

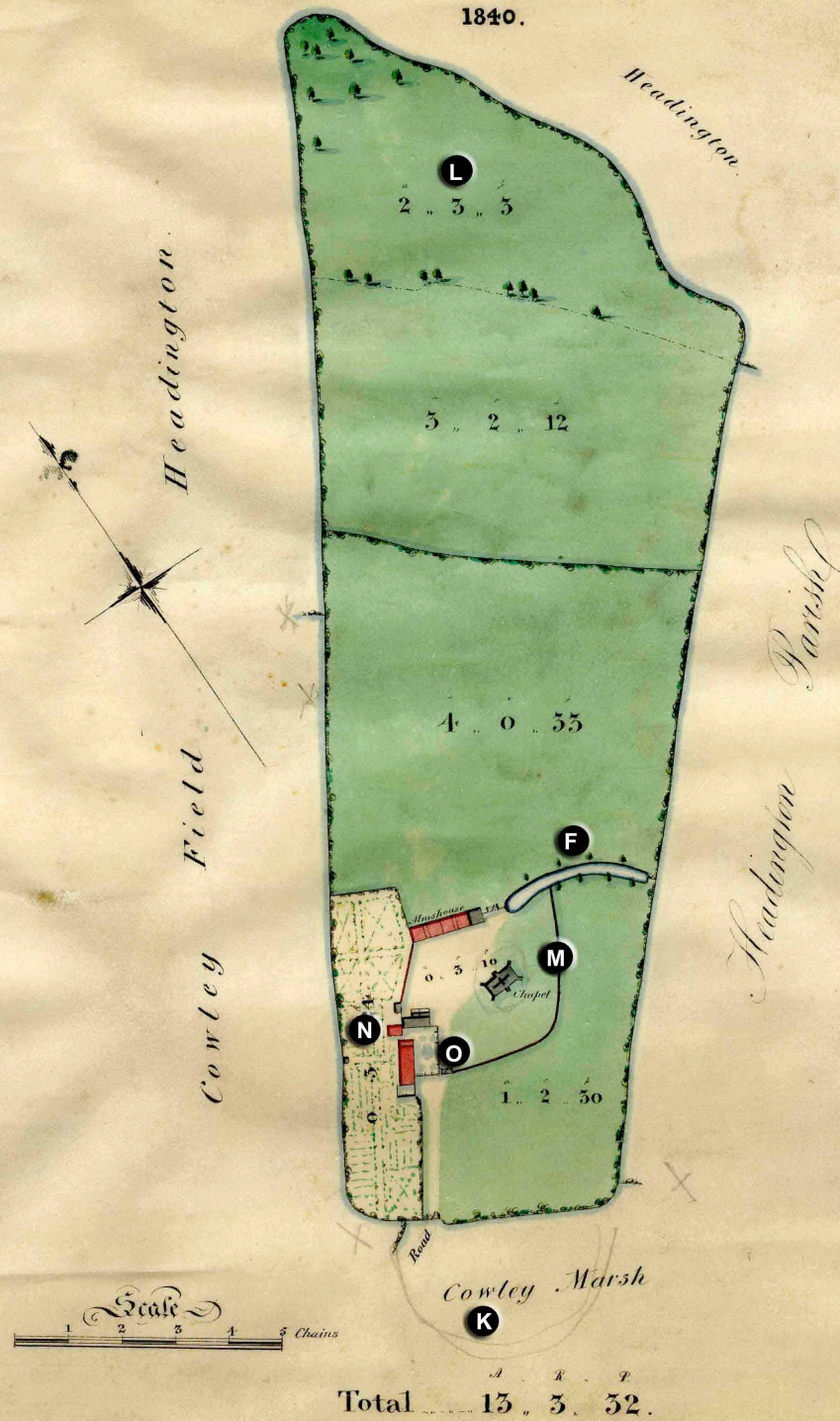


Fig. 5. Bartlemas 1840

1878 First edition 1:2,500 OS Map shows little change to Bartlemas itself from the 1840 plan, except that an orchard appears to have replaced the ornamental kitchen garden to the rear of the Farmhouse. The elongated pond edged with trees still visible to the east of the almshouse. Bartholomew Cottage is shown to the southwest of the farm complex now with its own track leading off the Cowley Road. No trees are indicated on the present day woodland area. The nearest buildings on the edge of Oxford are the Workhouse to the northwest and terraced housing, a church and the University and City Arms Public House to the southwest (also indicated as a block on the 1837 plan). A boundary line is still shown continuing from present day Barracks Lane creating a separate parcel of land adjacent to that for Bartholomew Cottage. Magdalen College Cricket Ground is on the opposite side of Cowley Road. This, and the line of the old drove road to Bullington, is referred to in the Taunt papers written in about 1915, where it is stated that “.....the meadow in front since the enclosure of Cowley has been added to, but traces of the old road still show across it.”¹⁰

The 1:10,560 1886 OS Map indicates that the surrounding area was still predominantly rural in character, with Bartlemas on the very edge of Oxford City, although Victorian suburban development has already begun along the Iffley Road. The Workhouse is shown to the NE of Bartlemas.

By the 1899 Second Edition 1:2,500 OS Map, much of the area to the west has been developed as late Victorian suburbs, advancing out from Oxford: the area between Bartlemas and the Workhouse has been infilled: Bartlemas, Divinity and Southfield Roads, as well as a terrace of housing to the southeast along the north side of the Cowley Road opposite the Magdalen Cricket pavilion. The buildings of Bartlemas and the Cottage remain as before. The track to Southfield Farm appears to have been formalised with boundary lines on both sides. The photograph (**Figure 6**) from the Taunt Papers illustrates how the farm must have looked at this time.



Fig. 6. St Bartholomews Hospital- Taunt photo

The 1900 1:10,560 OS shows that housing has also infilled between the Cowley and Iffley Roads as far as Bartlemas, with the exception of Magdalen College Cricket Ground. To the north of Bartlemas is Headington Hill Park, an extensive area of open space acting as the eastern boundary to the City. This is edged to the southeast by Divinity Walk leading from the Workhouse/ Infirmary to the Warneford Asylum. Temple Cowley is still a separate village to the east.

¹⁰ H W Taunt c1915

3.05. Twentieth century – further changes in use – farmland to playing fields

The 1919 measured survey plan (**Figure 7**) shows a proposed sports ground for Oriel College, with the farmyard and fish pond still intact.

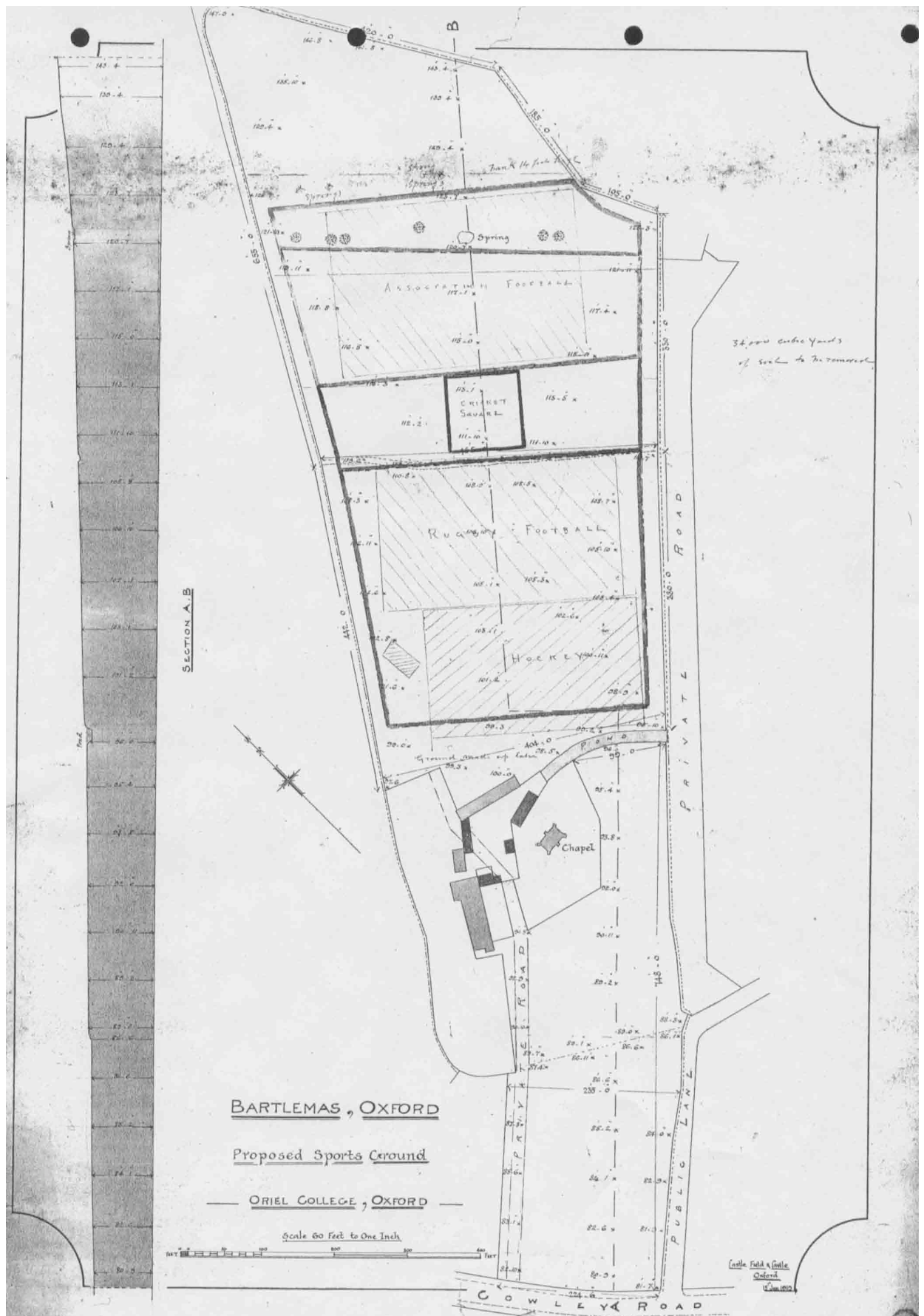


Fig. 7. Proposed Sports Ground 1919

The 1921 1:2,500 OS map again shows no change at Bartlemas – the area remained as a farm until about 1920. However, the density of housing to the northwest is increasing. Magdalen Cricket ground has become allotments, and new cricket grounds for Lincoln and Jesus Colleges are shown to the east, with their pavilions adjacent to the track leading to Southfield Farm. To the northeast, Hill Top Road is now shown, leading off Southfield Road with scattered larger houses along it. Further terraced housing is shown to the north side of the Cowley Road, with allotments and orchards, backing onto what is now Barracks Lane (**E** on Figure 3).

The pressure for late nineteenth-early 20th century development of Bartlemas must have been intense. There is documentation of efforts to protect the land from building: in 1901 a letter was written to a concerned citizen, by The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings recording its interest in acquiring the chapel and domestic buildings and suggesting a publicity campaign to protect it. **(Figure 8)** In March 1908, Mrs Arnold Toynbee launched a fund for acquiring the four and a half acre Bartholomew field in order to build and let modest cottages and thereby protect the view of chapel, and provide a permanent fund for its upkeep. Few responded to her appeal to save “the one and only bit of picturesque antiquity in all the large and hideous new suburb of Cowley St John”. In the end the Chapel alone with its one rood of land was gifted to the Parish in 1913 without any funding for restoration and upkeep and the College retained possession of the surrounding land. ¹¹

The Vicar of St Mary and St John organised the restoration of Bartlemas at end of WWI. A renowned Franciscan, Brother Giles, visited the site in May 1920 and the possibility was discussed with Dr Lancelot Phelps, Provost of Oriel at the time, the possibility of turning Bartlemas and cottages into a Franciscan friary. In the event Flowers Farm in Dorset was used as it had more space and possibility to work with wayfarers – but Bartlemas still seen as a place that most closely connects with Brother Giles’ Franciscan identity. ¹²

By 1922 the college had refurbished the almshouse and farmhouse to accommodate senior members of the college, and in 1926 Bartlemas Cottage was put on the open market. ¹³

¹¹ Len Clark, 1987?

¹² Peta Dunstan, 2002

¹³ DW Price, 2004

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

10, Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W.C.

8th March 1901

re,
St Bartholomew's Hospital, Oxford.

My dear Sir

The Committee desired me to thank you for your letter and to express its gratification upon finding that you are interesting yourself in the matter.

The value of the Chapel and the domestic buildings can hardly be overestimated, but the Committee confesses it has

to approach Prof York Powell on the subject, and if, after consulting with him, it is thought that the Society can do anything, we trust you will let us know in what direction you think we can act.

As a last resort we think that public opinion, influenced by the public press, might be sufficiently strong to prevent the College from destroying the buildings.

Yours very truly
Thackeray James

Rt Hon. Secretary
James Bryce M.P.

always held the opinion that considering the benefits the College has had from the charity for many years, the least it could do in the interest of history would be to preserve the valuable remains.

The Committee thinks it would be most desirable if the remains could become the property of the National Trust, and if this could be brought about we might be able to influence subscriptions to some extent.

The Committee hopes that you will be willing

Fig. 8. Letter from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

3.06. The 1937 1:2,500 OS map shows most of the surrounding area now covered with dense housing, with the exception of the newly formed Oriel College sports grounds to the north east of Bartlemas, and Lincoln and Jesus College sports grounds to the east. Magdalen former cricket ground is now completely built over with the large Regal cinema on the corner with Cowley Road. Further houses have been added along Hill Top Road. Housing is now also shown to the southeast onto the newly named Bartlemas Close, and continuing along the northern side of Cowley Road: Belvedere Road, Kenilworth Avenue and Cumberland Road. Many of the outbuildings at Bartlemas have gone, the almshouse is shown as Bartlemas House, and the farm as Bartlemas Farm House, each having separate plots of land with boundaries following those of the former farm and almshouse complex. Bartlemas House includes the Chapel within its grounds, but the elongated water body is not shown. Some of the features associated with the smithy at Bartlemas Cottage have gone. Also a separate parcel of land is defined adjacent to Cowley Road (now a disused bowling green) with what a small pavilion.

Little has changed by the 1944 1:10,560 sheet, as would be expected during the war.

3.07. The 1956 1:2,500 OS map shows little encroachment onto the open space of Bartlemas, apart from the Nursery School to the west of the Farmhouse, and a line of tennis Courts are marked to the north of the Nursery School. A remnant of the linear water body is indicated as a drain, and the grounds of Bartlemas House have been reduced by a north south division close to the side of the chapel. Orchards are indicated to the south of the chapel and in the grounds of both Bartlemas Farmhouse and Bartlemas Cottage. The land to the south has become allotments, and additional allotments are shown to the northeast at the back of Hill Top Road. The northern corner of the site is shown as developing scrub/woodland, possibly on the excavated slope created by the levelling for Oriel's cricket ground. Southfield Farm has been divided into Southfield Cottage and Southfield House. The bowling green to the south is now labelled.

3.08. On the 1961 1:10,560 OS map, a golf course is now shown to the east of Southfield Farm for the first time, as well as the establishing woodland on the bank to the north.

3.09. Recent developments

The 1974 1:2,500 OS Map shows the start of development of new housing at Southfield Farm: Southfield Park. Bartlemas House and Bartlemas Farmhouse were sold to various owners in early 1980's. Further infill has since taken place, and two further dwellings have been built between Bartlemas Cottage and the Cowley Road: Bartlemas Lodge and no 271 Cowley Road. New flats have been built along the lane to the nursery school, and most recently, new student accommodation on the former tennis courts to the north of Bartlemas.

3.10 The Surviving Historic Buildings.

Bartlemas represents the most complete assemblage of a medieval hospital surviving in Oxfordshire.¹⁴ Its immediate surrounds remain an oasis of peace in the 21st Century, screened from the busy Cowley Road by the hedgerows which enclose the bowling green site and allotments. The hamlet has survived pressure for change through the centuries and demonstrates how by adapting its use, this assemblage of medieval buildings can retain its integrity.

The Chapel (**Figure 9**) is all that remains of the original mediaeval hospital buildings. It is early 14th century, built of roughly coursed rubble masonry with ashlar dressings, and with a steep double pitched tiled roof. It is Grade I listed. It stands in its own plot adjoining the garden of Bartlemas House to the north; the south and west boundary being clearly defined by an old hedge.

¹⁴ Margaret Markham Medieval hospitals, 1997



Fig. 9.
Bartlemas
Chapel

3.11. Bartlemas House (**Figure 10**) was rebuilt on the approximate site of the almshouse by Oriel College in 1649. It housed four tenements with plots, and is listed Grade II*.



Fig. 10.
Bartlemas
House (former
Almshouse)

3.12. To the west, and forming a loose group with Bartlemas House and the Chapel, is Bartlemas Farmhouse (**Figure 11**). The house is again of rubble masonry construction, apparently mainly 16th and 17th century construction but, according to Nick Doggett, with an earlier core. It is also listed Grade II*.



Fig. 11.
Bartlemas
Farmhouse

3.13. To the south of Bartlemas Farmhouse is Bartlemas Cottage (**Figure 12**), a rubble masonry house dating from the early 19th century. The Cottage once owned the entire plot to the south to Cowley Road, but this has subsequently been subdivided into plots for Bartlemas Lodge, 2002, and the Vicarage. No 271 Cowley Road, c.1990.



Fig. 12.
Bartlemas

Cottage

3.14. The lane leading to Bartlemas Farmhouse still retains much of its defining low masonry wall. (**Figure 13**).



Fig. 13.
Masonry wall to
Farmhouse lane

4. Landscape + Ecology

4.01. Landscape form and natural drainage

The site is located on the south facing, lower slopes of Headington Hill, 1.5 Km to the east of the River Thames and River Cherwell confluence at Iffley Fields. There is a distinct break in slope to the north of the Oriel College Sports Ground where a triangular area of semi-indigenous woodland has regenerated on the steeper hillside above the regraded playing field plateau. The remainder of the site, although essentially flat, falls gently from NE to SW towards the Thames floodplain. The site of the bowling green/tennis courts has also been subject to regrading to form a level playing surface. Natural drainage flows southeast towards Cowley Marsh and Boundary Brook

which passes beneath the Cowley Road at Temple Cowley before flowing into the Thames south of Donnington Bridge.

4.02. There are no open water courses within the site, apart from a cut off ditch at the toe of the wooded slope, although a contemporary ornamental canal within the grounds of Bartlemas House echoes the medieval fishpond of St Bartholomew's Hospital

4.03. Land Use, Access and Circulation

The site is located at the interface of the densely populated inner suburb of Cowley and an extensive area of green space formed by Southfield Golf Course (on the spur emanating from Headington Hill to the north) and a concentration of college and school playing fields clustered along the lower hill slopes - all of which have restricted access to the public. The site is surrounded by residential development of various periods (see site history) except where the Oriel Sports Ground and allotments adjoin Jesus and Lincoln College playing fields on either side of Bartlemas Close.

4.04. Within the Conservation Area Bartlemas House, Bartlemas Farmhouse, Bartlemas Cottage, Bartlemas Lodge and No 271 Cowley Road are all in active residential use, whilst the prefab Bartlemas Nursery School is now disused. The Links allotments in the centre of the site form a visual context for, and 'buffer' to, the Bartlemas hamlet and are well used. However, the bowling green and its pavilion on the Cowley Road frontage have been disused for some time. Tennis courts have recently been created on the old bowling green site but these are also un-used. There are currently no public footpaths or bridleways through the site. Access to the chapel for occasional services and to the Oriel playing fields and to all residential properties is via an unadopted access track. Access to the nursery school site is via a separate road which emerges onto Cowley Road between numbers 267 and 271. To the north of the Conservation Area, and within the overall site, the Oriel sports pavilion contains a groundsman's flat.

4.05. Vegetation and Ecology

The site contains a range of vegetation types which contribute to both its bio-diversity and landscape character. **(Appendix 2)**

The principal vegetation features comprise:

- The mixed broadleaf/coniferous semi-natural woodland on the lower slopes of Headington Hill to the east of the playing pitches **(Figure 14)**
- A premium oak in the garden of 271 Cowley Road is of key townscape significance. **(Figure 15)**
- A sequence of ash, swamp cypress and chestnut which line the access track to Bartlemas hamlet
- Specimen multi-stemmed sycamore, walnut and oak within the grounds of the Nursery School **(Figures 16 and 17)**
- The peripheral species poor hedgerows which enclose the bowling green, allotments, chapel and playing pitches **(Figure 18)**
- An inappropriate and overgrown beech hedge which lines the upper access track
- Small orchard in churchyard **(Figure 19)**



Fig. 14. Mixed Broadleaf/coniferous woodland. LCA 1 Southfield Woodland



Fig. 15. Premium oak and ash



Fig. 16. Specimen multi-stemmed sycamore



Fig. 17. Specimen walnut in grounds of Nursery School



Fig. 18. Species poor hedge



Fig. 19. Orchard in churchyard

5. Habitat Survey

5.01. Introduction & methodology

A walkover visit was carried out on the 8th March 2005. A Phase I Habitat Survey was undertaken following the standard Joint Nature Conservancy Council methodology. A hedgerow survey was carried out in addition to assessing general ecological issues.

5.02. Survey results

The woodland (Target note 1) was of particular ecological interest with respect to protected species (see below). It can be classed as semi-natural broadleaved woodland, composed mainly of beech *Fagus sylvaticus*, elm *Ulmus* spp. and English oak *Quercus robur* with occasional red oak *Quercus rubra*, grey poplar *Populus x canescens* and horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*. Occasional conifers included individual scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and douglas fir *Pseudotsuga menziesii*. There was also a sparse cover of holly *Ilex aquifolium* and elder *Sambucus nigra* understorey. Ground flora recorded included lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* and wild arum *Arum maculatum*, although the survey was carried out too early in the season to note the majority of ancient woodland vascular plants (AWVP's). The abundance of nettle *Urtica dioica* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* in the less shaded areas suggests some nutrient enrichment.

5.03. Several mature trees had visible cavities suitable as bat roost sites.

5.04. Evidence of badger presence was also found. Several sett holes were located although it is impossible to gauge the activity as few signs were apparent (this is typical given the recent cold weather). Badger hair was found on the boundary fence indicating that badgers do however frequent the site. They are also likely to utilise the large gardens adjacent to the woodland. Several well-marked trackways or runs were recorded but these may be used predominantly by muntjac deer (as indicated by frequent droppings and footprints). Evidence of recent rabbit burrowing was also noted.

5.05. In the cleared woodland area, now dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub (Target note 2), there is potential for reptiles, particularly grass snake and slow-worm.

5.06. The hedgerows were also surveyed (plotted as species-poor on the accompanying Phase I habitat map) and none can be classed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. However there is likely to be an issue from breeding birds should any removal be required. Consequently such works should be carried outside the breeding season.

5.07. Any buildings (including the pavilion) have potential to support bat roosts. Stone buildings such as St Bartholomew's Chapel and Bartlemas House have considerably high potential.

5.08. The sports field and bowling green were improved species poor amenity grasslands dominated by rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. The margins of the sports field were of a slightly longer sward, although the species composition was still species poor. Slender speedwell *Veronica filiformis* (a widespread and inert alien plant) was recorded in these margins.

5.09. The narrow ditches (Target notes 3&4) were not of particular ecological note and were highly eutrophic as indicated by the abundance of filamentous algae *Cladophora* spp. Hard rush *Juncus*

inflexus and jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*, along with the dead stems of giant horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*, were recorded along the shallow margins. A small area of damp semi-improved neutral grassland was adjacent to one of the ditches (around Target note 3).

5.10. The grounds of Bartlemas House (Target note 5) and St Bartholomew's Chapel (Target note 6) were a typical mixture of short mown grassland and planted ornamental shrubs. No particular habitat code exists and the individual habitat units were too small to satisfactorily plot on the Phase I map.

5.11. The allotments (Target note 7) were in current use and seemingly not of particular importance from an ecological aspect. There is only a low possibility of reptile presence, as the plots and margins were generally neat and well maintained. No specific habitat code exists for active allotments and cannot be ascribed to a particular habitat.

5.12. Summary

1. Badgers are present in the woodland area
2. The woodland is likely to be an important roosting and foraging area for bats
3. Reptiles may be present in the woodland/scrub transition zones
4. On-site buildings may be used as bat roost sites
5. Hedges may be used by breeding birds

6. Landscape Character

The site and its urban landscape setting may be subdivided into a number of discrete Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) which display consistent features and characteristics.

6.01. Southfield Woodland (LCA 1)

An area of semi-natural mixed broadleaf/coniferous woodland which has become naturalised through natural regeneration since the Oriel College Sports Ground was first laid out in the late 1920's / early 1930's. This area of woodland is particularly prominent as a consequence of its elevation on a south facing slope **(Appendix 3)**

6.02. College Sports Grounds (LCA 2)

The large area of close mown sports turf is formed by the adjoining pitches of Oriel, Jesus and Lincoln Colleges which straddle Bartlemas Close **(Figure 20)**

6.03. The Links Allotments, Bartlemas Close (LCA 3)

An area of actively cultivated allotments, enclosed by a poorly maintained hedge. The hedge lacks diversity and natural species. Although it is not historic, it contributes to the character of the area by screening the allotments. **(Figure 21)**

6.04. Bowling Green (LCA 4)

The disused bowling green/tennis courts with boarded up pavilion, residual netting posts and poorly maintained enclosing hedgerows/fencing/gates. **(Figure 22)**

6.05. Cowley Road Corridor (LCA 5)

Principal road corridor characterised by a mixture of suburban housing, commercial premises and cluttered street furniture/traffic management features. **(Figure 23)**

6.06. Bartlemas Nursery School (LCA 6)

Prefabricated single storey buildings dating from the late 1940s, disused, enclosed by mature hedgerows and adjoined by several specimen trees. The buildings are life-expired and inappropriate for refurbishment. The grounds are becoming overgrown. **(Figure 24)**

6.07. Bartlemas Hamlet (LCA 7)

An intimate arrangement of three contrasting historic stone listed buildings, which the Conservation Area Statement describes as “ A small Oxfordshire hamlet That, through chance of ownership, has retained its own isolated identity outside the suburbs of the city. Contained by trees, playing fields, allotments, schools and modern vicarage, the situation of the group of historic buildings maintains the illusion of a green country setting”. **(Figure 25)**

6.08. Cowley Inner Suburbs (LCA 8)

Area of small scale, dense Victorian housing laid out on a grid pattern. **(Figure 26)**

6.09. Bartlemas Close (LCA 9)

Suburban street with the character of a rural road with single sided footpath, hedgerows and mature trees. **(Figure 27)**

6.10. Sinnet Court Housing Association Flats (LCA 10)

Recently completed and visually intrusive student flats with new landscape treatment. Although the majority of this development is outside the Conservation Area, the southernmost block is within the Conservation Area. The three storey brick building with a shallow pitched slate roof is approximately 30m from Bartlemas House. The western boundary of the development has been recently planted. (2004-5) The plant screen comprises a 3-4 m wide belt of natural mix shrubs and transplants, 40-90cm high, at approx 1m centres, made up of a random mix of amelanchier, hazel, hawthorn, holly, and viburnum, with groups of standard trees at intervals – mainly field maple (ex heavy standards), with some wild cherry sp. (heavy standards) – these are at 4-5m spacing within the groups.

The quality of the plant material itself is not especially good, and a proportion has died. Assuming replacements succeed, a relatively good low level screen (to 2m +) will develop over 7 years or so – but a higher % of holly would have been better to give stronger evergreen presence. The tree groups will break up the façade over time – field maple have dense foliage, and grow reasonably fast without getting too large in the long term – so are a good species for the purpose. Stronger tree groups would have been preferable with an additional tree species within them, and smaller gaps between the groups. **(Figure 28)**

6.11. Bartlemas Cottage, Bartlemas Lodge and 271 Cowley Road (LCA 11)

3 detached houses of contrasting styles within their own gardens, created by the subdivision of the Bartlemas Cottage plot in the late C20, described at para 3.06 above. Bartlemas Cottage is an early C19 cottage described at 3.13 above. The newer Bartlemas Lodge is faced in rubble coursed stone/reconstituted stone with straight lintels, brown stained joinery and a red clay machine made tiled roof. 271 Cowley Road, to the south of this, is a red brick building with beige brick feature courses, and a brown sand faced tiles roof, again with brown joinery. Both newer buildings relate poorly to their historic setting and are suburban in character, although some older planting remains within the existing gardens. **(Figure 29)**



Fig. 20. LCA 2 – College Sports Ground



Fig. 21. LCA 3 – The Links Allotments



Fig. 22. LCA 4 – Bowling Green



Fig. 23. LCA 5 – Cowley Road Corridor



Fig. 24. LCA 6 – Bartlemas Nursey School



Fig. 25. LCA 7 – Bartlemas Hamlet



Fig. 26. LCA 8 - Cowley Inner Suburbs



Fig. 27. LCA 9 – Bartlemas Close



Fig. 28. LCA 10 – Sinnet Court Housing Association Student Flats



Fig. 29. LCA 11 – Bartlemas Lodge, Bartlemas Cottage and 271 Cowley Road

7. The Significance of the Site - Issues and Risks

7.01. The core of the Conservation Area is the group of historic buildings, pointing back to the mediaeval hospital, collectively known as Bartlemas Hamlet (LCA 7).

The Chapel is the most ancient and significant of the buildings. However the spaces enclosed between chapel, farmhouse and cottage, together with surviving masonry walls and hedgerows marking historic field boundaries are integral to the overall spatial character of the Conservation Area.

The essential qualities of the site include

- its historic character
- its sense of isolation from the surrounding suburban sprawl
- the relative quiet
- the relative abundance of wildlife
- the persistence of open fields and allotments.

The significance of the site is a green oasis, its historic survival emphasised by contrast to its surroundings. Yet these surroundings are ever felt within the site: through traffic noise, and through the visual intrusion of surrounding development.

Not all of the boundaries are negative in character. The open areas to the east and north-east contribute significantly in a positive way. And the Grade II Listed cinema on the south west side of Cowley Road offers the potential for a positive monumental C20 presence.

An additional characteristic of the site aspect of the site, notwithstanding some carefully maintained parts, and contributing significantly to the overall ambience of Bartlemas, is the lack of estate wide appropriate maintenance and management. This is emphasised by the poor state of repair of the Cowley Road boundary with its dilapidated and disused pavilion, the variable quality of hedges and boundaries. The Area has a sense of being slightly neglected, scruffy and unloved, and as such is only fulfilling a small part of its potential.

7.02. In considering the spatial setting of the core buildings, views and relationships to and from the Hamlet are significant. Characteristics to be preserved and enhanced include: the quality of a mediaeval hamlet, the association with almshouses, resonances of agriculture, the impression of countryside. Qualities to be suppressed are essentially those later developments which ignore rather than respond to the setting.

7.03. The mediaeval Hospital was sited close to the drove road east of Oxford but at a discreet distance from it. The open field between the road and Hospital served the function of isolating the Hospital, and later Almshouse colony, from immediate contact with the passing public, giving physical form to the perceived threat of contagion and sickness. Hedgerows encircling the Hospital site to the south and east of the Chapel visually reinforced this sense of quarantine. At the same time the open nature of the field together with the topography – the land rising slightly from Cowley Road causeway towards the Hospital – allowed long views of the building group. These have been lost, and the greater sense of enclosure has made the site more suburban in character. (See 7.07 below).

7.04. The Links allotments (LCA 3) serve at present to enclose and protect Bartlemas hamlet (LCA 7). The character of allotments is reminiscent of medieval strip farms and they provide an appropriate setting for the hamlet.

7.05. The area of high quality landscape accompanying the core area is limited in extent – the surrounding open areas comprising College playing fields (LCA 2) and the Links allotments (LCA 3) act as buffers to the hamlet, but their poor quality boundaries, and in the case of the playing fields, lack of bio-diversity, mean a loss of their full potential to enhance the setting of the hamlet and contribute to the wider landscape.

7.06. Beyond these, the urban fabric of Oxford City comprises a mix of currently disused sites: the bowling green (LCA 4), the nursery school (LCA 6), and suburban housing and roads: Cowley Road corridor (LCA 5), Cowley Inner Suburbs (LCA 8), Bartlemas Close (LCA 9), Sinnet Court Flats (LCA 10) and Bartlemas Lodge, Cottage and 271 Cowley Road (LCA11).

7.07. The combination of the surrounding housing and the hedgerows within the site give a high degree of both visual and structural containment to the conservation area. This has both positive and negative aspects: it retains the isolation and character of Bartlemas, but the lack of views into the site divorce the hamlet from its wider setting and the limited access reduces its accessibility. A consequence of the seclusion of the Bartlemas hamlet is the lack of opportunity for the wider public to see the chapel. Thus an important built fragment of Oxford's history is hidden, lost, and potentially forgotten.

Paradoxically the greater sense of enclosure makes the hamlet more suburban and less rural in character. Suburban plots are characterised by high hedges and large numbers of small private, secluded gardens. Rural settings offer long views and very limited privacy. Hedgerows exist for functional rather than aesthetic reasons, are maintained at an easily maintainable height, rather than allowed to overgrow. This is emphasised by the historic photograph at fig 6 above.

However a careful balance must be struck between making the historic asset visible and accessible, and preserving its religious and historic significance as a place of quarantine.

7.08. Risks to the Conservation Area include:

- inappropriate planting or management of landscape,
- degradation of the boundaries and disused buildings,
- erosion of its quality due to inappropriate development.

7.09. Future maintenance and management of the site should

address these risks to ensure the character of the area is preserved and enhanced.

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