

Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches

Madingley Road



CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL

AHP

Architectural
History
Practice

Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Madingley Road

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For

Cambridge City Council

March 2009

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1 CHARACTER SUMMARY

The approach to Cambridge along Madingley Road is predominantly green and leafy, right into the City Centre, more so than other approaches into the City. Notwithstanding some earlier developments, such as that for the Observatory, the road was developed from the late 19th century with large detached suburban houses, offering a taste of *rus in urbe* for dons newly permitted to marry. Thus the town end of the road was developed as what Pevsner calls Cambridge's *villenviertel*, denoting that part of the City (along with Grange Road) where are to be found the largest and most significant houses. Here are represented works in a variety of architectural styles by architects of local and national renown.

Unlike Huntingdon Road and Barton Road, Madingley Road largely escaped 20th century ribbon development. The road gently undulates, with interwar developments such as Bulstrode Gardens, Hedgerley Close and Conduit Head Road giving off as closes to north and south. The most significant post-war development has been Churchill College, occupying a large part of the eastern side of the assessment area. This is one of the most successful collegiate developments of post-war years, its (now listed) buildings set within spacious lawns and playing fields. A rural quality remains here, with a meandering stream following the side of the footpath.

Further west the landscape opens up, and towards the M11 becomes open fields, bounded to the road by mature hedges. This side of the assessment area has witnessed major development in recent years, notably Michael Hopkins' Schlumberger Research Centre, a new beacon landmark on the approach to the City. More often, however, the quality of new development has been indifferent or poor.

At present the northern edge of the West Cambridge Conservation Area includes much of the eastern end of the assessment area but excludes Churchill College and its grounds, Bulstrode Gardens and Hedgerley Close. Further west, part of the assessment area lies within the Conservation Area which has been created around Conduit Head Road. It is recommended that consideration be given to reviewing these boundaries so as to afford Conservation Area status to the whole of the eastern side of the assessment area.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Architectural History Practice Limited (AHP) was commissioned in January 2009 by Cambridge City Council (the Council) to undertake rapid assessments of Huntingdon Road, Madingley Road and Barton Road. These assessments are the first in, and will set the pattern for, a series of rapid and concise studies to provide assessments and understanding of 'local distinctiveness'. The programme reflects Council members' and residents' concerns in relation to major growth proposals and the individual and cumulative impact of the replacement of individual houses with flats.

2.2 Methodology

The assessment involved fieldwork, some desk research and analysis. Research was carried out at the County Record Office and in the building control records of the City Council. It consisted of a review of historic maps, and a more general review of works on the history of Cambridge, its architecture and development. Madingley Road was physically assessed on foot in February 2009. The assessment is based on what could be seen from the public highway.

2.3 Limitations

AHP were commissioned to assess the architectural and historic character of Madingley Road as part of a characterisation assessment, including the heritage significance of the area. The assessment is not in sufficient depth to support potential Conservation Area designation, although it may provide a useful basis for consideration for designation.

There are a number of additional lines of research which might produce additional historical information on the history and development of Madingley Road such as rate books, insurance and building control records. Further research will provide greater detail and depth to an understanding of how the area developed.

3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Brief overview of the development of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge lies at the intersection of four Roman roads, and the Roman settlement developed on the west side of the river Cam in the present Castle Hill area. In Saxon times there was further settlement south of the river. After the Norman Conquest a castle was built north of the river and several churches and monastic foundations were in existence by the mid-13th century. The major growth of the town dates from the establishment of the University from the 13th century, and at the time of the Reformation there were 15 colleges.

Cambridge did not develop beyond its medieval bounds until the early 1800s, following the Acts of Enclosure. With the arrival of the railway in the 1840s the town expanded as a market town and agricultural centre. Large new areas of housing were built throughout the second half of the 19th century, building off and connecting the historic routes radiating out from the centre, including Madingley Road. In the first half of the 20th century the town's population grew from 40,000 to 90,000; outlying villages were connected and absorbed as ribbon development spread out from the centre.

Early resistance to this growth and the loss of village character in outlying areas was manifested in the establishment of the Cambridge Preservation Trust in 1928, and the protection given to the Gog Magog Hills, Grantchester, Coton and Madingley. After the Second World War Sir William (later Lord) Holford and H. Myles Wright's *Cambridge Survey and Plan* of 1950 formed the basis of the 1952 County Development Plan, defining the Green Belt and proposing new housing growth on the northern and south-eastern fringes of the town (which became a City in 1951). Population was to be capped at 100,000.

Holford's policy of containment proved unsustainable, and the post-war period has seen continuing pressure for and accommodation of development in and around the City. The coming years will see significant development in the City, with new housing, associated community facilities, as well as development of land for employment, medical and higher education expansion. Land giving off Madingley Road, particularly in the western half of the assessment area, has already been affected by major development in recent years. The Council wishes to ensure that

change is accommodated in the most appropriate way, taking account of the sustainability, mixed use, conservation and design objectives set out elsewhere in the Plan. The current assessment will inform the preparation of more detailed policies and guidance.

3.2 The development of Madingley Road

At the turn of the 19th century Madingley Road was predominately fields, with ownership shared between St John's College (the north and south of the far east end, stretching south to Barton Road), Sir Charles Cotton RN (the north west end), a Jacob Smith (who also owned land on Huntingdon Road), the Diocese of Ely (south west, rented to Thomas Whittred), the Storey's Charity (adjacent to the latter), William Farish, Clerk, and Merton College (Oxford).



FIGURE 1: ENCLOSURE MAP, 1805

The Blackfriars' Conduit Head, the stone structure over the spring that supplied piped water first to the Blackfriars and later to Trinity and St Johns Colleges, remains from the Middle Ages. The Observatory, built in 1822, was the first major University building to be built outside the town. By 1830 the town map produced by Baker (Figure 4) shows that smaller buildings had appeared, including Gravel Hill Farm (the present house and barn are very much of a later age) to the west and Church Farm to the south (on Farish's land), whilst some of St John's College land had been planted, as the Mount Pleasant Nursery. The area to the west of Gravel Hill Farm appears to have been marshy around Conduit Head, as shown on the 1888 1st edition OS map. There was also at least one brick kiln established, making the most of the rich local brick earth.

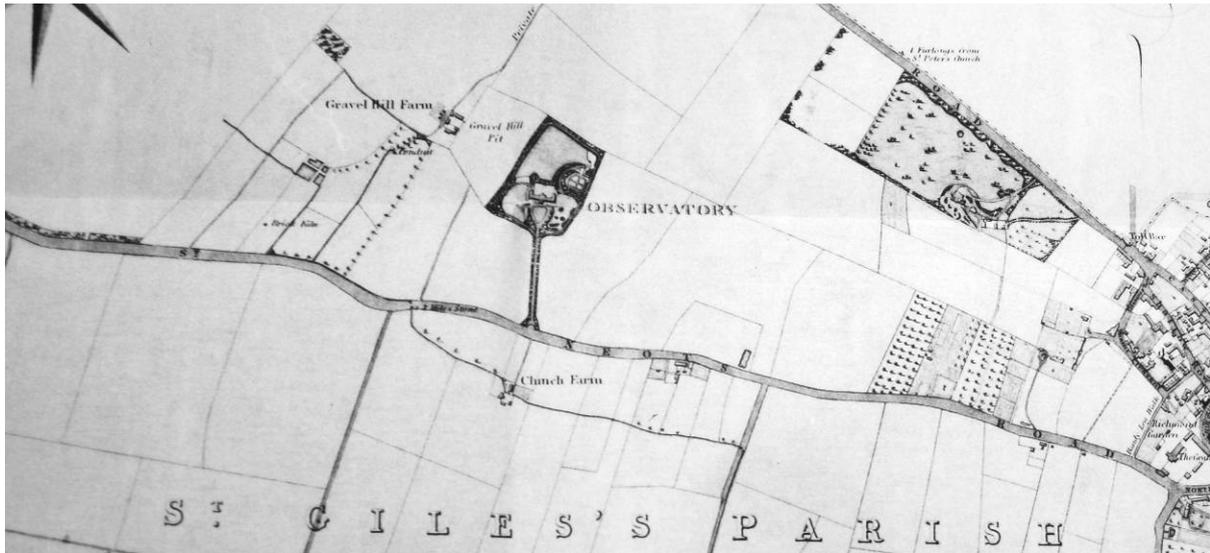


FIGURE 2: BAKER'S MAP, 1830

A small number of houses were built along the road in the mid-19th century, including Hedgerley Lodge (later the site for Hedgerley Close) and some terraced houses to the southeast, as well as No. 35. Three remaining buildings surrounding the road appear to be for agricultural use.

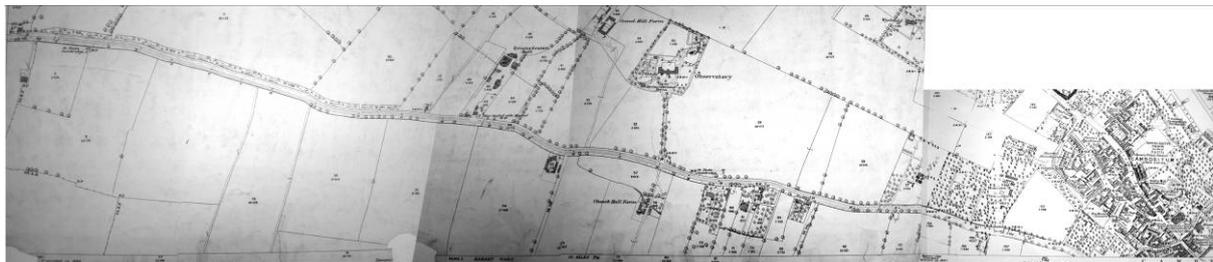


FIGURE 3: 1888 1ST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP (DETAIL)

After resident fellows were permitted to marry in 1882, colleges granted long leases on land for large family homes. These sprung up to the east of Madingley Road on land belonging to St John's College. Balliol Croft (later Marshall House, no. 6 Madingley Road) was completed in 1886 to the designs of the well-known Victorian architect J.J. Stevenson. Marshall was an economist who returned from Oxford to Cambridge once married, and named the house after his old Oxford college. By 1903 nos. 1, 3, 5 and 7 had been built on the south side adjacent to the playing fields, as well the lodge to Westminster College and nos. 8, 10 and 12 ('Elterholm') on the north. Further west, the 2nd edition map shows that two inns (*The Man Loaded with Mischief* and *Plough and Harrow*) had been built along the road for travellers entering and leaving the City.

Map progressions show that the large majority of houses in Madingley Road date from between 1926 and 1938, when the southeast side (including Bulstrode Gardens and Hedgerley Close), and Conduit Head Road (to the northwest) were developed. Bulstrode Gardens and Hedgerley Close were developed at about the same time as each other. Most, if not all, of Bulstrode Gardens appears to have been speculatively developed by J. A. Alliston, in connection with the firm of Alliston & Drew of London. With the exception of nos. 1 and 7, which were designed by Robert Furneaux Jordan (well known as an architectural writer), the houses of Hedgerley Close were built to the designs of the noted Cambridge architect H. C. Hughes.

The next significant phase was the development of the University towards the west, as a result of the 1950 Holford Report. The first buildings were those for the School of Veterinary Sciences (1953-5 by Ian Forbes, shown on the 1956 OS map, figure 6), stripped neo-Georgian/*beaux arts*, followed by Churchill College (1961-68, by Sheppard Robson & Partners), fully characteristic of that office's modernist planning and formal resourcefulness.



FIGURE 4: 1956 OS MAP (DETAIL)

Further west, the surrounding landscape remained relatively undeveloped until the recent University expansion to house new science buildings, some, such as the William Gates building, aided by private benefactors. Other sites were developed commercially, including the adjacent Microsoft Research Centre and further west, the distinctive stretched canopy of the Schlumberger Research Centre.

4 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.1 The Assessment Area

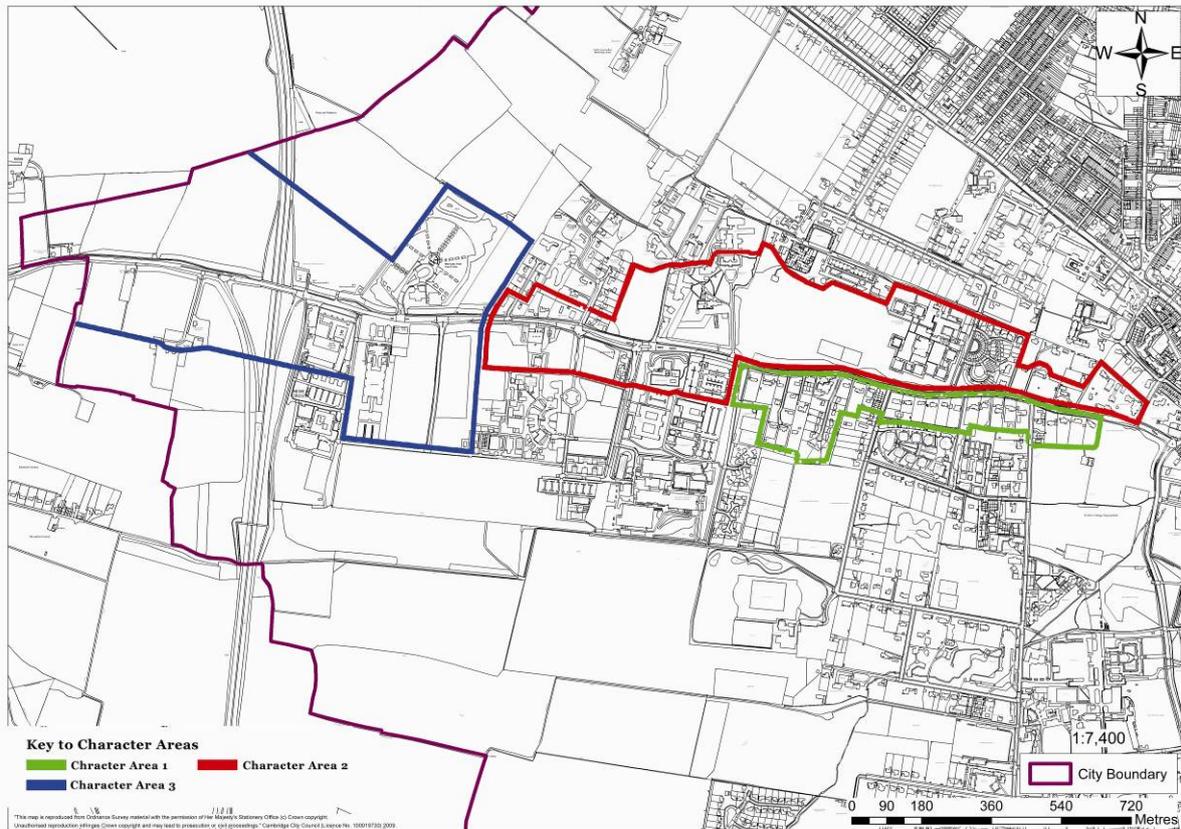


FIGURE 5: ASSESSMENT AREA, SHOWING CHARACTER AREAS



The area covered by the assessment (see map at figure 5) runs from the Cambridge City boundary (the drive to Moor Barns Farm, east of the Madingley turning) to the Madingley Road junction with Mount Pleasant, including the properties fronting each side of Madingley Road. It includes Bulstrode Gardens,

Hedgerley Close, and the east side of Clerk Maxwell Road. The assessment area can be broadly divided into three Character Areas, shown in figure 7:

- **Character Area 1** (green) is the residential area in the south east of the assessment area, and includes Hedgerley Close and Bulstrode Gardens.

- **Character Area 2** (red) consists primarily of University buildings with some houses to the north; it includes Lucy Cavendish College, Churchill College, the Observatory and on the south side, the northern approach to the School of Veterinary Medicine and the science sites.



- **Character Area 3** (blue) extends to the western City boundary. It includes part of the research buildings and the Park and Ride area.

At present the northern edge of the West Cambridge Conservation Area includes most of Character Area 1 but excludes Bulstrode Gardens and Hedgerley Close. On the north side of Madingley Road, the Conservation Area includes the buildings around Lucy Cavendish College but excludes Churchill College and its grounds. Further west along Madingley Road, part of the assessment area (the properties closest to the street) form part of the Conservation Area which has been created around Conduit Head Road. It is recommended that consideration be given to reviewing and extending these boundaries so as to incorporate Character Areas 1 and 2 within existing or new Conservation Area boundaries.

4.2 Overall Character and Appearance

Madingley Road is a principal route into the City, and retains its green and open quality closer to the City Centre to a larger extent than other approaches. The road remained relatively underdeveloped until the late 19th century when an eclectic series of large family houses were built, the best of them at the east end of the road. They display the gamut of styles of the late 19th and early 20th century Domestic revival. Arts and Craft or vernacular styles are well represented in the later interwar houses around the middle of the south side of the road. These are supplemented by some early modern houses (outside the study area) and a good collection of post-war houses around Conduit Head Road.

There are also some fine University buildings, notably the Observatory and Churchill College, both of which are listed, although very different in age and architectural character. This meeting of old and new benefits further from the quality and expanse of the green space between and around the



two, the sloping college grounds in particular give a sprawling, generous feel to the landscape. The south side retains its predominantly suburban character, the private character of Hedgerley Close and Bulstrode Gardens maintained by newer houses, tucked behind older properties.

In stark contrast, the new science buildings to the west shine with corporate funding.



The long brick buildings of the Veterinary School are somewhat barrack-like, an effect mitigated (on a small scale) by the neatly planted avenues, hedgerows and fences that surround it. The far west of the study area is open in character but, by virtue of the M11 junction and Park and Ride access, dominated by traffic.

However, the farm worker's cottages to the north hint at the agricultural hinterland beyond.

4.3 Character Area 1

The south east area of Madingley Road is composed of a series of large free-standing 1890s – 1930s villas, set back in well planted plots. Further middle class family homes followed as land was released or developed by the University. The houses are set back from the road, the plots frequently with two entrances, leading in and out of a drive. The front gardens were substantially planted out from the outset,

offering privacy from the busy road. The result is a high survival of original mature trees and cumulative plant growth. Most properties remain open to the pavement, albeit some heavily screened by planting. However, some (such as nos. 17, 19A and 21) have been hidden away behind large private gates, giving them a fortified air.



Character Area 1 has a varied mix of styles of houses giving it special interest. They are nearly all of a high architectural quality and little altered. Houses of particular note are:

- No. 3, 1896, built for J. R. Tanner, architect E. Doran Webb. A handsome free style house in honey-coloured stone, little altered except for chimneys. A Building of Local Interest and a possible candidate for statutory listing.
- No. 5, c. 1900, a rectangular red brick house with an upstairs gallery on the garden front, set back from the road behind tall fences and dense planting.
- No. 15, 1906, built for L. H. Bushe-Fox, architects Gervase-Bailey and A. P. Douglas (London). A large house in the vernacular style, with distinctive projecting entrance between two gables and a heavy stone semi-circular porch. A candidate for designation as a Building of Local Interest.
- No. 16, 1929, built for Col. W. D Gray, architect H. C. Hughes, in his vernacular vein. Also a candidate for Building of Local Interest.
- No. 19 and 19A, 1903 with a late 20th century addition. Built for F. Reed, architect/builder Arthur Rutter & Sons (of Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds). In neo-Tudor style, with a distinctive brick tower.
- No. 21, 1923, built for Austin Mardon Esq, architect/builder Coulson and Sons (Cambridge). A medium-sized house in elegant neo-Georgian style by a local builder.

- No. 31, 1932, architect Marshall Sisson. One of the first modernist houses in Cambridge, listed grade II. Note the horizontal Crittall windows.
- No. 35, a mid-18th century house, with later alterations and additions, listed grade II. Prominent timber Doric porch, canted bays and colour washed frontage. Remarkable studio range to rear.
- No. 37, 1932, architect/builder J. R. Bennett & Sons (Cambridge), brick with tiled roof. Original metal windows and porch entrance.
- No. 49, c. 1921, in vernacular style, white render and tile.
- No. 51, 1933, built for Rev. Dr. Alan C. Bouquet (All Saints Vicarage, Jesus Lane), architects Spalding & Myer (Westminster). A large brick house with plain roof directly over first floor fenestration, long and low slopes to sides, stock brick semi-circular entrance, original garage to west. Unaltered.
- No. 53, 1933, for B. Richard Farr, architect Spalding & Myer (Westminster). In the vernacular style, white render with entrance gable, surrounded by low sloped tile roof, with corner returns around gable. Externally unaltered.

Bulstrode Gardens is a consistent 1930s speculative development and as such is plainer in character than Hedgerley Close, its neighbour to the west, while lacking the latter's individual quirks. Internal arrangements and construction were often repeated, with external variations to add interest and variety. Around half of the houses have been extended or altered. Houses of note include:

- No. 5. The house has vertically-set bricks to some windows, modest first floor windows below overhanging eaves and long window adjacent to a stone-framed door.
- No. 6, in a simple neo-Georgian style, little altered.
- No. 7, similar in arrangement to no. 5, but with a band of dormer windows, a neo-Georgian entrance and tiling to the upper gable.
- No. 8, also similar in arrangement to no. 5, but with tall sash windows, brick lintels and sills and a plain entrance door under a flat hood.
- No. 10, a simple brick house enlivened by projecting first floor windows, balcony and tall single window above entrance (the oriel window appears to be a later attic conversion), original garage.
- No. 11 combines a pitched tile roof, set low, with suncatcher windows, giving it a horizontal and distinctly more 'Moderne' feel than the rest of the group.

In Hedgerley Close, its houses were for known clients, the setting and the fact that some of the houses are more hidden creates an intimate and private landscape, accentuated by tall fences and planting. Nos. 1 and 7 frame the entrance to the close, and were built in 1938 for John F. Jordan, from designs by Robert Furneaux Jordan. The pair mirror each other in plan and external appearance, although no. 7's windows have been replaced. The horizontal lines and low roof reflect a modern aesthetic expressed in traditional materials. Both buildings are considered worthy as designating as Buildings of Local Interest. Within Hedgerley Close, designs by H. C. Hughes predominate. A good and relatively complete example is no. 3, built in 1935 for Mr and Mrs Harry Sandbach. The quirky entrance door with its copper roof is set back from the road; this with the adjacent blind wall, orientation of the principal rooms to the south, and boundary hedge ensures privacy. This building too is considered to be a candidate for designation as a Building of Local Interest.



Buildings making a more negative contribution to the Character Area include the block of post-war apartments at the junction with Wilberforce Road, Fitzwilliam Court, a plain block of late 20th-century brick flats, partially obscured by tall hedges. The neighbouring site, formerly no. 41, was occupied by a McDonald's restaurant until 2004. Its replacement,

Churchill Court, returns the site to residential use, and is a design of some force and character. However, its large massing, pale tonality, strong cuboid forms and large expanses of fenestration and balconies are in direct contrast to the scale and character of the surrounding properties.



4.4 Character Area 2

North side

Immediately from the east, past Westminster College, lies a group of late Victorian houses, comparable to those to the south of the road, but set further back and in more generous plots. The first set belongs to Lucy Cavendish College, and is interspersed with newer buildings. Of these, the most notable is no. 6 (formerly Balliol Croft) built in 1886 for Alfred Marshall from designs by J. J. Stevenson. Lucy Cavendish's library (1999) by Freeland Rees Roberts is a contextual design using vernacular materials. Immediately north (but obscured from Madingley Road) is The End House of Lady Margaret Road, designed in 1911 by Baillie Scott, listed grade II.

Moving eastwards are houses owned by St John's College, including the stately neo-Tudor Elterholm (no. 12, outside the assessment area) built in 1900 by Grayson & Ould. Set far back from the main road is no. 16, a simple white render and red tiled house by H.C. Hughes of 1929. Its low-slung roofline and projecting dormers make it appear deceptively small.

The next north-leading avenue offers glimpses of new private houses. Of these the most architecturally adventurous is the award-winning Vizion House, completed in 2002 by Cambridge-based architects Barber Casanovas Ruffles, with rooms centred around an oval-shape courtyard lawn. Its neighbour, Willow House, is large and built in a neo-1930s style. Returning to the main road, no 18 was built in 1998 in a more conservative neo-Georgian style.

The Crescent was built on the junction with Storey's Way in 1992 to the designs of Saunders Boston, in a loosely neo-Georgian style. The 'townhouse' character is at odds with the suburban character of neighbouring houses and the modernist buildings in a parkland setting of Churchill College



immediately opposite. Churchill's modern design balances brick with concrete floor plates and copper details, the generous flush and protruding windows of student rooms making for a welcoming and informal environment. The site is of around 40 acres, with newer accommodation, the Møller Centre, stretched across the north east side. Sheppard Robson Churchill College Chapel is located to the far west, an afterthought uphill across the college's parkland, a deliberate marginalisation of religion in a place of scientific learning. The large expanses of open playing fields and tennis courts are separated from the main road by a low series of hedges going down to a meandering stream on the boundary. The grounds of Churchill College form the last substantial area of open space on the approach into Cambridge from the west.

Further west, the Observatory buildings were the first to be built by the University outside the town, after the original observatory was taken down from Trinity Great



Gate in 1797. It was built in 1822-3 from designs by John Clement Mead, and a glimpse of its Grecian columns and cream Bath stonework terminates the vista up a long avenue of densely planted non-deciduous trees and bushes, but also includes contemporary beeches. To the west is the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy

and Department of Geodesy and Geophysics, built in 1965-8, with later additions, mostly in brick with large areas of fenestration.

Northwest

Returning to the main road, the last stretch of Character Area 2 contains a group of 20th century houses, a prelude to Conduit Head Road (outside the study area). On the edge, hidden from Madingley Road by large hedges, and a high roof more recent structure in its curtilage, is the White House, listed grade II. Built in 1930 by the architect George Checkley for his own occupation, this is thought to be the first modernist house in Cambridge. It is now student accommodation for St John's College. To its west, simple late-20th century houses frame the entrance to Lansdowne Road.

South Side

The south part of Character Area 2 runs from the west side of Clerk Maxwell Road, over the Park and Cycle, the northern parts of the new sciences site and J.J. Thomson Avenue, as well as the north buildings of the University School of Veterinary Sciences. J. J. Thomson Avenue marks a distinct break from the prevailing



character of the domestic Character Area 1. The land uses either side of Conduit

Head Road (houses to the east, University associated parking to the west) are kept a secret behind verges and tall hedges. As at Hedgerley Close, the road dips down from Madingley Road. The east end announces itself in the bold four storeys of the Microsoft Research Building (2001, RMJM architects), a simple brick structure

punctuated with long bands of fenestration, the fourth floor topped with shallow-curved roofs. Next door is the William Gates Building, also by RMJM, with large expanses of glass recessed below overhanging wood canopies supported on slender columns. Around the Microsoft buildings are a large series of cycle stands, with distinctive tented fabric roofs. The road itself is given a semi-rural feel with post and rail fences and wide verges. At its north west corner, is a small retained mid-Victorian farm house (Merton Hall Farm). To the west of that a free-standing 1970s office block with coloured brick banding.

Moving west, the south side of the road opens up large expanses of green land comprising the paddocks of the School of Veterinary Medicine. This is a range of high-quality brick buildings in a loosely neo-Georgian/*beaux arts* style erected from the 1950s on.

4.5 Character Area 3

This area covers the remaining areas of field immediately alongside and beyond the road, running up to the City boundary and straddling the M11 motorway. To the northeast is the Maddingley Road Park and Ride complex, to the southeast further science and research centres. Across the motorway, the west side of the area is relatively open, with a smattering of small farm or domestic buildings.

The north east and Park and Ride area is partially obscured by trees and a long, high hedges in which is set a single pair of white painted agricultural cottages. A meadow with ridge and furrow cultivation marks separates Lansdowne Road gardens from the Park and Ride site which is laid out diagonally with a return-loop road, the northern car parking slots radiating on an axial plan. There are bus shelters and facilities to the centre, and small areas of planting set in long lines break up the grid. The signs immediately outside add an element of visual clutter.

The motorway crossing is a dramatic feature in the landscape, as the road below drops far down from the foot path level, ascending again far off to the north or south. The northern footpath continues westwards past fields as far as the Coton and Maddingley crossroads, the tree and foliage coverage diminishing away from the motorway, although the slip roads are partially obscured by planting.

To the far west of the study area, by the City boundary, are twin pairs of brick Victorian farm worker's cottages, the eastern pair crowned with a faceted chimney.

These are set back from the road behind hedges and small gardens. Immediately west is the track leading to Moor Barns Farm, a much older site.

South side

Two fields separate the back of the School of Veterinary Medicine from



private research buildings. The first, directly opposite the Park and Ride complex, is

the Schlumberger Research Centre. Built in 1992 for conducting oil drilling tests under laboratory conditions, and designed to accepted mishaps, the tented structure by Michael Hopkins is a landmark on the approach to the City, and no doubt a candidate for future listing. The final group of University related technical structures within the motorway boundary, High Cross, precedes Schlumberger and is a heterogeneous aggregation of no distinction. What can be seen through the tall Madingley Road hedge has a negative impact on this approach to the City.

5 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

The relative significance of buildings and landscape features in the study area has been assessed according to the following five categories (to be read in conjunction with the coloured map at appendix 1):

- **Protected:** buildings and trees that are protected by way of listing or Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Listed buildings are coloured orange on the map at appendix 1, while TPOs and TPO areas are also shown. Listed buildings on Madingley Road are Westminster College (outside the assessment area), nos. 6, 31, 35, the Observatory buildings and the original buildings of Churchill College.
- **Building of Local Interest:** although not afforded statutory protection, these make a positive contribution to the street scene, and are coloured yellow.
- **Positive:** buildings of clear local interest, but not yet included as a Building of Local Interest, or of lesser quality than Buildings of Local Interest, or altered superficially. They are coloured blue.
- **Neutral:** buildings which although of little individual merit, combine with other buildings and spaces to create a townscape of value, or at least do not detract. These are coloured purple.
- **Negative:** buildings which have an adverse impact. These are coloured dark red.

In addition to these categories, significant but not formally protected green spaces, including roadside verges and major open spaces, are also indicated on the map at Appendix 1.

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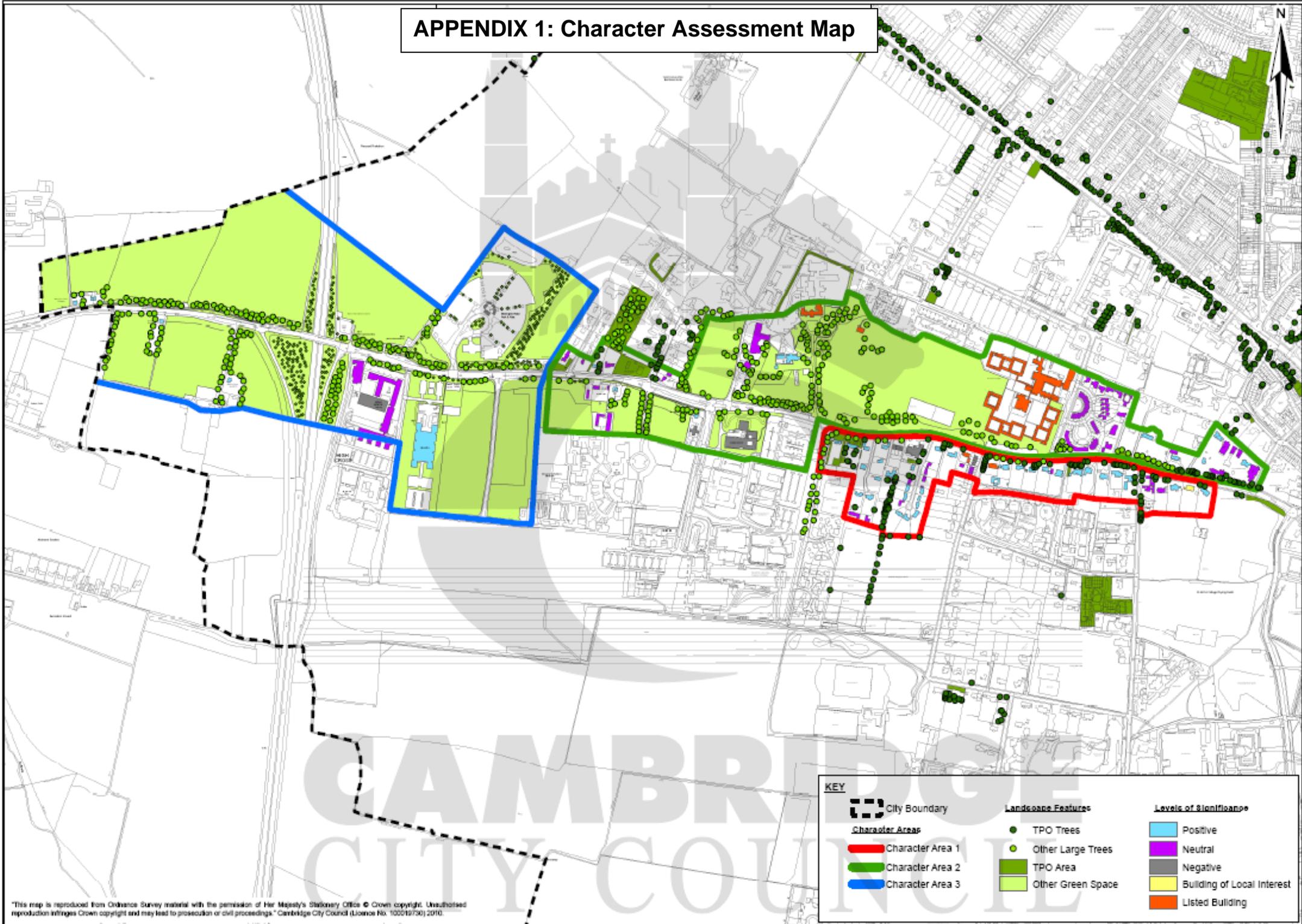
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APPENDIX 1: Character Assessment Map



KEY		Landscapes Features	Levels of Significance		
	City Boundary		TPO Trees		Positive
Character Areas			Other Large Trees		Neutral
	Character Area 1		TPO Area		Negative
	Character Area 2		Other Green Space		Building of Local Interest
	Character Area 3				Listed Building

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