

Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches

Barton Road



Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Barton Road

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For

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1 CHARACTER SUMMARY

Barton Road is one of the principle routes out of Cambridge City Centre to the south west, connecting with outlying villages and the M11. Approached from the south west, open country predominates until the City boundary is crossed. From this point the road has a wide, suburban character, gently undulating, with wide footpaths and verges lined with mature trees. Houses are generally large detached and semi-detached properties occupying long plots, set behind hedges amidst mature planting. Passing the buildings of Wolfson College on the left, also set within spacious landscaped grounds, one enters the core of the settlement of Newnham Croft. This was developed from the late 19th century onwards, and has an architecturally heterogeneous character. The open spaces of the Gonville and Caius College playing field, Lammas Land and the grazing marshland around the Fen Causeway provide a series of open spaces and a green buffer between Newnham Croft and the City Centre. Similarly, the approach from the west through farmland and Green Belt land, and the land to the south consisting of protected open spaces and fields, give Newnham Croft its own distinct character and identity, albeit subsumed by Newnham to the north. Although much of the development along Barton Road is of 20th century date and suburban in character, and there is some higher density development of the interwar and post-war years, the place nevertheless has something of a village character, particularly around the church and Red Bull public house. This is enhanced by the informal landscaping and surfacing of some of the streets leading off. There are no tall buildings, and the spirelet on the parish church maintains its pre-eminence on the skyline. More significant is the backdrop of tall, mature trees, which dominates both the approaches and views within the area.

At present Conservation Area designation extends to the whole of the eastern side of the assessment area (but split between two Conservation Areas) and parts of the western side. It is recommended that existing Conservation Area boundaries are reviewed, and that consideration be given to extending the Newnham Croft Conservation Area to include the whole of the assessment area (and possibly some of the streets giving off, which have not been included in this assessment).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Architectural History Practice Limited (AHP) was commissioned in January 2009 by Cambridge City Council (the Council) to prepare rapid assessments of Huntingdon Road, Madingley Road and Barton Road. These appraisals 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. Barton 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 Barton 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 Barton Road such as rate books, insurance and building control records. Further research would provide greater detail and depth to an understanding of the development of the area.

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. New housing began to appear on the roads leading out of town, including Barton Road. 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. 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. Barton Road is not directly affected by major proposals, although Leckhampton (to the north of Wolfson College) is identified as a major development site. However, the area will continue to

be subject to development pressure, and 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 Newnham Croft

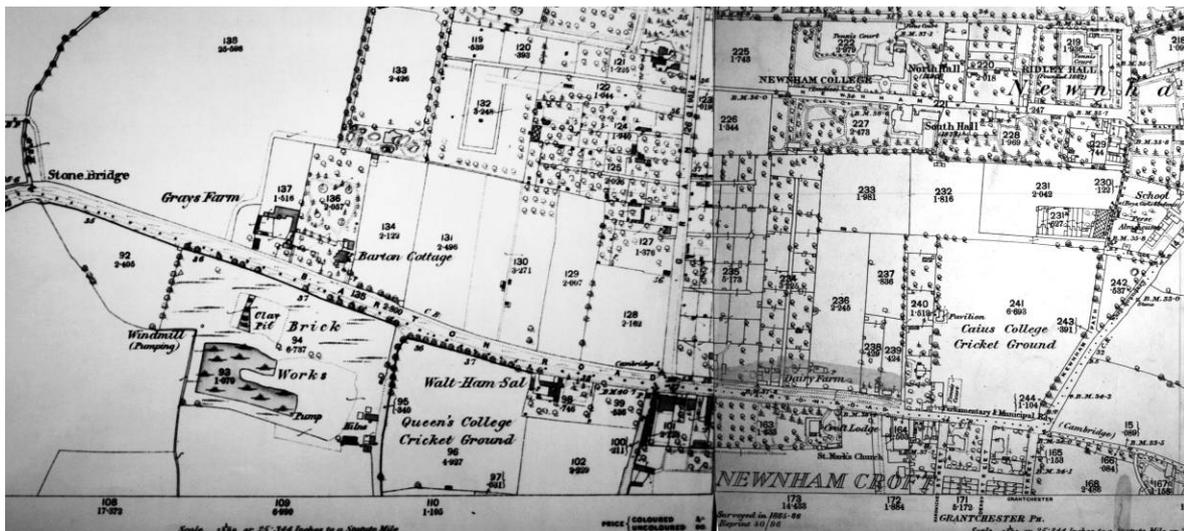


FIGURE 1: 1ST ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP, 1888 (DETAIL)

Following the early 19th century enclosure of the Cambridge fields, the area on the south western side of the town, partly within the town boundary and partly within the parish of Grantchester, began to be developed. In 1830 only two villas stood there, but by the 1850s over 50 houses had been built by the Barton Road. In 1871 a church, initially a daughter church to the parish of Grantchester, was built to serve the growing community of Newnham Croft (croft=farm). About the same time terraces of working men's cottages were laid out at Croft Town, followed by Selwyn Terrace in about 1880. Development was given impetus following the relocation of Newnham College to Sidgwick Avenue in the 1870s and the establishment of Selwyn College in the 1880s, and with the building of new houses sponsored by King's and other colleges. The first Ordnance Survey Map (figure 1) shows the area in a state of transition – part agricultural (farms, market gardens and orchards), part industrial (the brickworks and windmill to the west), part suburbanised (new detached and smaller properties towards Newnham Road) and part University playing fields. Some of the buildings existing at that time survive today; they include

- the mid-late 19th century pair at 1 and 2 Clare Road

- the Red Bull public house
- 27 Barton Road
- the then newly-built nos 29 and 31 Barton Road
- the Hat and Feathers public house on the corner with King's Road
- the large L-shaped early 19th century house at no.49-51
- further west and on the north side, the early-mid 19th century Barton Cottage, now no.78.



FIGURE 2: ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP 1903 (DETAIL)

The 1903 Ordnance Survey map (figure 2) shows further development along Grange Road and the new church of St Mark (built in front of the old church in 1901). About this time an important Iron Age burial was found in the garden of Croft Lodge (now the site of Croft Gardens).

In about 1908 King's College began to develop Millington Road with large houses in spacious grounds. Fulbrooke Road (off Grantchester Road) was begun at the same time. Newnham Croft was incorporated into the Borough of Cambridge in 1911 and in 1918 Newnham became a separate parish, independent of Grantchester. At this time there was much infilling of empty sites, but further growth westwards and southwards was constrained by the existence of college sports fields, themselves separated from Grantchester village by fields. However development of Newnham Croft was given further impetus in the 1920s when the building of Fen Causeway improved traffic connections with the City Centre.

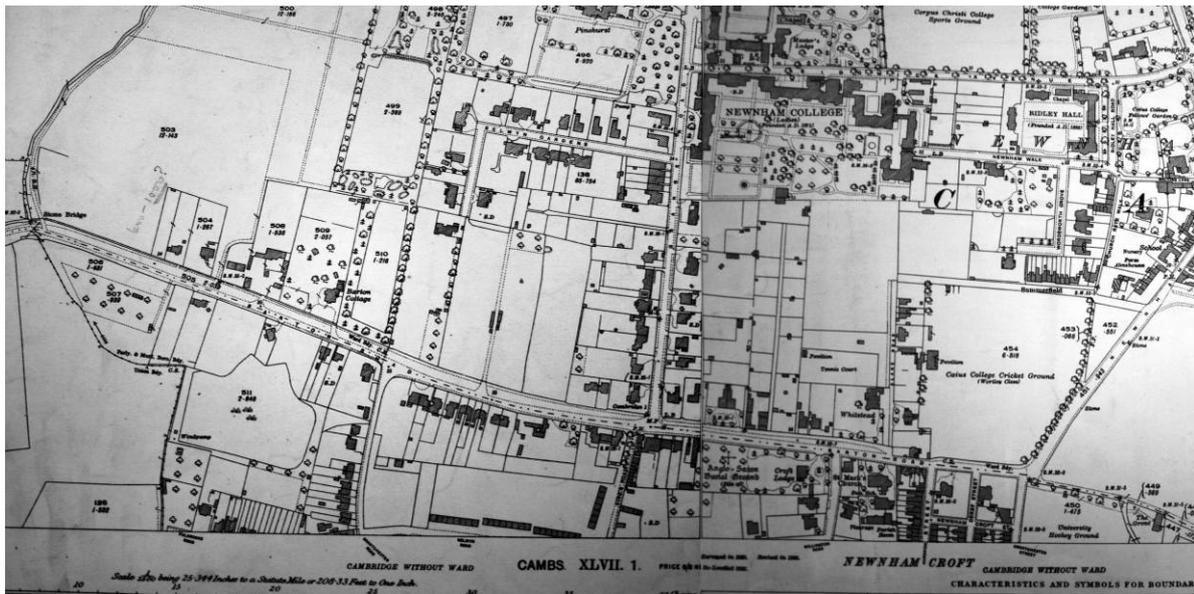


FIGURE 3: ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP 1927 (DETAIL)



FIGURE 4: ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP, 1939 (DETAIL)

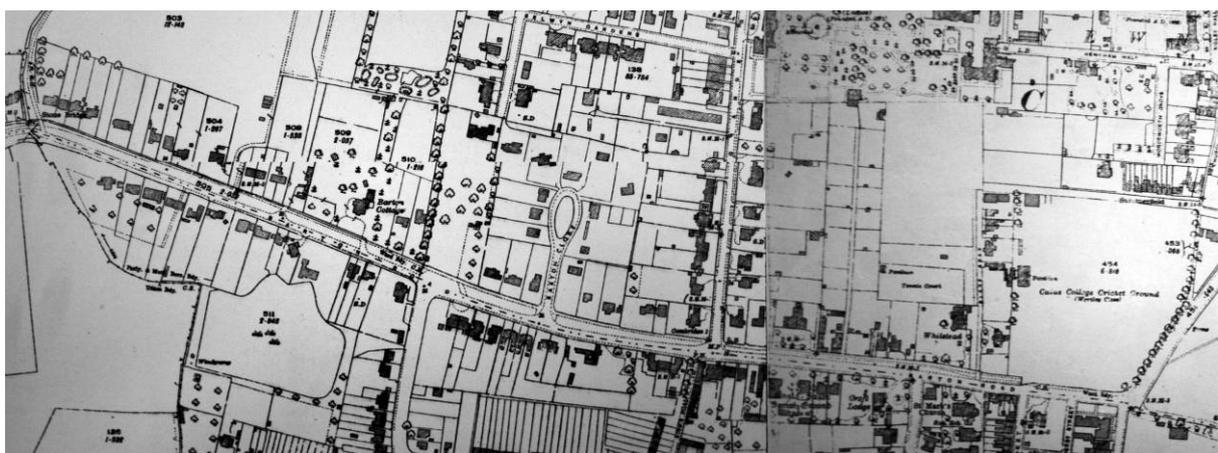


FIGURE 5: ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP, 1948 (DETAIL)

Lammas Land was enclosed to become a public recreation space. The Ordnance Survey map for 1927 (figure 3) shows the north side still largely undeveloped and the beginning of development around the lake formed on the site of the old brickworks.

The 1939 Ordnance Survey map (figure 4) shows the increased pace of change in the 1930s, with Barton Close laid out and ribbon development along the north side of Barton Road. The 1948 map (figure 5) shows further intensification and development, with new apartment blocks such as Maitland House.

The most significant post-war development has been the growth of Wolfson College, established in 1965 as the University College. The campus incorporated some pre-existing buildings, but has expanded considerably with new build. Residential developments have included some important modern houses backing onto Newnham Lake.

4 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.1 The Assessment Area

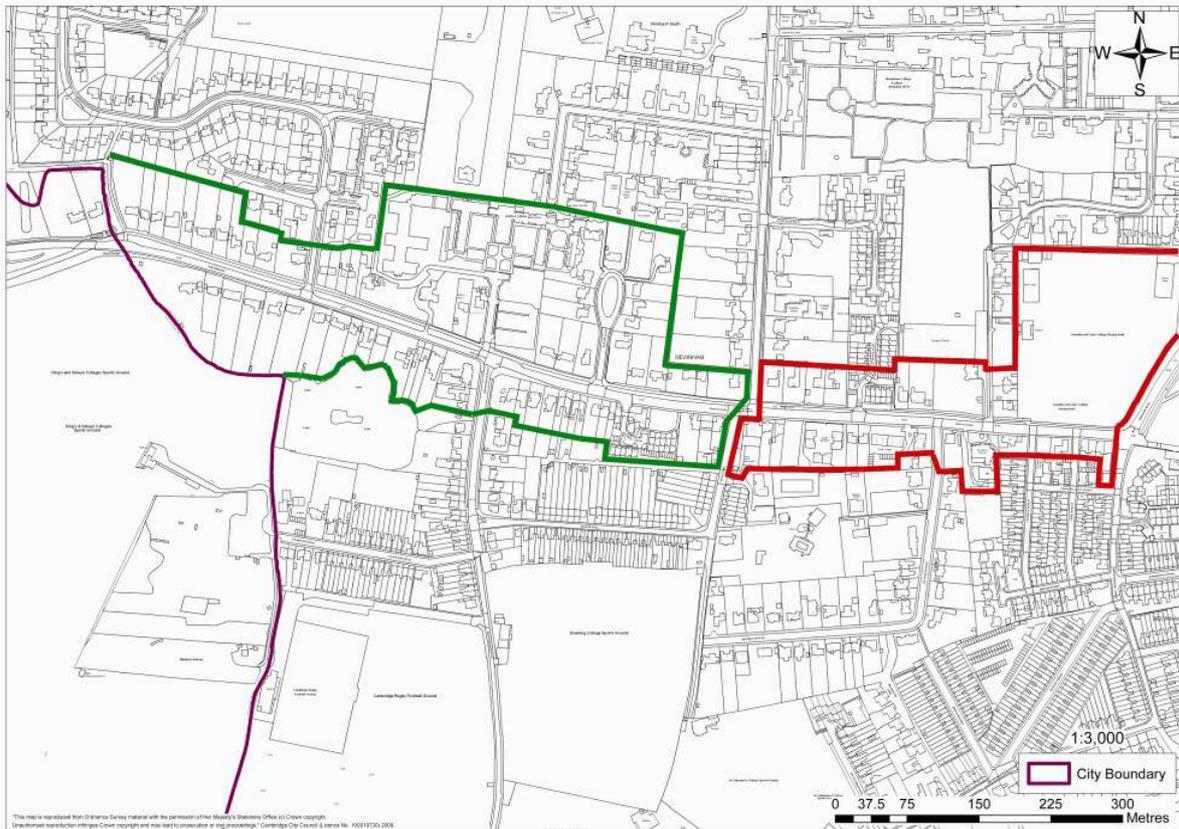


FIGURE 6: ASSESSMENT AREA, SHOWING CHARACTER AREAS

The area covered by the assessment is shown in figure 6. It runs from the City boundary in the east to the junction with Newnham Road in the west, and includes Barton Close. The assessment area can be broadly divided into two Character Areas, shown in figure 6. Character Area 1 (outlined in red) encompasses the eastern side of the assessment area from Newnham Road to Grove Road/King's



Road. Character Area 2 (outlined in green) lies to the west and is more suburban in character. This is a crude subdivision, for the area is heterogeneous in terms of architectural and landscape character. The subdivision is adopted as an aid to description rather than necessarily to act as

a guide to future planning.

At present Conservation Area designation extends to the whole of Character Area 1 (but split between the West Cambridge and Newnham Croft Conservation Areas) and parts of Character Area 2 (West Cambridge Conservation Area). It is recommended that the Conservation Area boundaries are reviewed, and that consideration be given to extending the Newnham Croft Conservation Area to include the assessment area (and possibly some of the streets giving off, not included in this assessment).

4.2 Overall Character and Appearance

Barton Road is one of the principle routes out of Cambridge City Centre to the south west. At the eastern end, land on the north side was developed in the late 19th century at the same time as the land to the north in Newnham, with which it shares many architectural and design characteristics, with large villas in domestic revival style, occupying spacious plots. These offered a taste of *rus in urbe* outside the town centre for dons (now able to marry) and the professional classes. The land on the south side is more heterogeneous and urban in character, with tight-knit late 19th century terraces giving off to the southeast, and several blocks of flats and apartments ranging in date from the early to the late 20th century. Amongst these there are also earlier survivors, and the presence of the church, cheek by jowl with an old pub, gives something of a village quality. This part of the assessment area lacks architectural homogeneity, but not architectural quality. A relatively high level of density is offset by generous planting and landscaping.

Heading further west, the suburban character increases, with large houses of late 19th and, more commonly, early 20th century date. Some of these are detached and semi-detached houses of fairly standard, speculatively-built design, but amongst them are some designs of real quality, displaying a range of Tudor, Georgian and vernacular influences. There are also some good late-20th century Modernist houses. In the western half of the assessment area, the footpaths are wider, with wide grass verges planted out with now mature trees. These are important in framing the approach from the west. Boundaries are typically marked by high hedges or wooden fences, and the houses are set within spacious plots with mature planting and trees. Amidst this residential enclave, Wolfson College has grown from its beginnings in the

1960s to become a major local presence. Substantial additions have been made to the college, yet the quality of its semi-formal landscape setting remains.



A few houses lie beyond the City boundary to the west, but very quickly we are in open countryside. The rural edges to the west and to the south have been jealously preserved from development for nearly 100 years, and the area retains a strong identity and coherence.

4.3 Character Area 1

South side

The approach to Barton Road from the City is flanked by open spaces to left and right. On the south side at the eastern end there is a concentration of dense late-19th century terraced development in the streets giving off to the south and east. At this point (and up to and including the church of St Mark), Barton Road forms part of the Newnham Croft Conservation Area, designated by the Council in 1998.



The street frontage at this point is dominated by the stylish apartment blocks of Maitland House, of late 1930s character. These two storey blocks have glazed pantile roofs, curving first floor balconies and original Crittall windows with horizontal panes giving a sleek,

Moderne appearance, evocative of an ocean liner. Maitland House is set behind a low wall on the street frontage amidst communal gardens laid mainly to lawn, with some mature trees around the perimeter.

Cherwell Court follows, a three storey 1960s apartment block, brick and with a rather fortified air, making a powerful statement on the corner. Again, this is set back from



the road behind a low wall, within communal gardens and mature planting. These blocks are on the site of former large detached dwellings. On the corner with Hardwick Street is a car park, a negative element in the street scene and Conservation Area.

After Hardwick Street, a slightly older and more villagey character asserts itself, with the lower painted brick and slate terraced group around the Red Bull public house. Adjoining this, and set well back from the road within a landscaped churchyard

containing a war memorial, is St Mark's church, built at the beginning of the 20th century from designs by R. Philip Day, Surveyor to the Archdiocese of Canterbury. It is a local landmark, in the Transitional Early English/Decorated Gothic style, red brick with stone dressings, with an apsidal east end and spirelet on the main ridge. At the west end,



an elegant narthex and porch are recent additions by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects. Behind the church is the large late 19th century vicarage.

Millington Road is not shown on the 1903 Ordnance Survey map, having been laid out in 1908. It is characterised by large detached houses in large plots, several of them by the noted interwar Cambridge architect H. C. Hughes, and is notable as a street which continues to be lit by gaslight. The unpaved footpath and verges give the street an informal, villagey character. The architectural tone of the street is set by no.1, occupying the corner with Barton Road, a substantial Queen Anne Revival

house with steep hipped roof and dormer. In contrast, Croft Lodge (occupying the other corner and continuing the Barton Road frontage, and on part of the site of the original Croft Lodge, see figure 4) is a three storey post-war block of flats, architecturally undistinguished, but placed behind a beech hedge in a mature landscaped setting. Nos. 19 and 21 are interwar detached houses in the revived domestic style, contrasting with Croft Gardens, which is similar in date and character to Maitland House, and consists of three blocks arranged around a central court planted out with topiarised yews. The buildings retain their distinctive green pantile roofs but unfortunately have lost their original metal windows.



Alongside Croft Gardens, and appearing to form part of its garden setting but set so far back as to barely register in the streetscape, is no.27, an earlier survival and a candidate for Building of Local Interest. This is of early-mid 19th century character, with painted brickwork, a hipped slate

roof, timber sash windows and hoodmoulds over the ground floor openings. Buildings previously occupying the front garden of this property (shown on earlier maps) have been demolished.

There is a remarkable contrast between the architectural and townscape reticence of this house and its neighbours to the west, the large, bold, red brick and eccentrically detailed late-Victorian town houses occupying the street frontage at nos. 29 and 31 (no. 29, The Red House, is dated 1885 in a lintel). Adjoining this, no.31 is a modern three storey



apartment block with two gable ends towards the street. It is set back with a hedge, leaving exposed the flank wall of The Hat and Feathers, which has a narrow frontage to Barton Road and a longer return elevation to King's Road, continued by a high garden wall. The building takes the corner well, with a hipped roof and a (now disused) entrance in the splay on the corner.

North side

The playing field to Gonville and Caius College is a large open space at the west end of Barton Road. On the road frontage it is enclosed by a tall copper beech hedge. It has a western backdrop of tall, mature trees in Clare Road, and on its western side is an attractive brick and tiled cricket pavilion with three plastered gables and a central recessed verandah. Clare Road is a cul-de-sac of semi-rural character. At its entrance, 2 Barton Road is a post-war detached house and garage, replacing an earlier 20th



century house closer to the street frontage; further up on the right 1 and 2 Clare Road is a mid-late 19th century pair of three storey town houses with ground floor bay windows.

The more suburban character continues with two large detached houses in the Old English style with timber framed gables at 10 and 12, set behind hedges and timber fences and gates. St Mark's Court, which follows, is a post war development of two storey flats of a contrasting density and grain. The prevailing character resumes with 22 and 24, a pair dating from about 1900, with double height bays under a hipped and dormered roof, set within large front gardens with a semicircular drive, and with good original timber gatepiers to 22. Along with 26, a detached late 19th century house with a portico, and 2 Grove Road, these belong with the late 19th and early

20th century development of Grove Road, characterised by substantial detached houses in large plots.

4.4 Character Area 2

North side

No development is shown here on the Ordnance Survey map for 1903 other than the older properties at Burton Cottage and Gray's Farm to the west. This part of Barton Road was developed from the early years of the 20th century, and most of the buildings are interwar in date. The prevailing character is immediately more suburban than that to the east, with a wider footpath and grass verge with an avenue of trees. Architecturally, the change is less pronounced; the house at 1 Grove Road and the long pair at 28 and 30 Barton Road are slightly later in date than the properties immediately to the east in Character Area 1, but are similar in character. No.1 is in the Queen Anne style, while 28 and 30 Barton Road have a more Arts and Crafts character, with roughcast walls and continuous leaded light casement windows under the eaves. They are included in the Buildings of Local Interest.

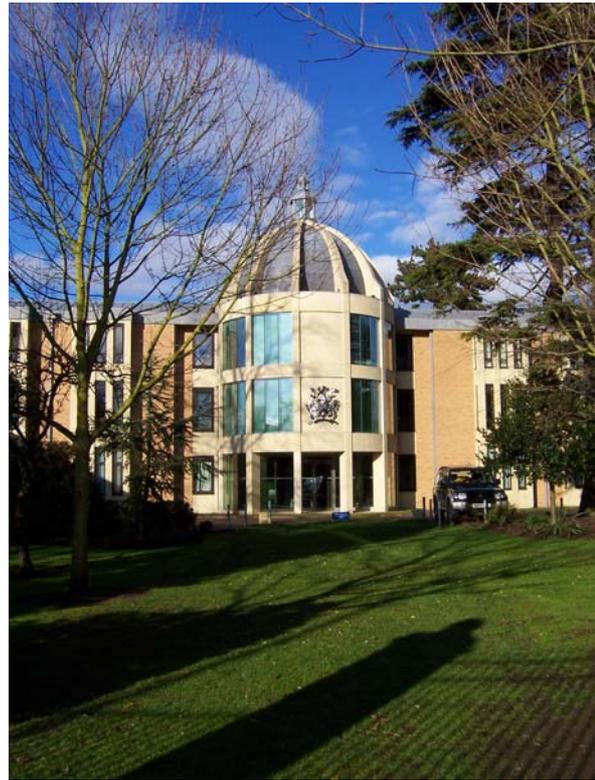
After this, nos. 32 and 34 (not shown on the 1939 map) are the first of the inter-war and post-war properties along the north side; these are typically brick built, with prominent roof forms and stacks, metal or casement windows, large gardens and attached garages.

Barton Close was laid out in the 1930s as a cul-de-sac around a central island, which is now maintained in a semi-wild state. Wide footpaths with grass verges skirt the perimeter, and some properties have high beech hedges on the boundary. The earliest



houses were nos. 1, 3 and 6, symmetrical brick-built houses with metal windows (some replaced) and hipped pantile roofs. Later houses tend to be more informal in composition and larger e.g. the rebuilt no. 3.

Nos. 38, 40 and 42 Barton Road are similar in date and character to the properties in Barton Close; good details include a swept copper roof over the porch of no.40. There follow the buildings of Wolfson College, placed in extensive landscaped grounds behind railings on the street frontage, and the most recent major development in the assessment area. The College site incorporates some pre-existing buildings and an avenue which framed one side of the approach to the main administrative building of 1972-77.



West of this, no.72 (Morrison House) and no.74 (Williams House) are 1930s houses now in use by the College. Also subsumed within the grounds of the College is no.78, the former Barton Cottage, an early-mid 19th century grey gault brick three bay house, listed grade II. The house is set well back from the road behind iron railings; the stone gate piers with ball finials and iron gates are separately listed. Beyond this is the Chancellors Centre of Graduate Study, a major new building with a projecting domed centrepiece, by Brewer Smith and Brewer, 2003-4.

84 and 84A are two modern houses, 84 lying to the rear of the site. They are followed by two pairs of 1930s semis with hipped roofs and large front gardens, the pair at 86A and 86B being the more altered of the two. Gough Way then leads off to the north, a post war development of two-storey suburban houses. There is a red pillar box on the verge to the left. From nos. 94 to 112 (Bin Brook and the City boundary), the character is of large detached houses set well back from the road on deep plots. Some of these are pre-war in date (occasionally much altered, e.g. no.106) and some are post-war replacements. They include a fine neo-Regency house at 94 with a canted bay and hipped slate roof, the neo-vernacular (but altered) no. 96 (a Building of Local Interest) and two good 1930s house with hipped roofs at 104 and 112, the latter with a swept lead hood over the central front entrance.

South side

Proceeding east from the City boundary, nos 111-79 form part of the interwar ribbon development along Barton Road. No. 111 is a slightly more neo-Georgian version of 112, and 83 is a later replacement, set well back from the road in a wide plot. The other properties are unremarkable and many have been altered with modern replacement UPVC windows, dormers etc. The exception is 89, a later interloper in marked contrast to its interwar neo-Tudor and neo-Georgian neighbours; it is a spare flat roofed design, single storey and deep on plan with an internal court, built in 1974-75 by Austin Lord: Smith for the Heffer family. It is one of a group of properties whose back gardens extend back to Newnham Lake, on the site of the old brickworks. No. 77 is a recent development, red brick and non-specifically historicist in design. No. 75 on the corner facing Grantchester Road is a substantial early 20th



century house of free Classical design, gault brick with stone dressings. Adjoining this at no. 2 and 2A Grantchester Road is a pair of houses of 1963-4 by Colin St John Wilson, no. 2 designed for the architect's own occupation. The upper floor is of white cast-stone blocks and is supported on irregularly-spaced square pillars,

leading through to a courtyard. *The Architect and Building News* for 7 July 1965 described these as 'two of the best houses produced in this country within the last few years'; they are listed grade II.

The group stretching from nos. 73-55A (odd) consists of large detached and semi-detached houses of early 20th century date, the most substantial of these being the red brick pair at 71-73. No. 49/51 is an L-shaped early 19th century survival

presenting a blind elevation to the street, with a modern timber doorcase on the eastern return and timber sash windows, some with external shutters, on this and the other elevations. Connected to this is the successful addition of no.53, with an archway beneath leading to Archway Court, a sympathetic 1970s development of flats in the former garden of the property, by Dry Halasz Dixon Partnership. The long east elevation of no. 49 looks onto the landscaped setting of Archway Court, with a pedestrian path from the street, and mature trees and planting. Finally, nos. 37-41 is an early 20th century Neo-Georgian group, three blocks facing a small front garden area, with timber sash windows and hipped tile roofs with prominent stacks, dormers and overhanging eaves.

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 listing or Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Listed buildings in the assessment areas are 78 Barton Road (with the gatepiers separately listed), and nos. 2 and 2A Grantchester Road. Buildings protected by listing are coloured orange on the map at appendix 1, while TPOs and TPO areas are also indicated.
- **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 (sometimes on account of unsympathetic alteration) nevertheless combine with other buildings and spaces to create a townscape of value, or at least do not detract. These are identified in purple on the map at Appendix 1.
- **Negative:** buildings which have an adverse impact. These are identified in dark red on the map at Appendix 1.

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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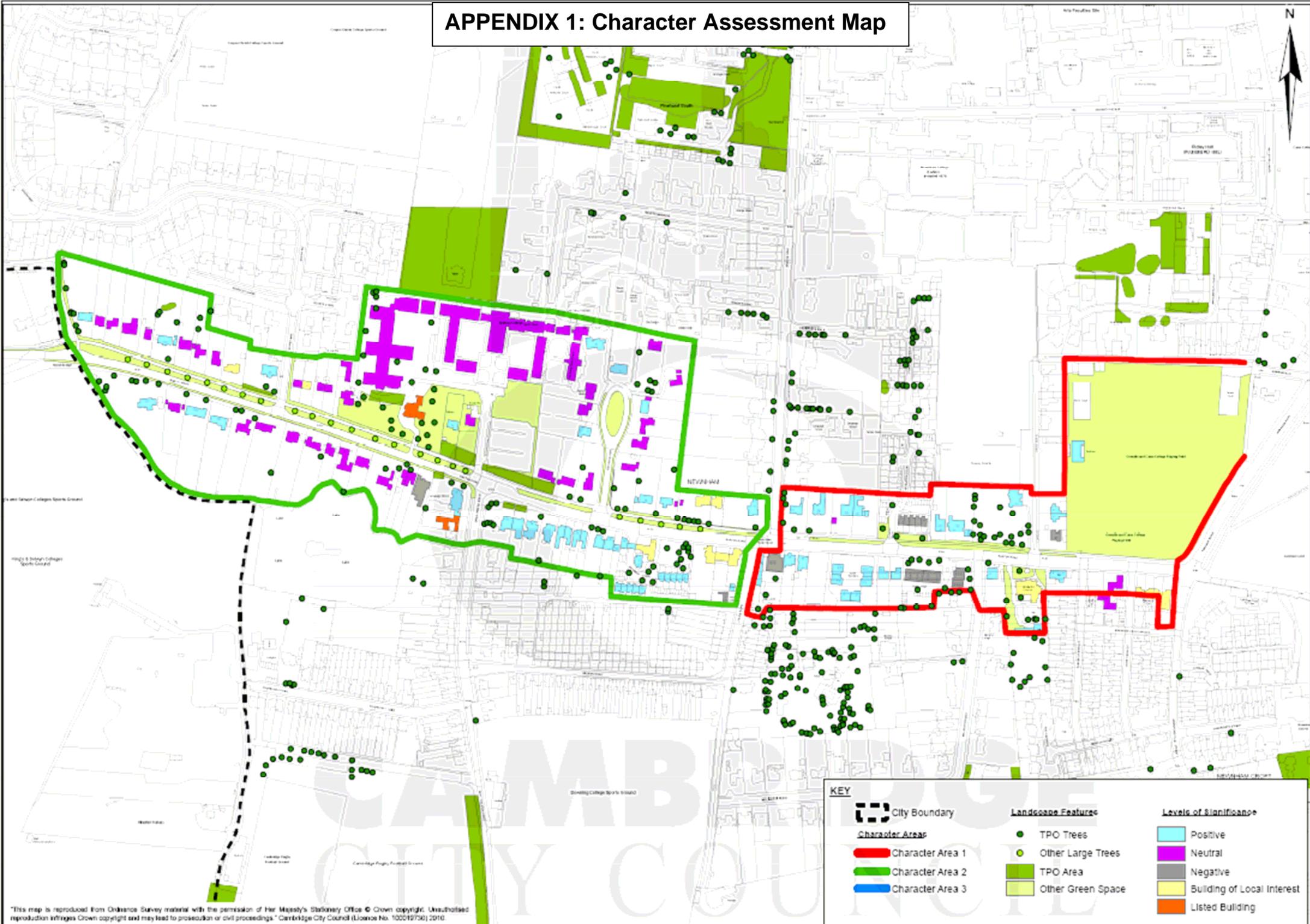
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APPENDIX 1: Character Assessment Map



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

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