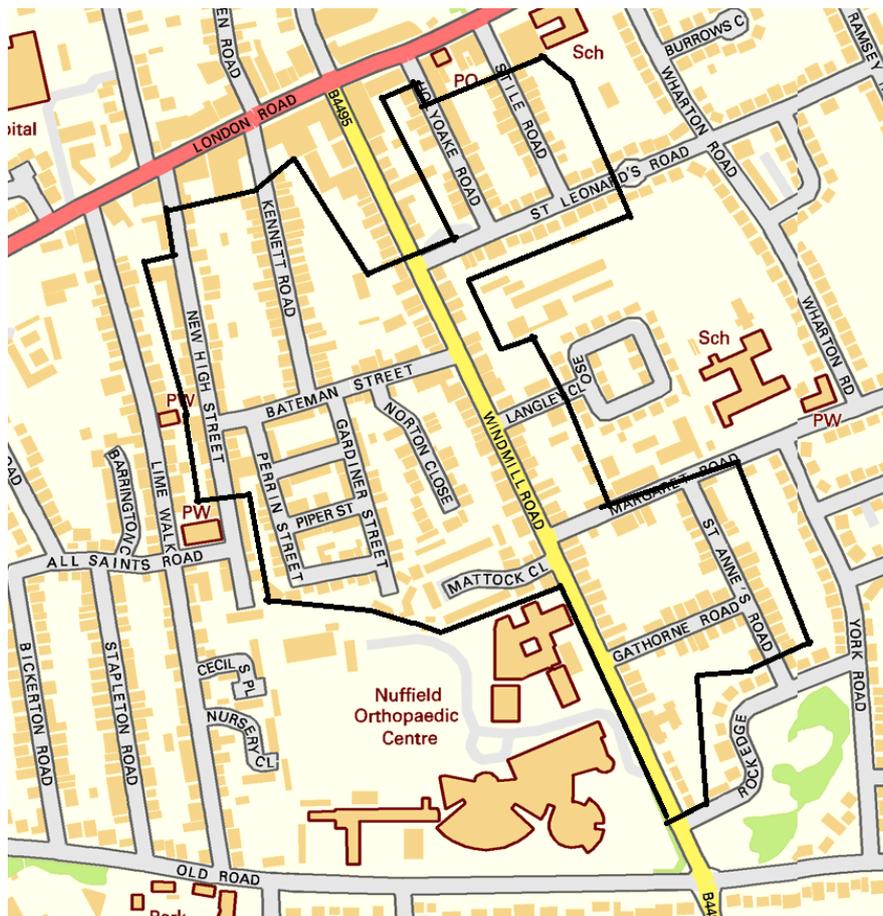




## CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

# AREA 11: NEW HEADINGTON and ROADS EAST OF WINDMILL ROAD



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

This area comprises the housing development on each side of Windmill Road (excluding the shopping area to the north) and includes most of the original New Headington village.

The area is bisected by the busy Windmill Road connecting the centre of Headington with the ring road and outskirts of Oxford and beyond. On the western side of the area is New High Street. The furthest points to the east are Stile Road and St Anne's Road. The northern border is just short of the retail area of Headington, and the southern one is at the corner of Rock edge with Windmill Road. It is a residential area with a few businesses tucked in here and there.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Until 1852 Windmill Road (formerly Windmill Lane) was the only feature of this area, linking Old Headington and the Old London Road to the windmill that stood on the site of the present Matthew Wigglesworth House (formerly Windmill House) from at least the twelfth century until the 1870s.

Here was the first planned development in the whole Headington area: a high street (now New High Street), and five roads to the south of Bateman Street which became known as the Square. Around 1870 the new village acquired a beerhouse (Butcher's Arms in Wilberforce Street); a chapel of ease (All Saints' Mission Chapel in Perrin Street) and a school (New Headington Infant School, Perrin Street). Like the rest of Headington it was served only by a few pumps and wells until about 1914.

The development of Windmill Road was slower: only eight houses are recorded in the 1881 census and sixteen in 1891. Nos. 97 –157 date from 1900. In between lay John Mattock's rose nursery (1873) on which the only council estate in the area was built in 1983 and West's Nursery (1893). Norton Close was built at the end of the 1960s.

From 1878 until the 1920s, Kennett Road was an apple orchard. The Methodist Chapel in New High Street opened in 1889.

In 1908 the famous Morris dancer William Kimber built the first house in St Anne's Road, and Gathorne Road followed in 1913.

In 1910 All Saints' Church opened and the chapel in Perrin Street closed.

Headington Conservative Club opened In 1927 - probably because the sale of alcohol was forbidden in Lime Walk.

In 1929 seven duplicated road names in this area were changed.

## KEY POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

- Houses from the Victorian and Edwardian era are largely terraced, semi-detached and some detached. They have a variety of styles of windows. There are also properties from the 1930s and 60s. In the last 20 years blocks of flats have been developed. This mixture of styles of housing gives the area a sense of the development of its history. Given the houses are in the main two storeys with some attic extensions this results in few buildings within the area dominating others.



- Building materials are red or pale brick and painted render in the main, with pitched roofs, red tiles or slate, and with chimney pots. Some houses have retained their original ridge roof tiles and their sash windows contributing to a sense of the area's late 19th and early 20th century past.

Although many front gardens have been converted into parking spaces, often efforts have been made to keep greenery and bushes to soften the aspect. A significant feature throughout the whole area is the low walls and hedges fronting the gardens, which provide uniformity and a division between the public and private space of the street.

- Some buildings have interesting features, such as ornamental ironwork, wooden balconies, and small murals adding attractive elements to the street scene.



The two areas on either side of Windmill Road are quite different in character.

**West of Windmill Road** there are three distinctly different small estates:

- Norton Close was built in the 1960s and about a third more were built more recently on the site of the former West's Nursery. The green verges are the only public greenery in this part of New Headington and are used for community gatherings.



- Mattock Close, laid out on a curved road, and spilling out into Gardiner Road, was established in 1983 on the site of Mattock's Nursery as a small social housing project. All houses are built from red and yellow bricks and the long front gardens allow for off street parking and greenery giving it its own distinctive character.



- The Square built between 1870 and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century consists of the five roads to the south of Bateman Street. It is the oldest housing development in this part of New Headington. Its grid of narrow streets and terraced housing is attractive and gives an intimate feel. These houses have fronts straight onto the road and others have shallow gardens with low walls. It is a quiet area with minimum through traffic. Some limited development of modern terraces, and semi-detached houses has taken place, some have their attics made into usable space or extensions built at the back.



- The newly resurfaced one way New High Street has a variety of housing; detached, semi-detached and rows of cottages interspersed reflect the span of building from the 1870's to now. At the London road end are modern, three storey blocks of flats, while on the opposite side is a row of cottages one of which has the famous shark crashing into its roof. Further down is a residential home and the old Methodist Church and towards the end is the All Saint's Church Hall. The road then narrows and becomes two ways. On the east side a row of narrow flat fronted cottages gives a unifying aspect which is repeated further down the road on the west side replacing ones originally built for the poor.



- There is no direct access to the East Side of Windmill Road because of the barrier close to Gardiner Street. This has reduced the amount of traffic moving through and makes it a quiet part of Headington.

- Bateman Street, Kennett Road and Gardiner Street are used by residents and staff of the NOC and Churchill Hospitals as pedestrian and cycle routes with the snicket at the back entrance of the Nuffield Orthopedic Hospital also providing a convenient short cut.
- The area is zoned for parking for residents.
- There is also a snicket between Wilberforce Street and New High Street.

#### **East of Windmill Road:**

- Margaret Road and St Leonard's Road are straight roads, busy with traffic and closely linking this part of Headington with Quarry Field, the Quarry and the ring road.
- Margaret Road has traffic calming measures in recognition of the community facilities in the adjacent area; there is a garage and MOT centre in this area, a school, church and playing fields in Quarry Fields
- Gathorne Road and St Anne's Road are attractive quiet residential roads with tree planting. Houses are mainly from the Victorian and Edwardian era. The southern end of St Anne's has a view of Rock Edge.
- Style and Holyoake Road are short, straight one way residential roads off London Road with tree planting.



#### **Windmill Road**

- Windmill Road is the main road running from South to North through Headington and is both broader and busier than the more residential streets to either side. There is an eclectic style of houses. An interesting feature is the steps up to the pavement where the road rises. Close by the Matthew Wigglesworth House offers accommodation to young homeless people. Getting closer to the centre are some businesses: Blanchford Building Supplies, Hine's, selling woven goods, Richard Ford's the useful second hand shop, AG Jacobs Removal and storage, and others. Headington Conservative club, built in 1927, stands on the corner with Bateman Street, and has its own car park.





## ISSUES

- Large volume of commuters creates traffic problems and pollution in Windmill Road and connecting streets.
- A high incidence of rented and multi-occupancy housing is felt to affect commitment to the area.
- Bins and food caddies are often left in streets and front gardens and are unsightly.
- Tree planting is limited as it is impractical in narrow streets.



- There is limited public parking, leading to illegal parking, at times causing obstructions compromising large vehicles (corner Gardiner Street/ Bateman Street).
- Walls removed and front gardens unattractively concreted over for parking.
- The camber and narrowness of some pavements make walking difficult.
- Some roads are in poor state of repairs.
- The Botnar building on the northern side of the NOC site looms over adjacent two-story dwellings, reducing the sunlight on the southern aspect of houses towards the western end of Wilberforce St.

## GUIDANCE FOR DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- There is very little room for development in this area, and therefore new developments should be in keeping with their surroundings and should be subject to parking restrictions.
- Given the area's proximity to its hospitals, 'affordable housing' for key-workers should be a priority in any future development.
- Energy-saving strategies should be encouraged.



## PROPOSED ASSETS

### Historical Assets

- The former school house on Windsor Street and the infant school in Perrin Street are notable red brick buildings. The school was in use between 1873 and 1908. The school building was then used for many years by Headington brownies and by a variety of commercial firms. It is now being redeveloped into flats.



- The current scout hut which was built as a chapel in 1870
- The Butchers Arms which was built in the same period as the chapel in the same materials
- The world-famous shark in New High Street.
- Oxford's first passive house in Kennett Road which was built in 2012
- The single-storey former Wesleyan Methodist Church in New High Street which has been used as a community space since the building of the new church in Lime walk in 1932
- The former Windmill school, now converted into flats.
- The Blue plaque in St Anne's Road commemorating William Kimber, the Morris dancer.
- The period dwellings in 'The Square'

### Community Assets

- The Methodist Church Hall and All Saints' Church House in New High Street are regularly used by a variety of groups for a range of activities, including a daycentre for adults with learning difficulties.
- The scout hut is used several times a week. It can be hired for community activities, and is used as a polling station.
- The Butchers Arms, recently refurbished and thriving, which serves as an informal meeting place for community groups and can be hired for functions.
- The ball room of the conservative club is for hire
- St Leonard's Road car park, is useful for visitor parking.
- The proximity of Co-Wheel vehicles parked in St Leonard's Rd car park and Kennett Road.
- The snicket leading from Wilberforce St to New High St provides a useful short cut for pedestrians and cyclists.