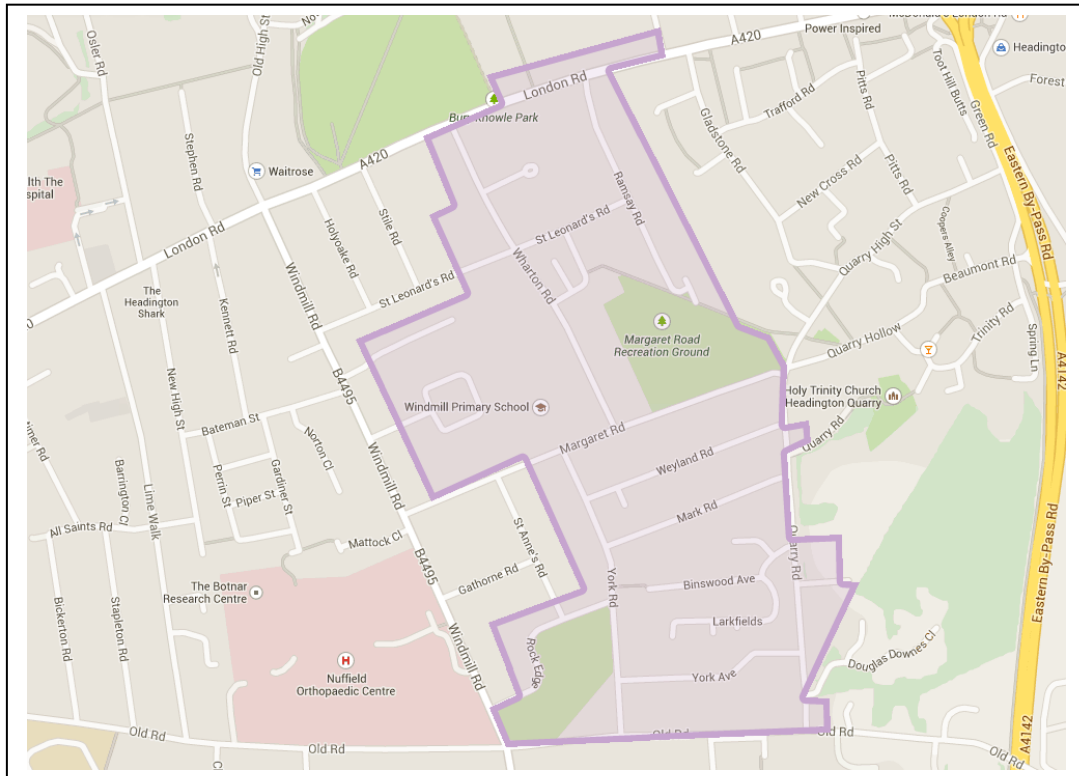




## CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

### CHARACTER AREA 12: QUARRY FIELD



### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

This area to the east of Windmill Road and to the west of Quarry village proper is bounded by the medieval routes of Windmill Lane (with the older housing area of High Field to the west) and the Old London Road and the modern London Road to the south and north respectively. These are all still main access routes and carry very heavy traffic, whilst the Quarry Field area is made up of quieter narrow streets. It is bound on the east by Gladstone Road, Quarry Road and Barton Road. For the most part it comprises the old Quarry Field, which traditionally was one of the four great fields that covered all of Headington.

In the south-west corner was the Crossroads Pit at Rock Edge, which is now a local nature reserve whose geological exposure of Upper Jurassic rock has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The largely quiet, residential area is characterised by formal rows of 1930's semi-detached houses, which join the two villages of New Headington and Quarry.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Roman Road that connected Alcester to Dorchester runs nearby and there is evidence of Roman pottery kilns on the edge of the area. There was a thriving pottery industry using Shotover Clay but this declined after the Romans left.



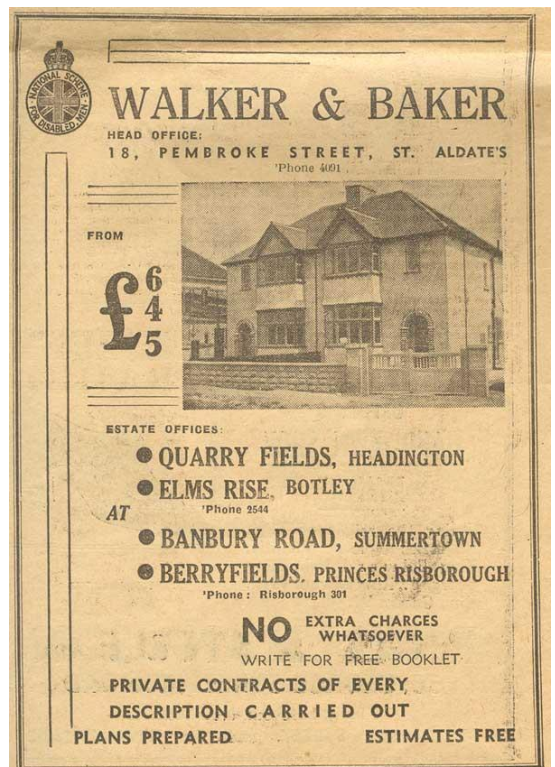
In the Middle Ages the area was part of the royal manor of Hedintone and from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century was part of the quarrying area (Crossroads Pit at Rock Edge). It was bounded by the medieval routes of Windmill Lane and the Old London Road. The modern London Road was established as a new turnpike in 1775. The old Quarry Field was gradually subdivided as a result of the 1804 Enclosure Act and like the rest of Quarry was in St Andrew's parish until 1849 and in the new parish of Holy Trinity thereafter.

As New Headington village grew in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was some development to the east of Windmill Road, and in 1908 Windmill School (Headington's first board school) opened in Margaret

Road, then just a short spur off Windmill Road; this building, to the left of the present Windmill Primary, closed in 2004 and is now flats.

The first council houses in the Oxford area were built along the London Road in the NE of the area but it was largely undeveloped until Headington became part of Oxford in 1929. The roads and houses south of the London Road were built on Quarry Field from 1934 onwards to accommodate the employees of the motor works at Cowley.

The old Quarry Gate was only remembered in the name of the new pub that opened in 1937 to serve the new houses (now the offices of a development company). The only space left free was Quarry Recreation Ground, tucked in the triangular area delineated by part of the old diagonal coffin path to St Andrew's Church.



## KEY POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

- It is primarily a quiet residential area with 'traditional' two storey properties built in the 1930s to serve local industry. It has straight, formally planned streets with some bungalows and a few, small apartment blocks and occasionally a terrace. There are some large detached houses on Quarry Road on the eastern boundary and there are peaceful cul-de-sacs e.g. Burrows Close.



- There is consistency of building materials throughout the area: brick, painted render, pebble dash, with hipped tile roofs. For the most part the houses' styles are variations on a 1930's design, often in small groups or pairs. e.g. St Leonard's Road, north end of York Road. As such, it has a strong architectural character creating a cohesive area.



- The houses are set back from the road, often with drives and with front gardens, which provides greenery to make an attractive street scene.
- Front walls and fences have been maintained along original lines retaining division of public and private space.
- Municipal tree planting in London Road has made the street scene more attractive.





- York Road and York Avenue have a greater variety of housing and there are some good examples of infill e.g. York Road, where the choice of materials and scale of modern design is consistent with existing housing.

- Some roads are quite uniform in design, e.g. Weyland Road and there is a strong building line creating a more pronounced sense of place



- The pavements throughout the area are edged with kerbstone, concrete slab and stone drainage gulleys, which provided unifying detail. Unfortunately in some roads this has been covered over by re-surfacing.

- Larger houses on London Road have been converted into B&Bs, which has resulted in the buildings being well maintained.
- There is a residential care home on the corner of London Road with Wharton Road.
- The village hall on Margaret Road provides a useful communal meeting place and nursery although the building now looks very dated.

- Corpus Christi Catholic Church, the first one in Headington, founded 1936 in Margaret Road.



- Green spaces 1:

Margaret Road Recreation Ground which provides space for football, cricket, children's playground and is well used for recreational purposes. It has mature lime trees.



- Green spaces 2:

Rock Edge - a geological SSSI and a rare lime/chalk land providing habitat for rare invertebrates, wild bees and limestone flora and evidence of the historic quarrying industry that provided the materials to build many of Oxford's famous college buildings.



## ISSUES

- Loss of commercial premises to housing, resulting in reduced community activity.
- No municipal street planting except in London Road.
- Commuter traffic using residential streets to avoid congested main routes.
- Proliferation of side, rear and attic extensions not always sympathetic to local character.
- Little affordable housing to meet the demands of University and hospital expansion.
- Front gardens paved over for parking have reduced greenery in the area.
- The pavilion on Margaret Road recreation ground is unfit for use in its present state.
- Dumped rubbish in the rear access cul-de-sac to the west of Holly Crescent is unsightly.



## GUIDANCE FOR DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- New developments will need to avoid additional traffic impact. Traffic calming measures and road closures are unwelcome.
- Green spaces must be retained and greenery should be increased where possible.
- New front garden parking should be permeable and include scope for planting’.
- Any development should be compatible with the two-storey norm for the area’.



- Development of the Quarry Gate pub provides an opportunity to create affordable housing in a building of scale and using materials consistent with the area.



- The Margaret Road recreation ground pavilion and the Quarry Village Hall each need improvement. Development as a single unit should be considered

## PROPOSED ASSETS

### Historical Assets

- The old funeral path from Quarry, retained as Vallis Alley.



### Community Assets

- Windmill Primary School, Margaret Road.



- Margaret Road Recreation Ground.



- Quarry Pavilion in Margaret Road Recreation Ground, soon to be re-built by Oxford City Council.



- Quarry Village Hall in Margaret Road.





- Corpus Christi Catholic Church.



### Ecological Assets

- Rock Edge, including the existing green space (shown in green on map).

