

AREA 13: LONDON ROAD EAST



GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

This area is divided into two parts by the London Road, the main access route from the east into Oxford.

The smaller part, to the north-east side of the London Road between Barton Road and the Green Road roundabout, comprises a few thirties detached and semi-detached houses, a row of seventies three-storey town houses, commercial buildings (including a veterinary surgery, B&Bs and some independent shops) and Oxford's first Sikh Temple - the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh.

The main part is south-east side of the London Road. It stretches from east of Ramsay Road to the Green Road roundabout and then south around the corner to include the roads adjacent to the Eastern Bypass, and all that part of Headington Quarry which does not fall within the conservation area. This is a quieter residential area with a mix of both private and social housing, mostly modern buildings dating from the late 1960's onwards.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

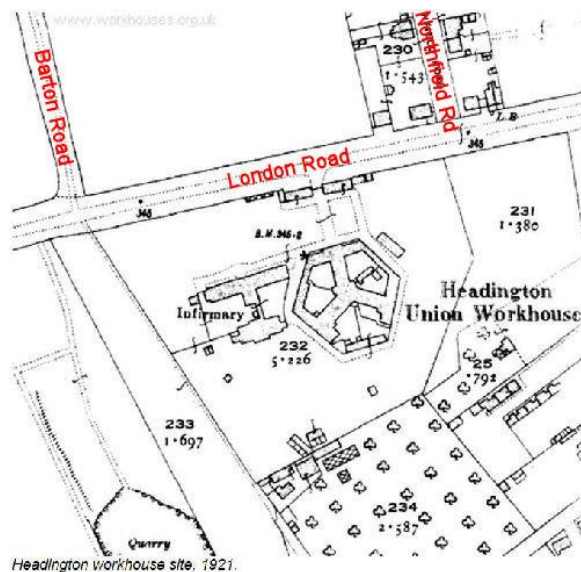


Green Road, Headington Quarry, c.1905

The London Road did not exist except in the form of a field path before the end of the eighteenth century when in 1775 it was established as a new turnpike.

Green Road is adjacent to the line of the Roman road from near Bicester to Dorchester, which probably became a drove road. William Orchard, the master mason of Magdalen College lived in the Barton Road area, which once extended as far as the Quarry pits. The Northern Bypass was built as unemployment relief work in the mid-1930s, while the Eastern Bypass to Rose Hill divided the parish of Quarry in 1959.

Headington Union Workhouse - a massive hexagonal building on a seven-and-a-half acre plot - opened on the London Road in 1838. In 1931 it became London Road Hospital and later an old people's home known as 'The Laurels'. This was demolished in 1968 to make way for a development which includes sheltered housing. A pillar and a portion of wall on London Road are the only remaining signs of the workhouse.



In 1890 there were just two houses at the north-east end of London Road (now 299/301), one a grocer's shop then a butcher from the 1940's to the 1970's. In 2012 it became the Sikh Temple.

Headington Community Centre was built on a corner of Gladstone Road and William Kimber Crescent in about 1961.

KEY POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

- The mainly residential part of the area south-east of the London Road is constructed mostly of yellow brickwork with white window/door frames. This style is a characteristic of both the social and private housing providing cohesiveness to the area. The houses are mostly in good order
- On the London Road the houses are a mix of older detached and semi-detached houses and newer terraced town-houses which works well, with representatives of all periods from the late 19th century to the 1970's. Some of the larger houses have been converted into B&Bs. The houses are generally well kept. Commercial premises along London Road include a vet, grocer and barber, which are also well kept.
- There are several buildings which serve the community:
 - Headington Community Centre, Gladstone Road.
 - Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Sikh Temple), London Road.
 - Shops – OX3 Convenience Store, Gladstone Road, and the Oxford Food Centre, London Road.
 - Services - Quarry Motoring Centre, Green Road, Veterinary Practice and Headington Barbers and Oxford Hypnotherapy Centre, London Road.
- This area is in the main pleasantly laid out with many green spaces, trees and hedges. There is also municipal tree planting along Green Road and London Road. This all lends an air of pleasantness and acts as a buffer against the traffic noise and pollution. Also provides a habitat for wild life, for example, the laurel hedge along the London Road and the green bank in Toot Hill Butts fronting the eastern bypass.



House showing typical construction



OX3 Convenience Store, Gladstone Rd



Green bank, Toot Hill Butts

There are several useful public access points and paths. These paths are well used and maintained. However, the signs at the Green Road roundabout subways are contradictory. One reads 'cycle route' another reads 'no cycling.' Pedestrians do not always feel safe walking through them.

- William Kimber Crescent provides access to Magdalen Pit, an SSSI (which lies within the Conservation Area).
- Public footpaths:
 - From Quarry High Street to Toot Hill Butts.
 - Three paths from London Road, Toot Hill Butts and Green Road to Coleman's Hill.
 - Two paths from London Road to Pitts Road and Trafford Road.
- Pedestrian and cycle subway under the Green Road roundabout:
 - From Green Road /Toot Hill Butts to The Roundway and Bayswater Road.
 - From Northway to Barton.
- Within walking distance there is access to several parks and recreation grounds.



Footpath from Quarry High Street to Toot Hill Butts

Views:

- From Green Road West there are views into Headington Quarry Conservation Area and south to Shotover Hill.



View to Shotover from Eastern Bypass

Transport links:

- There are good transport links to Oxford city, Aylesbury, London and both Heathrow and Gatwick airports from the London Road.

ISSUES

- Congestion. Each day up to 16,000 vehicles, including up to 900 buses and coaches use the London Road route.
- Traffic Noise emanating from the Green Road Roundabout, Oxford Ring Road (Northern and Eastern Bypasses) and London Road.
- Vehicle emissions. The Green Road roundabout is a recognised high pollution spot.
- Lack of coherent cycle routes.

Oxfordshire County Council's 2014-15 improvements should address, in part, the problems identified above.



Traffic Eastern Bypass

- Lack of affordable housing. Both university and hospital expansion has created an increased demand for housing. There is little space to build in order to meet this demand and the situation is being made worse as existing social housing is gradually being sold off diminishing the stock of affordable housing in the area. For example, in Trafford Road Oxford City Council have sold houses off which have been converted into flats.
- The area is generally tidy except for some accumulation of litter in the bushes along some footpaths and verges, for example the path from Pitts Road to London Road is a bad litter spot.
- Lack of space for the storage of domestic refuse bins. There is a general problem in the area concerning the lack of space to place bins, for example, the flats and maisonettes on Colemans Hill. This sometimes attracts fly tipping and domestic refuse becomes scattered around the area.
- On street parking. Parked cars on Green Road cause problems of access for residents of Quarry.

GUIDANCE FOR DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- Strong consideration should be given to maintaining the main amenities serving the area.
- Grass areas and greenery should be retained. Additional planting where possible, particularly trees, would be welcomed.
- The public access points and paths should continue to be maintained.
- There is little scope for infill housing development.

PROPOSED ASSETS

Historical Assets

- The only remaining evidence of the Headington Union Workhouse is a stone pillar and wall, London Road. It is recommended that a plaque be placed on the pillar to commemorate the children and adults from 22 parishes who lived here in the years between 1838 and 1930.



Community Assets

- Headington Community Centre – very effective, providing for a large cultural mix including Cherry Tree Nursery, community activities and worship on Sundays. There is also a useful car park and covered cycle park.
- Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Sikh Temple).
- OX3 Convenience Store, Gladstone Road – a store very well used by local residents.
- The several useful public access points and foot paths



Ecological Assets

- Trees. There are many mature trees in the area which are especially valuable in an urban setting.
- Grass verges and grass spaces. The trees, grass verges and green spaces provide an opportunity to connect with nature in an urban environment.



Green space Spooner Close