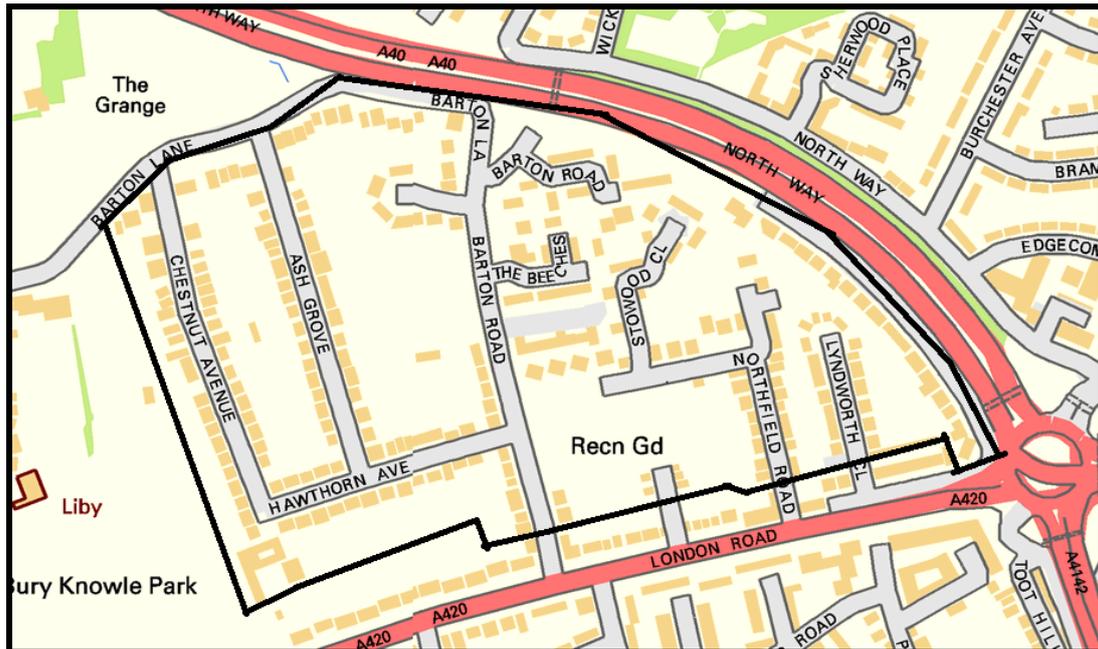




CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

CHARACTER AREA 6: NORTHFIELD



GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Northfield is a predominately residential area located to the east of Bury Knowle Park. To the south the area adjoins properties on London Road and extends east and north east up to and including residential properties on North Way (A40 Ring Road). Barton Lane defines the north east extent of the Northfield area. The Barton Bradley Recreation Ground on the eastern side of Barton Road is centrally located and provides a large area of open space as well as a children's playground for nearby residents. The recreation ground is linked to Northfield Road by a footpath.

The area is generally two-storey residential of mixed age dating from the 1900s and ranging from estate format to new infill developments. Thirty new houses and flats are being built on the former Barton Road Cricket Ground on the west side of Barton Road This development will be known as The Willows.

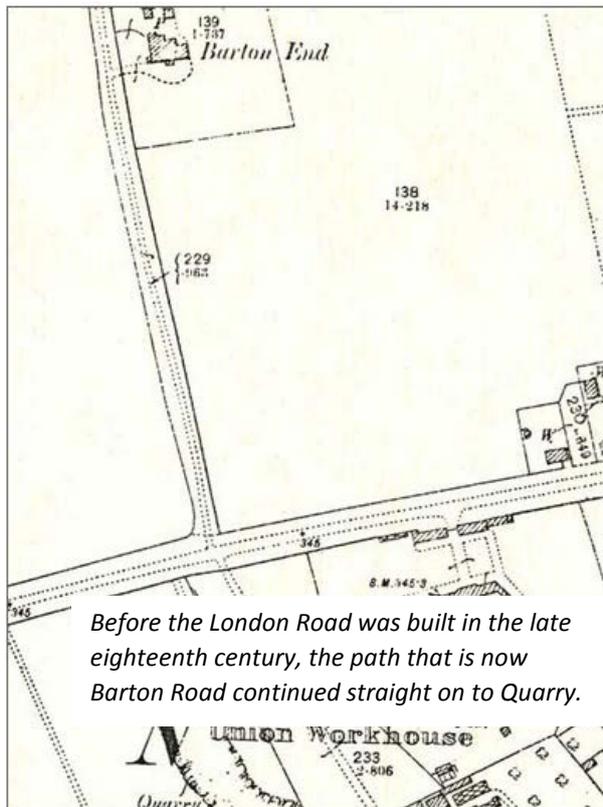
Whilst Northfields is a generally quiet there is considerable traffic noise from London Road to the south as well as from A40 Ring Road to the east and north east.

The Bury Knowle Doctors and Dentist Surgeries and a Boots the Chemist are situated in the far west corner. There is vehicular access from London Road but no pedestrian access through to Hawthorn Avenue or Chestnut Avenue.

Barton Road effectively separates the Northfield Area into two distinct areas. To the west there is a area of linked roads whilst to the east the roads are connected only by the London Road.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The London Road did not exist (except in the form of a field path) before the end of the eighteenth century. **Barton Lane**, however, is much more ancient. The hamlet of Barton was already described as “Old Barton” in 1246, and this lane led its inhabitants to the village of Headington, with its shops, pubs, and church. **Barton Road** is likely to have into existence when quarrying started in earnest in 1396, as it connected the hamlet of Barton with the pits.



William Orchard, the master mason responsible for much of Magdalen College’s building work in the fifteenth century, lived in a house which is believed to have stood on the site of the present Barton End in Barton Road.

This area was known as Between Towns Field or Barton Field until the nineteenth century.

By 1921 there were seven houses in Northfield Road, but most of this area was still allotments. By 1935 there were thirty three.

In the early 1930s three new roads were laid out here on what had been countryside: Hawthorne Avenue, Ash Grove, and Chestnut Avenue.

KEY POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

Barton Road runs north-south through the centre of the Northfields Area and provides vehicular access mainly to the west of the area from London Road.

The road and The Barton Bradley Recreation Ground effectively separates the area. The Recreation Ground is an important community resource for the whole area and also provides useful pedestrian links between the east and west parts of Northfield.

AREA WEST OF BARTON ROAD

- The west side of Barton Road is characterised by predominantly 1930s housing.



- At the southern end the houses have unusual sloped roof lines which distinguish them from the pitch roof style of other semi-detached houses in this area and provide architectural interest.



- The houses west of Barton Road – namely Ash Grove, Hawthorne Avenue and Chestnut Avenue are generally set back from the road frontage with small front gardens and driveways. There is a sense of coherence and a strong feeling of community.



- The western end of Hawthorn Avenue and Chestnut Avenue presents a uniform style of housing with an indication of having been built at the same time by the same builder. Ash Grove and the eastern end of Hawthorn Avenue are more varied in the character of the housing both in style and period. This contrast adds further interest to the area.



- Barton Road, Ash Grove, Hawthorne Avenue and Chestnut Avenue all slope downwards towards Barton Lane with a mix of two and single storey tiled and rendered brick development. There are attractive views to the countryside across the A40 ring road and the Barton area towards Beckley providing a sense of greenery, openness and visual connection with the countryside.



- Footpaths from Hawthorne Avenue to the London Road and from Chestnut Avenue to Bury Knowle Park allow welcome connection to other parts of Headington and to recreational facilities.



- The oldest property in the Northfields Area, 'Barton End' is set back from Barton Road and has been converted into five flats. A development of 25 houses – The Beeches - was developed in the early 1990s alongside Sycamores, a separate gated close of flats and houses.



- Towards the northern end of Barton Road is a small, pleasant cul-de sac, Blackthorn Close. At the end Barton Road widens out to provide a large attractive banked green verge leading off to a development of Oxford City Council three storey flats (circa early 1980s?) which provides much needed housing in this area.



- The cycle path at the end of Barton Road links through to Barton Lane, the Green Road roundabout and further north to Cutteslowe. Two underpasses provide pedestrian and cycle access from Northfield Area with to Barton and useful connectivity to other areas.



- Barton Lane, which joins the end of Barton Road, is an ancient connecting way that links Northfield with Old Headington and beyond. There are good views across to the open countryside beyond Barton.



- Along Barton Lane there are properties only on the southern side. Most of the houses are large detached properties interspersed with a few semi-detached houses set back from the pavement and with attractive front gardens and drives. The northern side of Barton Lane runs adjacent to the A40 Ring Road and also open grazing land. There is an unusual combination of views of heavy traffic and open countryside.





AREA EAST OF BARTON ROAD

The area to the east of Barton Road is defined by more modern cul-de-sac developments interspersed with the older 1930s type houses. The main roads are linked only by the London Road.

- The varied mix of detached, semi detached, bungalows and terrace houses along Northfield Road dates from 1921 through to 1935 and provides an attractive view of grass verges, trees and houses set well back.
- Three separate more modern residential developments off of Northfield Road include
 - 1) Gurden Place - a short close of 1970s (?) terrace and semi detached properties at the corner of Northfield Road



- 2) Stowood Close which includes terrace and semi detached houses dating from early 1990s (?) and looks across to the Barton Bradley Recreation Ground.



- 3) The Northfield Road Flats at the end of Northfield Road front on to the Barton Bradley Recreation Ground



All three developments provide much needed affordable housing.

- Greenery and tree planting along the roads is largely confined to the older parts of the area towards the A40 Ring Road.
- While few trees have been planted on the Recreation Ground, there are a few large and attractive old oak ? trees along the path which connects to Northfield Road which are clearly visible from the surrounding area.



- Lyndworth and Sefton Roads are cul-de-sacs leading off of London Road. Sefton Road is a very short road comprising just 5 detached houses. Barton Bradley Recreational Ground can be clearly seen at the end although there is no physical access through.

- Lyndworth Road is also a cul-de-sac of typical 1930s pebble dash semi detached houses interspersed with a couple of bungalows.



- The properties on North Way comprise semi-detached houses, some of which have been converted to flats and larger three/four storey flat developments. Some trees and a large grass verge provide welcome greenery and a separation from A40 Ring Road. This is not enough to mitigate the exceptionally high level of traffic noise and disturbance from the ring road which impacts on the amenity of the road.



- The footpath from the easternmost part of Northfield through to Barton Road, Barton Lane and beyond provides welcome connection for pedestrians.



ISSUES

- Lack on connectivity for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists within the area east of Barton Road.
- Limited landscaping and tree planting along many street frontages
- Noise and pollution issues on periphery of area due to proximity of A40 Ring Road
- Small greenfield site (probably an old orchard) on Barton Lane just outside Northfield Area (in Old Headington) which backs onto Bury Knowle Park and sits next to Emden House might provide an opportunity for development.
- May be scope to develop larger substantial plots on Barton Road although these would be considered 'windfall' sites rather than potential sites that could be designated for residential development.



- Sefton Road is an unadopted road and is in a poor state of repair.



- Siting of the premises of the Oxfordshire County Council Integrated Transport Office at the end of Barton Road is inconsistent with the residential nature of the area and provides a jarring note. If the Oxfordshire County Council Integrated Transport Office is no longer required this would provide an opportunity for residential development.



GUIDANCE FOR DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- Any new development should ensure that there are effective links with the existing residential streets for pedestrians and vehicles to facilitate a sense of coherence and community.

PROPOSED ASSETS

Heritage Assets

- Barton End – built in 1880s

Community Assets

- Barton Bradley Recreation Ground and Bury Knowle Park adjacent to Northfields Area
- Cycle Way which leads through the East end of the area and continues down the side of the Ring Road to Cutteslowe

Ecological Assets - None identified