



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD



**11 and 13 Banbury Road
Conservation Plan**

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Estates Services

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11 AND 13 BANBURY ROAD, OXFORD

CONSERVATION PLAN



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1 INTRODUCTION

11 and 13 Banbury Road was constructed, as the second element of the “Park Villas” group consisting of 7 to 19 (odd) Banbury Road, not long before December 1858. Thomas Graham Jackson’s 21 Banbury Road was added to the group in 1879. The pair of houses is semi-detached, now forming a single building which was Grade II listed in June 1972. It was designed as a residential space, but now houses the OUCS offices and training facilities. It is a fine example of 19th-century Italianate architecture and despite internal alteration remains architecturally significant, notably as part of the group that demarcates the border between University-dominated central Oxford and the more-residential North Oxford.

1.1 Purpose of the Conservation Plan

The University has an unrivalled portfolio of historic buildings, of which it is rightly proud. It has traditionally taken a thorough, holistic approach to building conservation, seeking to understand all the varied factors that make historic buildings significant to their diverse stakeholders, and using this to inform necessary change. It has become clear that this approach is vital to the conservation culture of an institution where so many of its historic buildings that are valued for their function also have extensive historical or architectural significance. This Conservation Plan represents the continuation of this tradition of seeking to understand what makes the University’s buildings cherished assets, and of seeking ways to conserve these most important features for the enjoyment of future generations.

The success of this approach is such that it has now become codified in government policy: First in March 2010’s *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historical Environment* then in its replacement, March 2012’s *National Planning Policy Framework* (hereafter: NPPF). NPPF provides useful guidance on approaching the conservation of heritage assets, and postdates the University’s existing literature. NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’

This designation clearly applies to 11 and 13 Banbury Road.

The purpose of this Conservation Plan is to update 11 and 13 Banbury Road’s conservation policy to take into account the new guidance provided by NPPF. It will be of use both for informing responsible regular maintenance and in the preparation of future planning applications, as specified in NPPF paragraph 128.

The Conservation Plan should form the basis for 11 and 13 Banbury Road’s Conservation Policy and exists as part of an ongoing process. It will be renewed and updated at least every five years or following any major alterations or legislative changes.

1.2 Scope of the Conservation Plan

This Conservation Plan will cover the interior and the exterior of 11 and 13 Banbury Road, a single, three-storied building in north-central Oxford, which now forms a constituent element of the larger OUCS block (**Figure 1**). It will not cover the later (c.1973-74) extensions to the rear (western) and side (southern and northern) elevations.

The plan is not intended to be a catalogue, and to facilitate its practical use will concentrate only on the most vulnerable aspects of significance, suggesting how they should be approached and conserved in the future. A brief list of the most significant architectural features can be found in **Appendix 5** and should be referred to when planning any repair or alteration work.

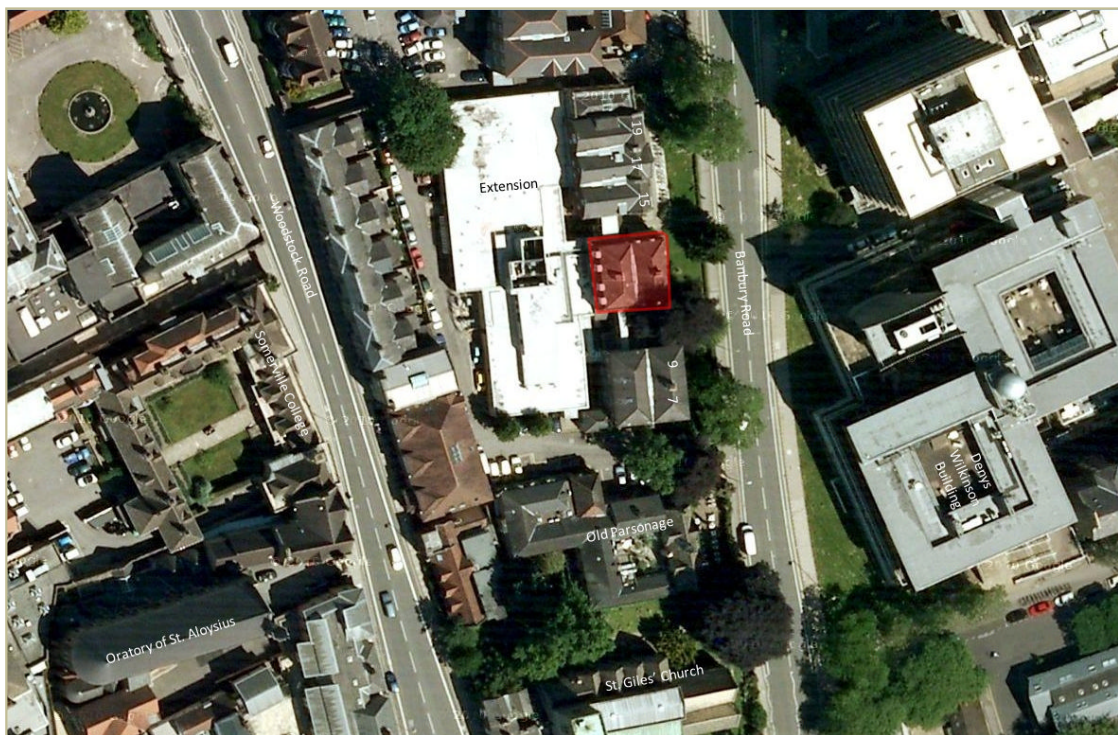


Figure 1. Satellite image of 11 and 13 Banbury Road (outlined in red) and the surrounding area, orientated with north at the top of the image

1.3 Existing Information

A Conservation Plan has not previously been produced for 11 and 13 Banbury Road; however, there are various sources of information available:

The original 1972 listed building description (**Appendix 1**) is the logical starting point for the plan, though it seems now seems possible that its identification of Samuel Lipscomb Seckham as the architect may be inaccurate (see **Section 2.2**).

Several published books, the OUCS website, and the University College Archives all provide valuable information on the building (see **Section 6** and **Appendix 3**).

The plan draws on statutory guidance from NPPF prepared by HM's Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012.

1.4 Methodology

The Conservation Plan is a document that assesses the current and predicted conservation needs of 11 and 13 Banbury Road and attempts to address them with a view towards maintaining or increasing the significance of the heritage asset. Its formulation to supersede any existing literature is a response to the requirements of NPPF, and it is prepared in accordance with the policies contained therein.

11 and 13 Banbury Road was constructed as two separate dwellings within a single building, and is no longer separated internally. As it is being treated as a single heritage asset, within this plan it will be referred to in the singular.

1.5 Constraints

11 and 13 Banbury Road and its environs are subject to various constraints imposed by Oxford City Council:

- HE.9 – High Building Areas: Planning permission will not be granted for any development within a 1,200 metre radius of Carfax which exceeds 18.2m in height, except for minor elements of no bulk.
- TR.3, TR.11, TR.12 – Car Parking Standards: The City Council will not allow any significant increase in the overall number of car-parking spaces in the Transport Central Area or development that provides an inappropriate level of car-parking spaces. It will attempt to reduce the level of non-residential car parking.
- The City of Oxford Smoke Control Order No. 4: It is an offence to emit smoke from the chimney of a building, from a furnace, or from any fixed boiler if located in a designated smoke control area.
- HE.7 – Conservation Areas: North Oxford Victorian Suburbs Conservation Area: Planning permission will only be granted for development that preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the conservation areas or their setting. All trees in Conservation Areas with stem diameters greater than 75mm at 1.5m off the ground are protected.

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2 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

2.1 History of the Site and University

The site of Oxford has had sporadic settlement since the Neolithic period. Bronze Age barrows have been found in the University Parks (linear barrow cemetery) and in the Science Area (double-ditched barrow). Oxford has had a continuous history of occupation since at least the 8th Century AD. The University of Oxford itself has a long-standing tradition of exceptional education: Able to trace its roots to the 11th Century, it is known to be the oldest university in the English-speaking world.

The site of 11 and 13 Banbury Road was located outside the mediaeval and early modern city of Oxford. A 500-acre stretch of land called St. Giles' Field, north of St. Giles' Street, was acquired by St. John's College in 1571, as it sought to establish an endowment following its foundation in 1555, and provided income to the college in the form of agricultural rents.¹ University College also held several strips of land in the locality, including the site of the OUCS buildings. St. Giles' Church (extant) was constructed in the vicinity in 1120, and there was some early development in the immediate area, for instance the Old Parsonage, directly to the south of 7 and 9 Banbury Road, was in place by the mid-17th Century (with an inscribed doorway providing a *terminus ante quem* of 1659).² Despite this, for the most part land use in the area was agricultural until the 19th-century enclosures.

Oxford's growth in the 19th Century may have been modest compared to Britain's industrial "boom" towns, but it was still historically rapid, with the city growing five-fold between 1801 and 1901.³ Traditionally the University had made little direct impact on private housing in Oxford, as a regulation of 1561, compounded by the religious restrictions of individual colleges, meant that fellows could not live outside their colleges. The main impact of the University on housing provision was in the number of middle-class professionals or tradesmen (e.g. builders, masons, doctors, solicitors, surveyors) and working-class staff (e.g. labourers, cleaners, cooks, grooms, groundskeepers) who needed to reside within the city in order to serve the needs of the colleges and their residents. It has been remarked that:

*'In the early years of the nineteenth century Oxford's social geography was the opposite of that usually found in English towns, where the working class lived in the centre while the middle classes moved to surrounding suburbs. In Oxford the suburbs that did appear around the town were inhabited by the working classes, while the middle classes, even those with a peripheral interest in the University and the colleges as members of the professions of tradesmen, preferred to remain in the centre.'*⁴

The removal of religious restrictions within the colleges following the Royal Commission of 1852 led to an opening up of Oxford education to the middle classes, resulting in a large increase in numbers of undergraduates in the second half of the 19th century. This resulted in

¹ Hinchcliffe, T., 'Landownership in the city: St. John's College, 1800-1968', in Whiting, R.C., (ed.), *Oxford: Studies in the history of a university town* (Manchester, 1993) 85.

² Pevsner, N., and Sherwood, J., *Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (Oxford, 1974) 317.

³ Tyack, G., *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (New York, 1998) 214.

⁴ Hinchcliffe, T., 'Landownership in the city: St. John's College, 1800-1968', in Whiting, R.C., (ed.), *Oxford: Studies in the history of a university town* (Manchester, 1993) 88.

an increased demand for student housing within the city centre, making the suburbs increasingly attractive to the middle classes.⁵

In the 1850s, estate agents reported a shortage of houses with rents of £35 to £50 *per annum*, suitable for those with middle-class incomes of £500 to £1000 *per annum*.⁶ Samuel Lipscomb Seckham was employed by St. John's College in 1853-1855 to develop part of their North Oxford estate east of Banbury Road into an area of middle-class housing which would become Park Town:

*'Some of these houses were detached and semi-detached villas of an Italianate character, each of them capable of housing a normal Victorian middle-class family, complete with servants; at the centre of the development there is an oval-shaped space densely planted with trees and shrubs, overlooked by two crescents of terraced houses faced in Bath stone, with a similar crescent at the far end.'*⁷

7 to 19 Banbury Road was constructed, as "Park Villas", at a similar time to Park Town (1847-59) as part of the same trend: handsome middle-class housing immediately outside the city centre. Thomas Graham Jackson added 21 Banbury Road to the group in 1879.

The area continued to be a focus for middle-class housing throughout the later 19th and early 20th centuries, notably with the addition of William Wilkinson's Norham Manor to the northwest in the 1860s; however the expansion of the University from the latter half of the Nineteenth Century has also had a major impact on the immediate vicinity:

- Keble was constructed to the west, on Parks Road and Keble Road, from 1868.
- Lady Margaret Hall was constructed to the northwest on Norham Gardens from 1878.
- Somerville College was constructed immediately to the east on Woodstock Road, around the site of the c.1826 Walton House, from 1879.
- The Anglican Convent of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity, which would come to house St. Anthony's College, was constructed to the northeast on Woodstock Road in 1866, and was further developed after the foundation of the college in 1950.
- St. Hugh's College was constructed to the northeast between Woodstock Road and Banbury Road from 1886.
- The 19 houses that would come to hold St. Anne's College were constructed on Banbury Road, Woodstock Road, and Bevington Road in the early 19th Century. The current location of the college, constructed to the northeast between Woodstock Road and Banbury Road, was developed from 1937.
- The Denys Wilkinson Building (with its unusual tower designed to house a Van der Graaf accelerator) and the Thom Building were constructed directly opposite on Banbury Road in the 1960s.

⁵ Tyack, G., *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (New York, 1998) 215.

⁶ Howell, P., 'Samuel Lipscomb Seckham', in *Oxoniensia* XLI (1976) 339.

⁷ Tyack, G., *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (New York, 1998) 216.

- The Mathematical Institute was constructed on the eastern side of Banbury Road, at its southern boundary with St. Giles, in 1966.
- Green College (now Green-Templeton College) was constructed to the east, around the 18th-century Radcliffe Infirmary on Woodstock Road, from 1979.

Banbury Road is now a principal arterial road into Oxford, experiencing heavy motor traffic. The immediate area is dominated by University and collegiate buildings constructed in the late 19th or early 20th centuries, or occupying earlier buildings. The high-quality domestic architecture of 7 to 21 Banbury is distinctive in the immediate vicinity, as it is not repeated until one moves north into the Norham Manor suburb or west onto Woodstock Road.

In 1968 Oxford City Council designated Banbury Road and the majority of North Oxford as part of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area; this was extended in 1972 to include Walton Manor (see **Appendix 2**).

2.2 Construction and Subsequent History of 11 and 13 Banbury Road

A general chronology can be found in **Appendix 4**.

As mentioned above (**Section 2.1**) University College held several strips of land in St. Giles' Parish from mediaeval times. When the parish was enclosed in 1830, the college was assigned the strip of land north of the Old Parsonage that would eventually hold the OUCS buildings. Initially the college continued to rent this as agricultural land, but decided to split it up in the 1850s.

It has previously been assumed (following Pevsner's dating) that the OUCS buildings were constructed in or around 1855, presumably because this would place them directly after the construction of Park Town; however, the original leases for the buildings, held by University College archives, reveal that 11 and 13 Banbury Road was not constructed until shortly before Christmas Eve 1858, when a 40-year lease from University College was signed by Rev. Richard Cox Hales for the site and the houses that he had recently built there (with an initial consideration of £12.10.00, followed by an annual rent of £7.10.00).⁸ As this was the first lease signed for the property, and it was signed by the builder, it is almost certain that the properties had only just been completed at this point, making a date in 1858 likely.

Despite a lack of documentary evidence, the argument for "Park Villas" being constructed by Seckham is clear: It is indubitable that the design of the building is similar to buildings in Park Town (for instance, the rustication on the ground floor is similar to that of the terraces at Park Crescent); however, they are equally similar to terraces at Beaumont Street constructed from the 1820s (e.g. the ground-floor rustication at 33 Beaumont Street is a similarly close parallel for 11 and 13 Banbury Road). As it can now be shown that 11 and 13 Banbury Road was constructed in 1858, it would seem strange that, if Seckham was the architect, the plot was not leased by his own Park Town Estate Company, which was an active developer from its foundation in 1857 until its collapse in July 1861.

⁸ University College Archives, reference UC:E2/9/37D/1.

Following the initial contract in 1858, Rev. Richard Cox Hales continued to lease the property from University College, and took out a second 40-year lease in March 1872 with an annual rent of £14.3.00. Hales sold the remainder of his lease to Rev. Fraser Hislop Penny of St. John's College, Oxford, in January 1887. The building continued to provide a residential function until 1958 when 13 Banbury Road was leased by the University. Planning applications to convert number 13 to commercial offices in 1958 and 1958 were both refused by Oxford City Council, but an application for conversion into University offices was approved in May 1961. Despite this, the University surrendered its lease for number 13 on 8th September 1961. 11 Banbury Road continued to fulfil a residential rôle until 7-19 Banbury Road were purchased by the University in 1969 (**Figure 2**).



Figure 2. Site plan of 7-19 Banbury Road (outlined in red) from 1969. Note the lack of connecting corridors or extensions (other than the older extension to the north of number 19)

11 and 13 Banbury Road were occupied by OUCS at some point between 1971 and 1973; by this point OUCS already occupied 11 to 19 Banbury Road, with an extension (the Thames Suite) having been added behind 17 and 19. Once they occupied the entire block of houses, OUCS began a second extension behind 7 to 11 Banbury Road (the Machine Room) in 1975. This was funded by the University Grants Committee, the sale of computer time on OUCS' machines during 1974, and directly from the OUCS budget. This extension included the demolition of the rear projections of 9, 11, and 13 Banbury Road, though the rear projection of 7 was retained.

A link extension was constructed between 13 and 15 Banbury Road in 1973, followed by another connecting 11 and 7 Banbury Road at some point between 1975 and 1977, as can be seen today. These linking corridors effectively converted 7-19 Banbury Road, and their extensions, into a single interconnecting computing complex (see **Figure 3**).



Figure 3. 9 to 15 Banbury Road in the late 1970s, showing newly-constructed connecting corridors.

11 and 13 Banbury Road has formed the main public space of the computing service since its occupation by OUCS. The entrance to number 13 provides the public entrance to the entire complex, and was fitted with a handrail to improve access in 2006. This entrance opens onto the ground-floor reception, which leads onto the main Help Desk area in the rear extension. In 2000 the reception was refurbished and altered, with the raising of the ceiling level, the removal of pillars and the introduction of glazed screens.

In late 2008/ early 2009 the disused caretaker's flat on the second floor of number 11 was converted to office spaces. This involved removing the fitted kitchen, repositioning loft hatches, and upgrading the electrical and fire safety provision.

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3 SIGNIFICANCE OF 11 AND 13 BANBURY ROAD

NPPF paragraph 128 specifies that in assessing planning applications:

‘Local planning authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting.’

The significance of 11 and 13 Banbury Road has been publically recognised by two statutory designations: It was designated a Grade II Listed building in 1972 (see **Appendix 1**); and it was included in Oxford City Council’s designation of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area in 1968 and its revision in 1972 (see **Appendix 2**).

3.1 Significance within its setting

3.1.1 Significance to the south of North Ward, the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area, and St. Giles’ Street/Banbury Road

11 and 13 Banbury Road is located at the southernmost extent of North Oxford. The character of the area is that of the Victorian suburb, of extreme but publically-restrained prosperity. The Denys Wilkinson and Thom Buildings, directly opposite 11 and 13 Banbury Road, represent the University’s continued dominance in this area, but as one moves further north the character, even of the University and collegiate buildings, is increasingly Victorian-residential. 11 and 13 Banbury Road is not the “deciding factor” in the character of the area, but it is a significant contributing factor, as part of the “Park Villas” group and as one of the southernmost 19th-century Italianate-style buildings on Banbury Road, its attractive, high-quality elevation marks the entrance to the North Oxford Victorian Suburb, effectively delineating it from the city centre.

3.1.2 Significance as part of the “Park Villas” group (7-21 (odd) Banbury Road)

11 and 13 Banbury Road forms part of the “Park Villas” group, a significant contributing factor to the character of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb.

11 and 13 Banbury Road is a well executed design. With its vermiculated quoins and window surrounds and its Gibbs surrounds on the first floor, it is slightly more elaborate than 7 and 9 Banbury Road, lacking some of its simple charm, but remains an attractive building. Its exterior finish is of a significantly higher quality than 15-19 Banbury Road, but its stucco facing is in a slightly worse condition than that of 7 and 9 Banbury Road. As a group 7-13 Banbury Road feel relatively unified, with their rusticated ground floors and semi-detached designs. 15-19 Banbury is massed differently, its linear design, exacerbated by its northern extension, betraying its original specification to house three dwellings. Its frontal (eastern) elevation is distinct from the other structures, with its two stories, prominent pediment, and plain unrusted stucco. The result is that 15-19 feels separate from the other structures, and so whilst the three buildings of 7-19 Banbury Road do form a group, it is not an entirely cohesive one.

3.2 Significance as an IT support, teaching, and research space

Oxford University Computing Services is one of the oldest and most prominent computing departments in the country, starting as part of the Computing Laboratory in 1958 before they separated in 1977.

11 and 13 Banbury Road is a major component of the Banbury Road OUCS complex. It is the main public space of the service and controls access to the other facilities. The computing service remains one of Oxford University's most significant departments, providing practical service to every other department and every undergraduate and postgraduate within the University, as well as undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research of its own. Every University department and college relies upon services supplied from this building for their communications infrastructure, IT provision, and support; as a facilitator it is one of the most important elements of the modern University.

3.3 Historical Significance

11 and 13 Banbury Road marks the continuation of the trend towards middle-class suburban housing in Oxford that: began with the Beaumont Street development in the 1820s; was continued by smaller projects, such as 15-19 Banbury Road in 1847-48; eventually occurred on a large scale with the construction of Park Town in 1853-55; and continued throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, for instance Norham Manor built between 1860 and the mid-1870s.

11 and 13 Banbury Road is not the most significant portion of this trend, but is one of many interesting examples of the nature of suburban development in Oxford in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, and of the phenomenon of Victorian suburban development in general. Beyond this the heritage asset is of limited historical significance, not appearing in any documentation or historical narratives except its own leases.

3.4 Archaeological Significance

North Oxford has a rich and relatively-continuous history of occupation since the early Bronze Age.

The foundations of 11 and 13 Banbury Road, and notably the extension at the rear, will have destroyed any later archaeological material, but fortunately post-mediaeval occupation of the site seems to have been primarily agricultural and of limited significance considering the possible earlier history. Mediaeval ridge and furrow may also have damaged some of the earlier material (though it is fortunate that the site went out of agricultural usage prior to the advent of the mechanised plough) but, despite the relatively shallow nature of the soil in the area, the long history of occupation makes it likely that some significant archaeological material may be preserved at the lower stratigraphic layers.

3.5 Architectural Significance

Externally 11 and 13 Banbury Road is constructed of red brick with stucco facing on the side and front elevations (eastern, northern, and southern elevations), horizontally rusticated on the ground floor, with vermiculated ground-floor window surrounds and quoins, and Gibbs surrounds on the first-floor windows. The eastern elevation is brilliantly executed and its

symmetry is striking from the street, with the connecting corridors with 9 and 15 Banbury Road being set back and distinctive enough to allow 11 and 13 Banbury Road to be appreciated as a single structure; however, the full height of the building can only be viewed properly from the opposite side of Banbury Road and the often heavy car traffic can detract from the appreciation of this elevation. It is surprising the extent to which the character of the elevation is dictated by the extensive tree cover and modern hedges, which, whilst pleasant, obscure and lessen the impact of the architecture (compare **Cover** and **Figure 3**).

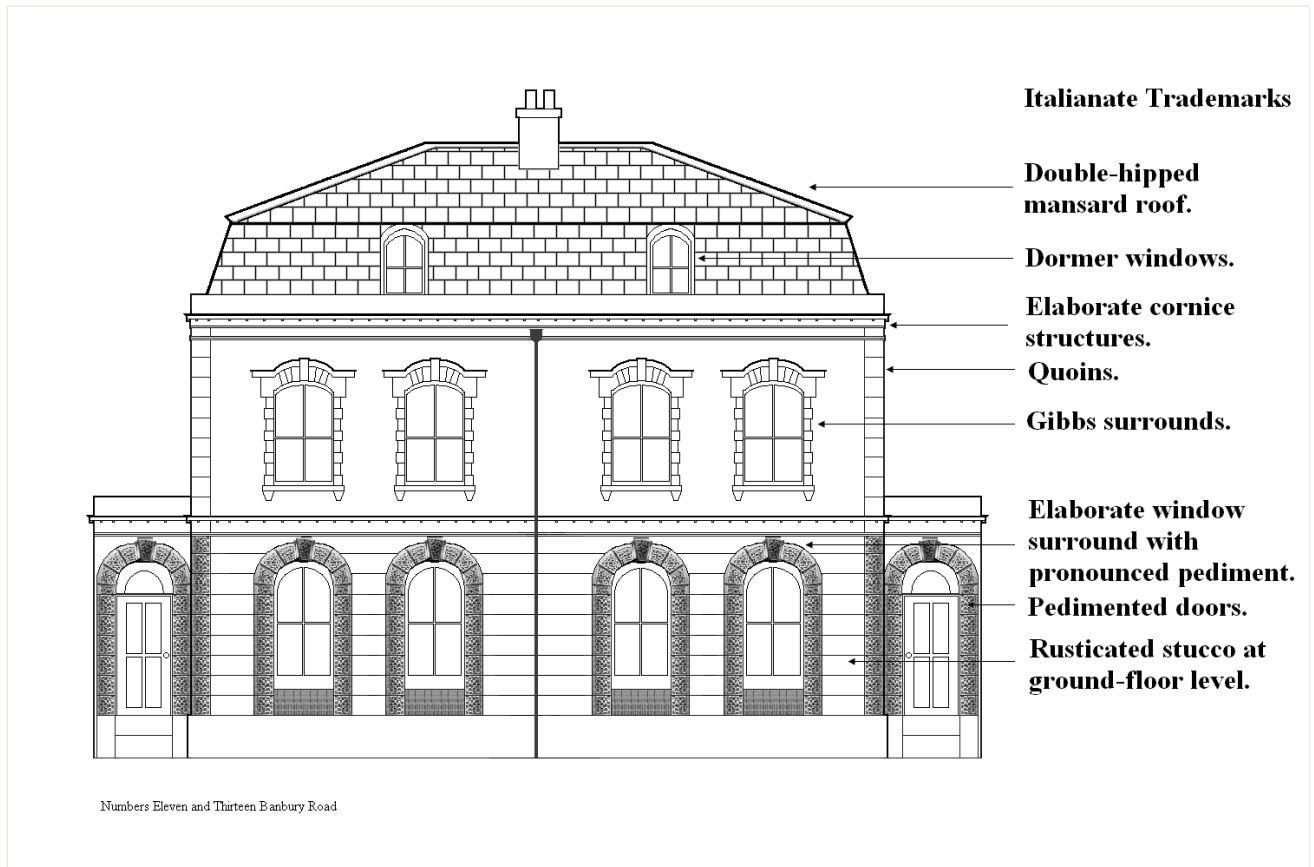


Figure 4. Typically Italianate aspects of 11 and 13 Banbury Road (eastern elevation)

3.5.1 Italianate Architecture

11 and 13 Banbury Road is significant as a characteristic example of the English Italianate style in 19th-century domestic architecture. This architectural style was popular in England in the first half of the 19th Century, and was just falling out of fashion when it was adopted for Seckham’s houses at Park Town in 1853-55. The deliberate use of this style, which by 1859-63 was certainly no longer *en vogue*, is clearly in reference to the new development at Park Town. A slightly simpler example of this style can be found at the slightly-later 7 and 9 Banbury Road, clearly designed to complement this building.

11 and 13 Banbury Road is a simple and typical use of this style, with many aspects of its external façade being quite standard Italianate features (**Figure 4**). The heritage asset remains an excellent example of the final stages of this style in 19th-century England.

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4 VULNERABILITIES

4.1 The ability of 11 and 13 Banbury Road to fulfil its current function

11 and 13 Banbury Road's current function as a public consultation and office space is its optimum viable use.

The initial, domestic design of the building means that most of the spaces are architecturally neutral and have been suitable for conversion into offices with little alteration required. Any major physical alterations (such as the clearance of the western side of the ground floor to make space for the reception area, see **Figure 5**) have already occurred and little further damage to original material can be expected from the continuation of this usage.

Whilst information technology is an ever-changing field, the necessary internal infrastructure is already in place at 11 and 13 Banbury Road.

Usage as a public consultation and office space has the lowest impact on the significance of the heritage asset, now and into the future, of any possible utility. It funds the upkeep and conservation of the heritage asset and ensures its continued existence and significance. The significant areas are not threatened, and its listed status ensures that any further alterations will operate within the constraints of an accepted understanding of the building's significance as a heritage asset.

4.1.1 Fire Safety

The safety of the contents and users of the building are central to its ability to fulfil its function as a working office space. Fire safety has improved since the original design and in general circulation routes are legible (with most rooms opening directly onto corridors, which open onto the main staircases which lead directly to the exits), so escape can be logically planned.

4.1.2 Security

The safety of the contents and users of the building are central to its ability to fulfil its function as a work space. The building allows access to areas housing highly valuable computing equipment, which may be targeted by professional thieves, as well as office computer equipment and user's personal belongings, which may be vulnerable to opportunists.

Security is currently effective as, whilst there is extensive public access to the site, it is via a manned reception, and there is an active security detail. Private areas (accessed via key fob) are clearly demarcated and the numbers of staff working within these areas are small enough that interlopers are easily identified.

4.1.3 Access

Ensuring that access to the building for legitimate users is as wide as possible is central to the significance of the heritage asset. Disabled access remains below the standard that should be expected of this building, and that will ensure its continued use, relevance, and significance into the future. Notably, the heritage asset's only ramp access is through 9 Banbury Road and its connecting corridor, so disabled people are not able to access the main public space via the same entrance as other users. In general the access provision is typical of a building of its age, with narrow circulation spaces and stairways, and access to the upper floors being via stairs only. Office spaces on the first and second floors are relatively inaccessible.

4.2 Exterior Elevation and Setting

The eastern elevation of 11 and 13 Banbury is its most significant architectural feature:

*'2 storeys and attic, 4 windows to pair with doors projecting on either side. The windows and doors have vermiculated surrounds on the ground floor, plain above. Vermiculated quoins on the ground floor, plain above. Arched sash windows on ground floor, sashes with Gibbs surrounds on 1st floor. Cornice, parapet, slate mansard roof, 2 arched dormers.'*⁹

The eastern elevation (**Cover** and **Figure 4**) is the aspect of the building appreciated by the greatest number of people and that contributes most to the character of the setting. The elevation has aged well and is in excellent condition, but it is the most exposed face of the building and is open to weathering, erosion, and potential vandalism: damage which could detract from the significance of the heritage asset.

The light, sandy colour of the stucco is a particularly attractive element of the design, and will need periodic, sympathetic cleaning in order to maintain its character.

4.3 Interior Layout, Fixtures, and Fittings

No original plans for 11 and 13 Banbury Road are known to be extant but it seems probable, from comparing the current floor plans with the original floor plans of contemporary dwellings, that the layout on the ground floor has changed considerably since the original design. **Figure 5** compares a speculated original plan (based on the structural material in the current floor plan, earlier outline plans (such as **Figure 2**), and extant floor plans of roughly-contemporary domestic dwellings).¹⁰ This shows how demolition, extension, and partitioning, has drastically altered the layout of the ground floor, most notably in the eastern sector at the rear of the building.

⁹ *Listed Building Description (Appendix 1).*

¹⁰ For instance 27 Banbury from 1882; Hinchcliffe, T., *North Oxford* (London, 1992) 116.

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5 CONSERVATION POLICY

Having established the significance of 11 and 13 Banbury Road as a heritage asset, and having identified ways in which the significance of 11 and 13 Banbury Road is vulnerable to harm, it is necessary to recommend policies to reduce the probability of such harm occurring and thereby conserve the significance of the site. In essence, these policies set parameters for managing the fabric of the site.

The Conservation Plan is intended as an active tool for the regular maintenance and long-term management of 11 and 13 Banbury Road. It needs to be reviewed regularly, and revised as appropriate to take account of additional knowledge and changing priorities. Through a process of regular review it should continue to act as a useful resource.

5.1 **11 and 13 Banbury Road's current use, as an office and public reception space, is its optimum viable use. Permit, in line with NPPF paragraphs 131, 132, 133, and 134, alterations intended to facilitate its continued use in this way**

The significance of 11 and 13 Banbury Road as an office and public reception space, supporting IT provision across Oxford University, means that its current rôle represents its optimum viable use. Limited alterations will inevitably be required to allow it to retain this significance in line with modern standards and requirements. If alteration is required in the future it should be permitted with the following provisos:

- Any alterations must be sympathetic to the 11 and 13 Banbury Road's significance as a heritage asset and, in line with NPPF paragraph 134, any proposals that involve 'less than substantial harm to the significance' should deliver 'substantial public benefits.' In line with NPPF paragraph 132, any proposals that involve 'substantial harm or loss' should be 'exceptional.'
- Any changes should: '...preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset' (NPPF paragraph 137).

5.1.1 **Note that 11 and 13 Banbury Road is a Grade II listed building and ensure that appropriate consents are obtained for any alteration works to the interior or exterior of the building**

Limited changes may be required in the future, e.g. to improve accessibility, and due to the listed status of the building even minor routine repairs may need consent. Caution should be applied in order to ensure that any statutory duties are fulfilled. In cases of doubt **Estates Services should be contacted in the first instance**, and if necessary they will refer queries on to Oxford City Council.

5.1.2 **Ensure proper consultation in advance of any work to the building with the Local Authority Conservation Officer (through Estates Services) and any other interested parties**

It is important to guarantee that the best advice is obtained at an early stage of any proposal to alter any part of the building in order to ensure that the significance of the building is respected.

5.1.3 Refer to this Conservation Guide when considering repairs or alterations in any space

The Conservation Plan gives an overview of which aspects of the building are significant or vulnerable. Where original or significant material is extant, repairs should be carried out using the same materials and techniques and should not affect the significance of the asset without providing substantial public benefits in line with NPPF paragraph 134.

5.2 In order to ensure that 11 and 13 Banbury Road can operate to modern standards, and that its significance can be maintained by making access as wide as possible, special concern should be applied to ensuring that disabled access is adequate

Ensuring that the heritage asset can be enjoyed as widely as possible will have a major positive impact on its significance. As noted in **Section 4.1.3**, disabled access is not currently up to acceptable standards. Access will remain a major concern in any plans developed for the site, and will always be viewed as part of an ongoing process.

5.3 Any redevelopment needs to respect the character of the surrounding area and 11 and 13 Banbury Road's setting adjacent to listed buildings, and notably the integrity of the "Park Villas" group

It has been established that 11 and 13 Banbury Road is significant to the character of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb (**Section 3.1**), interacting well with both the older and newer buildings around it. Any future alteration should be sympathetic to this fact, and should not diminish its rôle there.

5.4 Conservation of specific features contributing to overall significance

The interior fixtures and fittings have been poorly recorded and for the most part it is for the most part unclear where original material is extant. An effort should be made to identify and conserve original interior and exterior architectural features, and keep these in use where possible, in line with **Section 5.1**. However, it is accepted that all materials have a natural life span and some degree of change must be permitted to keep the building safe, useable, and generally fit for its primary purpose as a working office space. Some materials, such as the rusticated stucco facing, will have a very long life expectancy if given minor maintenance; others such as wooden doors (for instance the original door in the entrance to the front room in the ground floor of number 13) are ultimately impermanent and may need periodic replacement. Within the framework of understanding and valuing what is present in the building a degree of ongoing change is inevitable.

5.4.1 The eastern elevation will remain substantially unchanged

As established above (**Section 3.1** and **Section 4.2**), the eastern elevation is integral to the significance of 11 and 13 Banbury Road. Any changes to this will significantly affect the character of the building. Allowing for necessary changes in line with **Section 5.1**, this will remain unchanged from the original design.

5.4.2 The limited remaining original interior features will be retained, conserved, and remain substantially unchanged

Many of the original interior features have been lost, but the few that remain (see **Section 4.3**) are important to the significance of the building as a heritage asset. Loss or alteration of these features would negatively affect the character of the heritage asset and they should be conserved as good examples of the original character of the interior.

5.5 In the vein of NPPF paragraph 110, efforts should be made to ensure that 11 and 13 Banbury Road's contribution to climate change is as minimal as is feasible for a building of its age, size, materials, and use. Any proposals for alterations should assess the feasibility of incorporating low and zero carbon technologies

Ensuring that the building is sustainable will be crucial to its long-term survival and significance. As stated in NPPF paragraph 110, development should seek to 'minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment.'

5.6 A disaster recovery plan will be prepared for the building and will be regularly reviewed to keep it up to date

This is an architecturally significant building with internal contents of particular value and academic significance. It is imperative for the safety of the building that a clear disaster recovery plan exists.

5.7 If during subsequent renovations or alterations any evacuation work is carried out beneath 11 and 13 Banbury Road or the surrounding area an archaeological assessment will be made of the potential for significant finds, and if appropriate an archaeologist will be given a watching brief as the excavation takes place

There is the potential for significant archaeological material across the site and should any evacuation work be carried out an assessment of the archaeological potential should be made. This should include at least a desk assessment, but possibly geophysics and trial trenching. A watching brief will almost certainly be required for any such work.

5.8 A good practice of routine recording, investigation, and maintenance will be enacted and sustained. Such an approach will minimise the need for larger repairs or other interventions and will usually represent the most economical way of retaining an asset

5.8.1 Estates Services (or its agents) will ensure that a senior member of staff has responsibility for the administration and recording of a routine maintenance programme for the building

All buildings need to be routinely maintained if they are to stay in good condition. This requires a detailed maintenance programme and, critically, someone who is responsible for ensuring that the routine operations are carried out. A proper record of the repair and maintenance work in a maintenance log is a useful management tool. Such information will be recorded in the Estates Management software package *Planon*.

5.8.2 A detailed routine maintenance programme will be prepared for the building

Maintenance is best carried out as a series of planned operations. A well-thought-out and properly-administered maintenance programme may appear to be time consuming but will result in a better-functioning building with less need for emergency repairs.

5.8.3 The Conservation Plan will be circulated to all senior staff who work 11 and 13 Banbury Road and to all other members of the University who have responsibility for the building or the collection

The value of the building needs to be appreciated by all the senior staff managing or working in the building. Only in this way will the heritage asset be properly treated, repaired, and maintained.

5.8.4 The Conservation Plan will be made available to Oxford City Council, English Heritage, and any other party with a legitimate interest in the building

The Conservation Plan is intended to be a useful document to inform all parties with a legitimate interest in the building.

5.9 The Conservation Plan will be reviewed and updated from time to time as work is carried out on the building or as circumstances change. The recommendations should be reviewed at least at five-yearly intervals

Policy changes, building alterations, or other changes of circumstance, will affect the conservation duties and requirements of the building. The policy recommendations in the Conservation Plan will inform the future of the building and should be a useful tool for people carrying out maintenance work or where more significant alterations are being considered. The recommendations need to be kept up to date if they are to remain relevant.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 Government Reports and Guidance

- *National Planning Policy Framework*, The Department for Communities and Local Government (March, 2012).
- *Town and Country Planning Act* 1990.
- *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act* 1990.

6.2 Planning Applications and Supporting Documents

- Listed building applications from 1970 onwards, courtesy of Estates Services archives (summarised in **Appendix 3**).

6.3 Books and Articles

- Hinchcliffe, T., *North Oxford* (London, 1992).
- Hinchcliffe, T., ‘Landownership in the city: St. John’s College, 1800-1968’, in Whiting, R.C., (ed.), *Oxford: Studies in the history of a university town* (Manchester, 1993) 85-109.
- Howell, P., “Oxford Architecture, 1800-1914”, in Brock, M.G., and Curthoys, M.C., (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. VII* (Oxford, 2000).
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- Saint, A., ‘Three Oxford Architects’ in *Oxoniensia* XXXV (1960) 53-103.
- Tyack, G., *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (New York, 1998).

6.4 Other Documents

- Courtesy of Dr. Robin Darwall-Smith, archivist to University College, Oxford:
 - Original lease documents for 11 and 13 Banbury Road, 1858-1886 and 1928-1961.
- Courtesy of Oxford University Computing Services:
 - Annual reports of the Oxford University Computing Services Committee, 1957-2009.

6.5 Websites

- English Heritage, Listed Buildings Online:
<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/BuildingDetailsForm.aspx?id=245292&search=y>, accessed on 5th November 2010.
- Google Maps:
<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?hl=en&tab=w1>, accessed on 15th October 2010.
- Oxford City Council Planning Department website (ongoing and selected historical planning applications available for viewing):
<http://uniformpublicaccess.oxford.gov.uk/PublicAccess/default.aspx>, accessed on 5th November 2010.
- Oxford University Computing Services website, history of the computing service and buildings:
<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/internal/history/building-photos.xml>, accessed on 15th October 2010.

6.6 Image Credits

- Cover: Estates Services Photograph.
- Figure 1: Adapted from Google Maps (see **Section 6.5**).
- Figure 2: Adapted from HM's Land Registry.
- Figure 3: From OUCS website (see **Section 6.5**).
- Figure 4: By author for Estates Services.
- Figure 5: Adapted from *Application 08/01388/LBC: Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to convert disused caretakers flat to offices involving stripping out fitted kitchen, upgrading electrical and fire safety measures. Extend and reposition loft hatches.*

7 Appendices

Appendix 1. Listed Building Description

Building Details:

Building Name: 11 AND
13
Parish: OXFORD
District: OXFORD
County: OXFORDSHIRE
Postcode: OX2 6NN

Details:

LBS Number: 245292
Grade: II
Date Listed: 28/06/1972
Date Delisted:
NGR: SP5113707069

Listing Text:

BANBURY ROAD

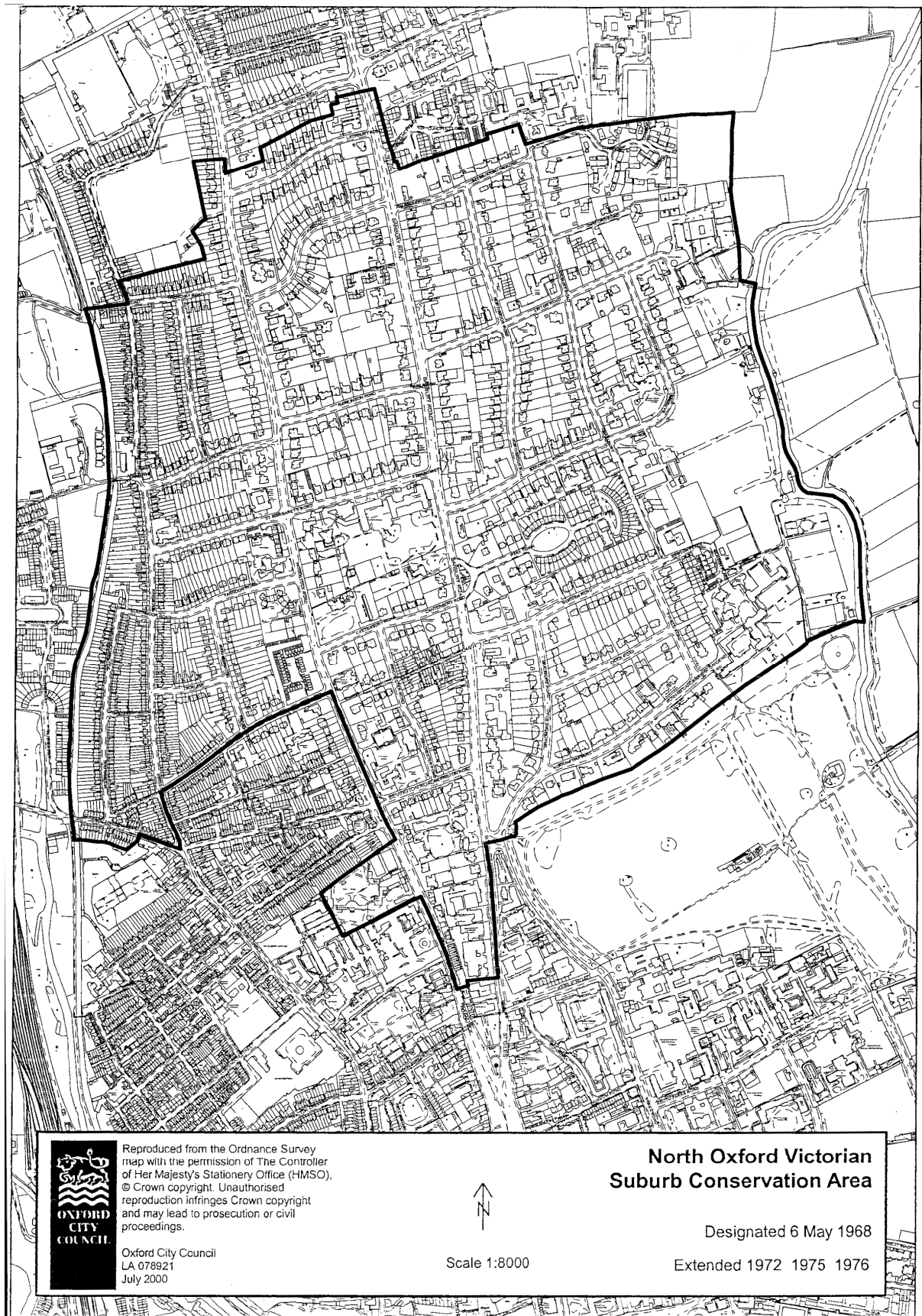
1.
1485
(West Side)
Nos 11 & 13
SP 5107 SW 3/660
II GV
2.

Circa 1855. By Samuel Lipscomb Seckham. Stucco. 2 storeys and attic, 4 windows to pair with doors projecting on either side. The windows and doors have vermiculated surrounds on the ground floor, plain above. Vermiculated quoins on the ground floor, plain above. Arched sash windows on ground floor, sashes with Gibbs surrounds on 1st floor. Cornice, parapet, slate mansard roof, 2 arched dormers. Nos 7 to 21 (odd) form a group.

Listing NGR: SP5111507066

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Appendix 2. Conservation Area Description



The North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area, No. 1

The extension and enlargement of the North Oxford conservation area, with the inclusion of the Rawlinson Road conservation area on 1 6th July 1976, resulted in the creation of the consolidated North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation area. It stretches from St Giles in the south, to Frenchay, Staverton and Belbroughton Roads in the north; from the banks of the Oxford canal in the west, to those of the River Cherwell in the east, encompassing the "essential North Oxford".

Much of the area on which North Oxford now stands, formerly Walton Field and St Giles Field, was acquired by St John's College in the 16th century. It was developed between Walton Manor and Summertown as a residential suburb of large detached and semidetached houses beginning in the 1850s with the laying out of Park Town (1853-5). Park Town is a late example of the use of the Classical discipline of design, tempered by early Victorian picturesque as shown by the mixture of terraced crescents and detached villas. It was with the development of Norham Manor, owned by St John's College, that the distinctive pattern of Victorian North Oxford was established. After 1860, the College employed the Oxford architect, William Wilkinson (1819- 1901), to lay out and superintend work on its property. The houses built in the 1860s in Norham Manor by Wilkinson, H W Moore, Frederick Codd and others were far from Classical in inspiration. The use of plain and multicoloured bricks, stone window dressings and high tiled roofs, was combined with the very up-to-date use of early French Gothic detailing, in what has become known as the High Victorian manner.

The success of these early St John's developments lead to a continuous programme of building in North Oxford for the College between, and to each side, of the Banbury and Woodstock Roads for the next forty years. In the progress of these works, Wilkinson evolved a distinctive and much more locally inspired regional architectural style, using Tudor examples in the county west of Oxford. The assertive French Gothic massing and detailing were gradually set aside and replaced by buildings in simpler masses, with the use of plain Bath stone dressings and a sparing use of free late Gothic decoration, often above the lintels, and introduction of barge boards to the gables. At a very different scale on the eastern side of Kingston Road, terraced groups of artisan dwellings of a picturesque gothic influenced style were designed by Clapton Rolfe in 1870-3.

Stimulus for development in the 1890s resulted from important reforms in University and College life, introduced by the University of Oxford Commission from 1877. Earlier developments were built to house the clergy, prosperous town traders, heads of colleges and professors. St Margaret's Road marks the change which created the North Oxford of the married dons. The abolition of the rule of celibacy for the majority of College members began with the reforms of colleges' statutes in the late 1870s. This domestic factor provided occupants for the new leasehold housing being constructed by builders and developers, under the tight guidance of the St John's College estate and its supervising architects. The grounds of the developed area were parcelled out into individual plots let on a 99 year building lease, and building was implemented between the years 1860 and 1900.

Punctuating the residential character of North Oxford, are several colleges, such as St Anne's, St Hugh's, Lady Margaret Hall, with modern Wolfson College to the north-east by the Cherwell Meadows.

Also of great architectural importance and visual impact are the churches, including a fine example of the work of George Edmund Street, St Philip and St James (1862), declared redundant and now the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. Wilktnson7s layout resulted in an environment of very high architectural and amenity standard. The plots are very large, with spacious gardens, and the roads are wide (fifteen metres between fence lines). Banbury and Woodstock Roads were developed from their original tracks across open countryside to become major traffic routes. The houses, often semi-detached, or detached, have deep front gardens, planted with trees and shrubs, many of the former having reached their prime, but all contributing a character which anticipated the Garden City ideal. Victorian love of the exotic or innovative led to the introduction of new plant species and a new building type, the conservatory, examples of which survive. While the architecture of the individual houses is not always of an exceptionally high standard, there is an overall harmony of great interest and since the houses have all been built by a handful of local architects and builders, they achieve coherence despite variety in design and materials. They are also bound together visually by their planting and boundary walls.

Need for Conservation

The needs for conservation of this area are as valid today as they were for the first designations of 1968 and 1972. Most of the original 99 year leases have run out and St John's has ceased to be the overall landowner as a result of the Leasehold Reform Act. Although residential remains as a dominant use, institutional uses have expanded, together with continuing conversion of houses to flats or outstations of colleges to secure their viability and upkeep. Some of these changes of use have occasionally resulted in the deterioration of the environment by the use of front gardens for parking, by accretions and changes in elevations not always carried out well, and by the removal of front boundary walls and piers. Trees have been lost through old age, disease and weather conditions. By designating a conservation area, the council has successfully stemmed the threat of demolition of significant buildings on corner plots for blocks of flats that occurred in the 1970s. It has promoted replacement planting for gardens and maintained the Victorian idea of building co-existing with landscape through co-operation with owners. North Oxford has weathered the demise of the derisive comments on its appearance by its 19th and 20th century critics of red brick architecture, to come into its own in the late 20th century as an attractive place of character which is as much special to Oxford as are the Colleges, University buildings and City Centre.

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Appendix 3. Summary of planning applications regarding 11 and 13 Banbury Road, 1958-2010

1st April 1958

13 Banbury Road:

“Change of use from residential to professional offices.”

- Application refused.

19th May 1959

13 Banbury Road:

“Change of use from residential to temporary offices (in principle).”

- Application made by the Royal Insurance Company Ltd.
- Application refused as the building is in an area zoned for University use and should be retained to prevent the need for the University to expand into areas zoned for other usage.

16th May 1961

13 Banbury Road:

“Change of use from residential to University office accommodation.”

- Application approved, see below:

Proposed **change of use from residential to University Office accommodation**

at **13 Banbury Road**

on behalf of **University Chest**

As the property is included in an area zoned for University purposes in the approved Town Map the Council would not be prepared to permit the introduction of commercial offices into Banbury Road and this permission is therefore restricted to offices in connection with University purposes only and the property shall not be let sold or otherwise disposed of except as a private dwellinghouse.

9th August 1973

13 and 15 Banbury Road:

“Link extensions between two buildings.”

- Approved.

8th May 1974

Extension to rear of 7-11 Banbury Road:

“Outline application for extension of computer building and conversion to provide staff and user accommodation.”

- Connects with S of “new” extension to 15-19.
- Completely removes rear projections from 9, 11, and 13 (the projections are demolished, with 9 and 11’s mostly being covered by the footprint of the extension, and 13’s being turned into a paved courtyard). Even part of 9’s projection not covered by the footprint of the new extension (i.e. the NE corner) is demolished.
- Rear projection of no. 7 is retained.

13th October 1987

13 Banbury Road:

“Construction of two paths between Nos. 7 and 13 and one ramp with handrails for disabled persons to No.9.”

- On computer, record no. 81 and 82.
- The majority of the paths out front, including horizontal connecting paths.

25th November 1993

13 Banbury Road:

“Replacement louvres and air condition plant on roof.”

- On computer record no. 717 and 718.
- Only affects 1970s extension.

28th October 1994

11 and 13 Banbury Road:

“Replacement louvres to air condenser plant.”

- On computer, record no. 765.

26th October 2000

13 and 15 Banbury Road:

“Alterations and refurbishment to ground floor reception area.”

- “...*the proposal is to cut back the pillars, raise the ceiling and new lighting (sic.) and provide a glass door to the open area. The existing desk arrangement will be removed and reconfigured at an angle to create an improved visual connection with the entrance area and the visiting area enlarged by the removal of a cupboard in the corridor area. Additionally, the entrance area link with the shop will be enhanced with the insertion of a glazed screen and door to the stairway, [;] this will improve both fire safety and security within the building.*”

12th May 2006

13 Banbury Road:

“Proposed handrail at main entrance.”

- “Similar to existing handrail outside 9 Banbury Road.”
- Improves disabled access.

August-September 2007

13-15 Banbury Road:

“Helpdesk refurbished and realigned”

25th August 2008

11 and 13 Banbury Road:

“Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to convert disused caretakers flat to offices involving stripping out fitted kitchen, upgrading electrical and fire safety measures. Extend and reposition loft hatches.”

- Work completed 13th February 2009.

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Appendix 4. Chronology of 11 and 13 Banbury Road

1858	11 and 13 Banbury Road are constructed, probably at some point in 1858
24 th December 1858	Rev. Richard Cox Hales, a clerk, takes up a 40-year lease on 11 and 13 Banbury Road, recently constructed by him
25 th March 1872	Rev. Richard Cox Hales takes up a second 40-year lease on 11 and 13 Banbury Road
24 th January 1887	Rev. Richard Cox Hales sells the remainder of his lease to Rev. Fraser Hislop Penny of St. John's College, Oxford
27 th February 1928	Ernest William Ainley Walker, D.M., Fellow of University College, takes up a 3-year lease on 13 Banbury Road
17 th March 1930	Nellie Bradfield and James William Bradfield take up a 1-year lease on 11 Banbury Road
14 th October 1931	Kenneth James Franklin, D.M., Fellow of Oriel College, takes up a 7-year lease on 13 Banbury Road
13 th October 1938	Douglas Allan Abernathy, B.M., takes up a 7-year lease on 13 Banbury Road
1 st April- 19 th May 1958	Planning applications made by Royal Insurance Company Ltd. to convert 13 Banbury Road into commercial offices. Consistently refused by Oxford City Council due to zoning for University use
12 th November 1958	The University takes up a 3-year lease on 13 Banbury Road
16 th May 1961	Planning application to convert 13 Banbury Road into University offices is approved
8 th September 1961	The University surrenders its lease on 13 Banbury Road
19 th February 1969	11 and 13 Banbury Road sold to the University of Oxford
1973	Link extension constructed between 13 and 15 Banbury Road
1975-76	Internal alterations in 11 and 13 Banbury Road to make spaces suitable for offices
1975-76	"Machine Room" extension constructed behind 7-11 Banbury Road
1987	Construction of path at front between 7 and 13 Banbury Road
1988-89	Ground-floor reception area converted to "Help Area"
1993-94	Replacement of air louvres at on roof of extension at rear of 13 Banbury Road
2000	Alteration and refurbishment of the ground-floor reception area
2006	Disabled handrail constructed at entrance to 13 Banbury Road
2008-09	Second-floor caretaker's flat converted to offices

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Appendix 5

CHECKLIST OF SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

This checklist is intended for the use of those working or planning work on the building. It highlights features of architectural significance within **11 and 13 Banbury Road**; these may be original features or new additions that nevertheless contribute positively to the character of the building. As this is a **Grade II listed building** any repair or alteration work to factors that contribute to the significance of the building will require listed building consent in order to avoid prosecution under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. **If planned work will likely affect any of the aspects featured in the list below advice should immediately be sought from the Building Conservation Team at Estates Services.**

The checklist lists both general significant features that affect the building as a whole and which should be held in mind if working in any space, and specific features of particular significance that should receive special regard if working in these particular spaces. The Further Information column refers to the relevant page reference in the Conservation Plan proper.

11 and 13 Banbury Road, Building No. 107		
SIGNIFICANT FEATURE	✓	Further Information
General:		
External Elevations		p. 15-17, 20, 24
Original brickwork		p. 15-17, 20, 24
Original stucco		p. 15-17, 20, 24
Visible slopes of the roof		p. 15-17, 20, 24
Any original fixtures or fittings		p. 20-21, 24
Windows throughout		p. 15-17, 20, 24
Specific Features:		
External Elevations:		
-Rusticated stucco at ground-floor level		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Dentils and cornice structures at first- and second-floor level		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Vermiculated stucco detailing and pediments on ground-floor windows		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Vermiculated stucco detailing and pediments on doorways		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Gibbs surrounds and pediments on first-floor windows		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Dormer windows at second-floor level		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Banding at first- and second-floor levels		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Sash windows on ground- and first-floor levels		p. 15-17, 20, 24
-Chimney stack		p. 15-17, 20, 24
Interior Features:		

-Staircases excluding balustrades		p. 20-21, 24
-Door to ground-floor front room in 13 Banbury Road		p. 20-21, 24
-Bathroom door on second floor		p. 20-21, 24
-Skirting		p. 20-21, 24
-Cornice moulding		p. 20-21, 24

PRIOR TO UNDERTAKING ANY REPAIRS OR ALTERATIONS ON THE ABOVE-LISTED ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES, CONTACT THE CONSERVATION TEAM AT ESTATES SERVICES ON (01865) (2)78750