

MIKHAIL
RICHES

Owlstone Croft
Design & Access Statement
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Project Team

Client

Queens’ College Cambridge

Project Management

Mott MacDonald

Architecture & Principle Designer

Mikhail Riches

Landscape Architect

SEED

Quantity Surveyor

3GCC

MEP, Sustainability & Passivhaus Designer

Max Fordham

Civil & Structural

Smith & Wallwork

Planning & Public Relations Consultancy

Turley

CDM Consultant

Simply CDM

Transport Consultant

PJA Engineering

Fire Consultant

Arcadis

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1.0 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report is prepared on behalf of the client, Queens' College Cambridge, for the proposed development site, Owlstone Croft, on Owlstone Road, Cambridge. This report supports a Planning Application for the site.

Description of Development

The proposal includes 13 new post-graduate homes, accommodating 60 student study-bedrooms. 87 student rooms are retained in existing buildings with works to improve the fabric and thermal performance of these buildings.

New communal facilities are provided and integrated as extensions to existing buildings. These include a student study room, seminar room, meeting spaces, gym, laundrette, cafe and kitchen, together with shared landscaped gardens, cycle parking, accessible car parking and other associated works.

The new homes have been designed to Passivhaus standards and the proposal is net zero in operational carbon. Existing buildings on site are retained and refurbished where possible, enhancing local heritage assets, whilst reducing embodied carbon.

1.0 Introduction

1.2 The Client and Project Brief

The Client

Queens' College Cambridge have resided in the centre of the city for centuries, and the college has developed over time to accommodate approximately 500 undergraduate students, 450 graduates and more than 60 academics across a variety of educational and residential buildings. Queens' purchased the Owlstone Croft site in 1988 and have refurbished existing accommodation here at various points over the last 30 years.

Project Brief

The project brief sets out to consider the long term future of the Owlstone Croft site as a sustainable part of Queens' College.

A primary requirement is the provision of new postgraduate homes. These homes will become the permanent residences for postgraduate students for up to four years. Each homes should accommodate between four and five students, and be self-contained, independent and secure. Sufficient space should be provided within each homes for the students to live and work comfortably, and to receive and entertain guests.

Further to these new homes, the existing facilities on site are to be evaluated and re-imagined to provide flexible study and recreation spaces to enhance the wellbeing of the community. With existing buildings accommodating a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students, the communal spaces should be designed to foster an environment of integration. This is important for developing and enhancing the intellectual life and inclusive ethos of the College.

The College aims to achieve a net zero carbon footprint by 2045. Therefore, the design brief for any development has sustainability at its core. The College's Environmental Policy can be found at <https://www.queens.cam.ac.uk/about-us/documents-policies>.

The core objective of the approach is to create highly efficient buildings designed for longevity. New buildings should maximise cost-effective passive design, consuming the minimum of power, and look to create opportunities for on-site energy generation. The client expects that the fabric of the buildings should be designed for ease of future maintenance and robustness to ensure buildings have a lifespan appropriate for a College setting. Existing buildings on site should be evaluated as part of a long term strategy of de-carbonisation of energy use. This includes sensitive upgrades to the performance of building fabric and the servicing strategies across the site.

All existing buildings are to be considered as part of a long term sustainable strategy for the site. A focus should be on the continued development of a coherent collegiate setting, appropriate for flexible educational and residential use. Where demolition is proposed, the impact on embodied carbon should be assessed and implications integrated into the whole life carbon strategy for the site.

2.0 The Site

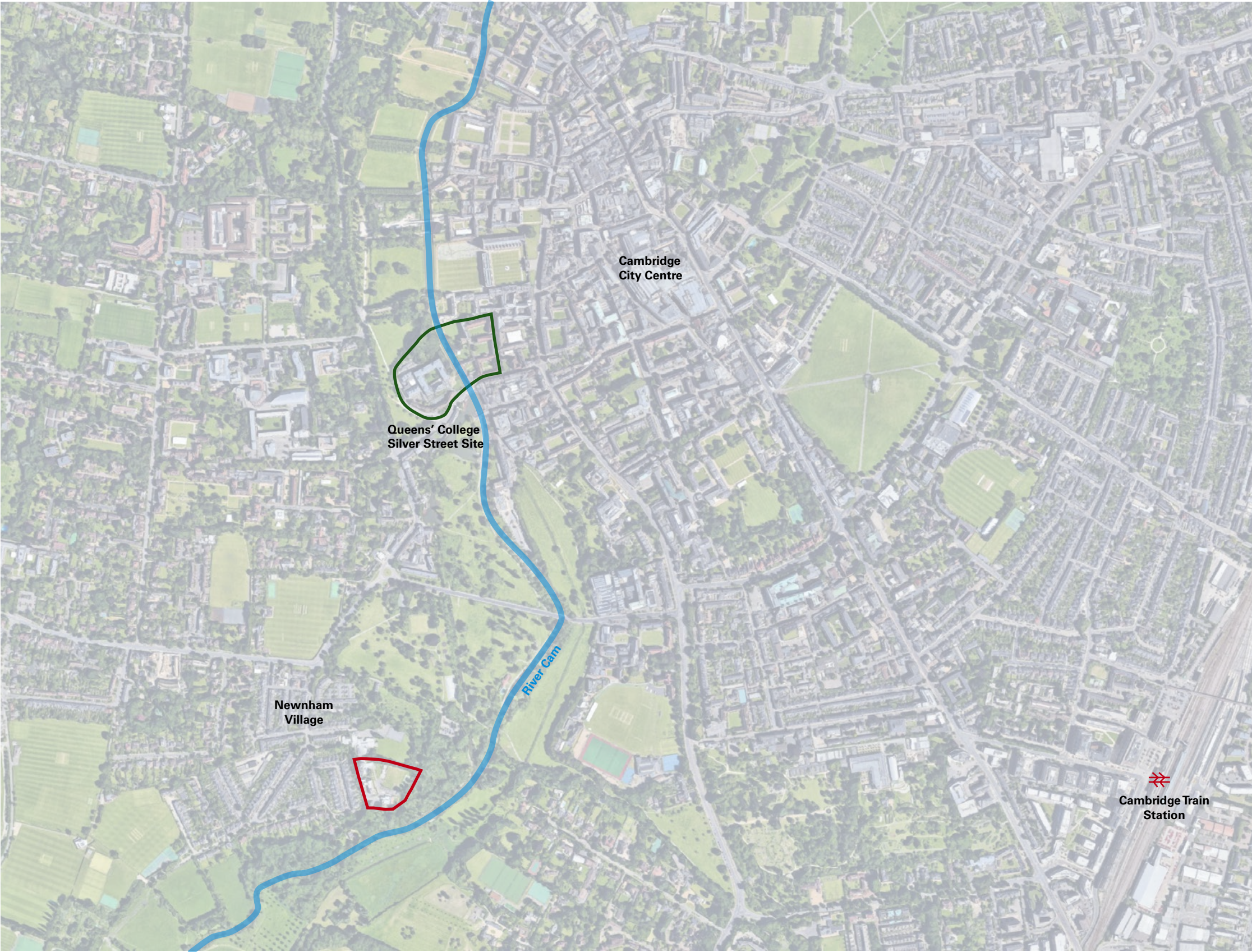
2.0 The Site

2.1 Location

Site Location

The Site is located on the edge of the village of Newnham. Newnham is approximately a 20 minute walk or 8 minute cycle south-west from the centre of the city.

The site neighbours the Paradise Local Nature Reserve to the east and is also in close proximity to the River Cam.



2.0 The Site

2.2 Aerial Views



Looking North



Looking East



Looking South



Looking West

2.0 The Site

2.3 Historic Context

Historic Development of the Site

Owlstone House was built on the site of an earlier building in 1881 along with a pair of cottages (now the Porter’s Lodge) for coachman and gardener. Previously, the site was a market garden.

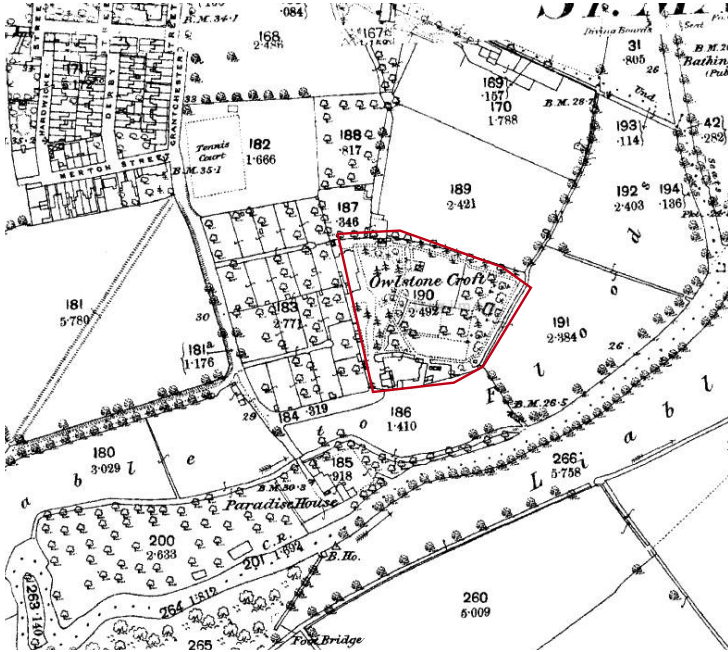
From the 1880s 1:500 Ordnance Survey Series we can speculate on how the site functioned:

The site was accessed from its own private lane running east from the south end of what is today Grantchester Street. The cottages faced the end of this lane and ‘guarded’ the entrance to the house. It appears that the cottages were separated from the drive to the house itself by a wall which connected to a structure with a radius-end with a gate to the yard formed by outbuildings enclosing most of the north, south and east ends. The kinked outbuildings on the north side were narrow on plan, those to the south mostly deeper. The east side has a half-hexagonal addition and to the rear a small attached building and yard and detached glasshouse.

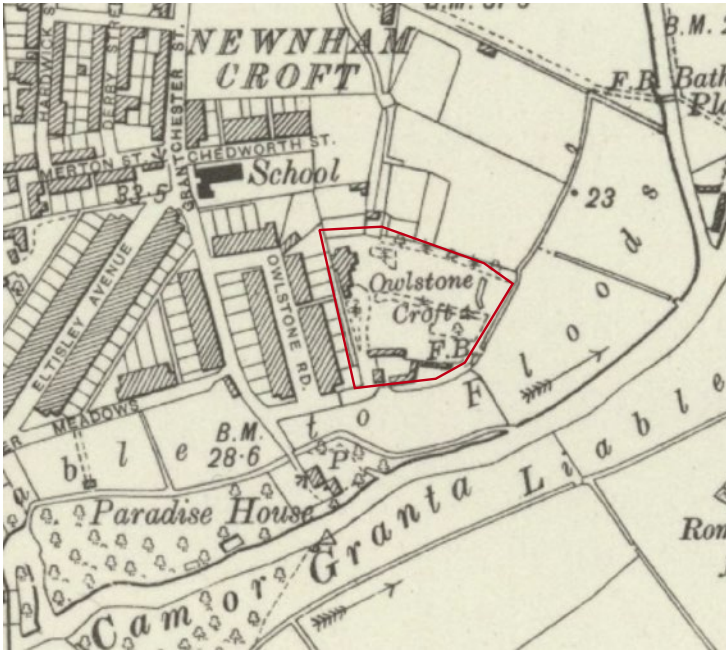
After becoming a school for young women during the First World War, Owlstone Croft was acquired by Theodore Fyfe who was at one point the University’s Professor of Architecture. He made a series of changes to the house: In 1929, a southern extension to Owlstone House was undertaken.

Between 1936-39, further extensions to the east facade of the house were constructed.

The building plans for these extensions suggest that the pattern of outbuildings remained largely the same as they were at end of the C19.



1888



1927



1929 Extension

1936-38 Extensions

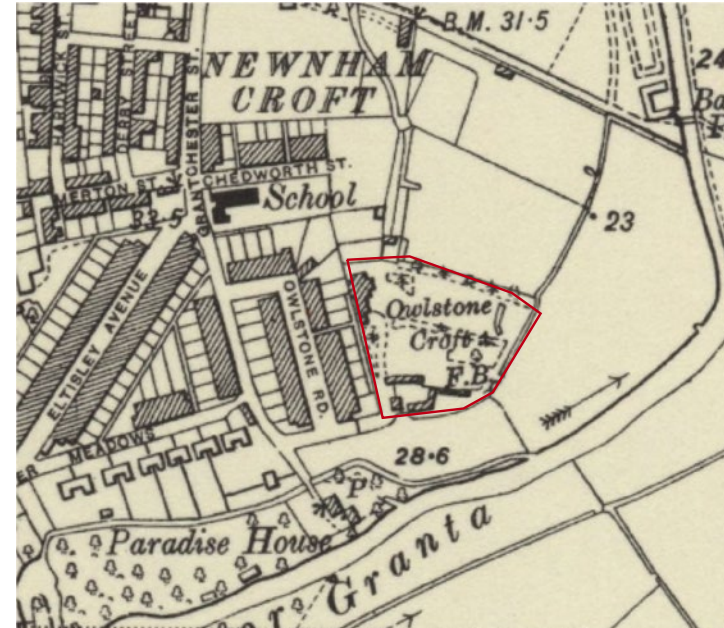
2.0 The Site

2.3 Historic Context

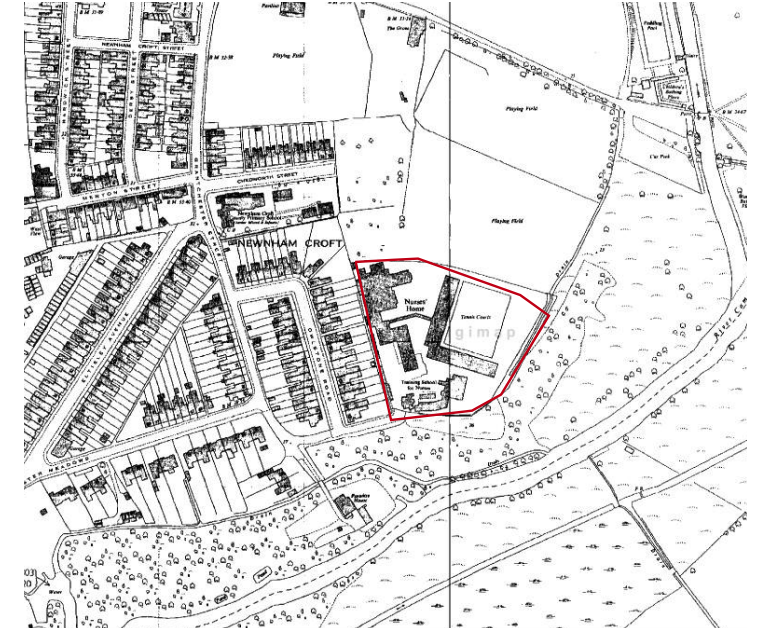
Addenbrookes Hospital acquired the site in the late 1940's and added a number of buildings to the site including an L-shaped accommodation building on the lawn, and a building to the south of the main house (Block B). The outbuilding ranges were also modified to create a training school.

As Addenbrookes Hospital moved to it's new site south of Cambridge the usage of Owlstone Croft diminished. Queens' College purchased the site in 1988 and refurbished Blocks A (The house) and B for post-graduate accommodation. The L-shaped building on the lawn was demolished in 2001.

Further renovation was undertaken in 2014 to student accommodation as well as the outbuilding ranges to create the Porter's Lodge with stores behind and a nursery with 5 student rooms above (app no.13/0384).



1952



1960s



2000



2011, prior to renovations

2.0 The Site

2.4 Local Context

KEY

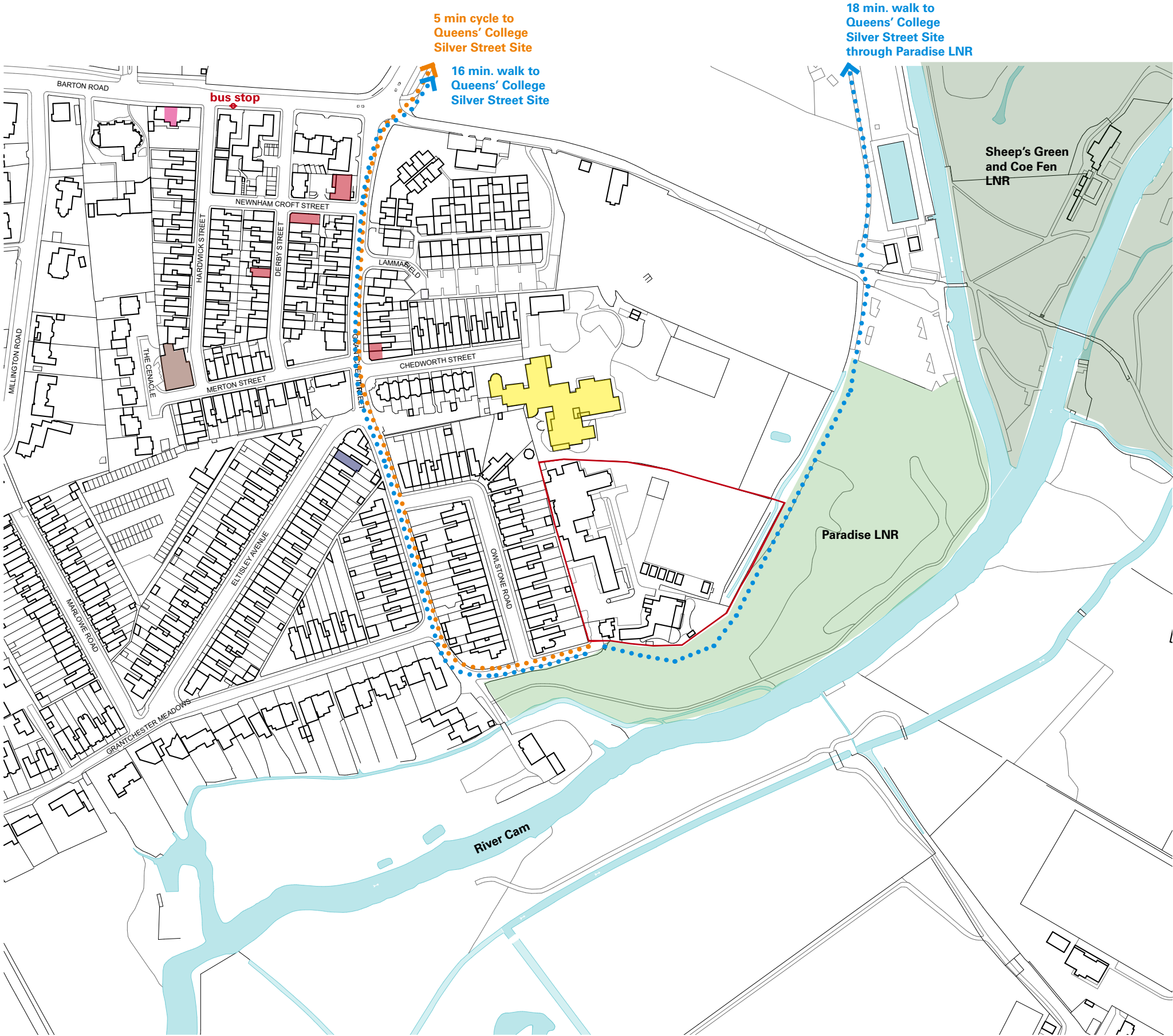
Local Grocery Shop

Public House

School

Chemist

Social Club



2.0 The Site

2.5 Local Character Appraisal

Newnham Village

A pattern of modest terraced streets characterises Newnham Village. Primarily residential housing of various size and detail forms a coherent street scape with some retail/community uses in the north end of the village or on street corners.

Most buildings are of brick construction, with stone detailing to window sills and lintels and door surrounds. There is a limited palette of brick with many houses built in either gault or red brick, whilst some are painted. Contrasting brick types or bonds are often used to form decorative detailing around windows, at gable edges or corners.



2.0 The Site

2.5 Local Character Appraisal

Towards the edge of the village there are larger plots, with buildings of a wider range of styles, age and construction.

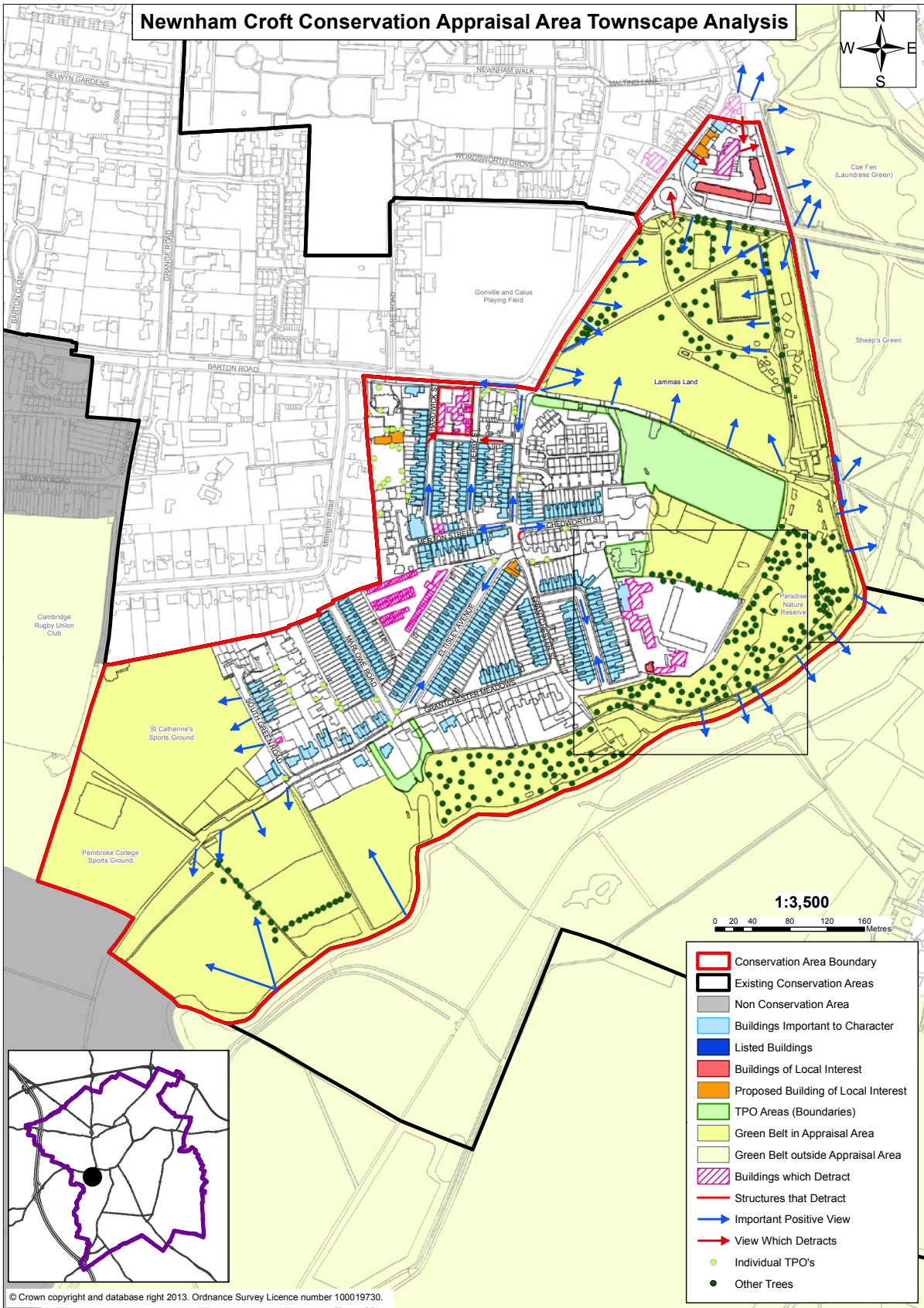
Most are two-three storeys in scale and sit comfortably amongst landscape which forms a key part of the character of the edge of the village.

The setting of the Paradise Local Nature Reserve and surrounding meadows bordering the River Cam contribute to the character of the area, with the Owlstone Croft site located at the edge of the village, forming part of this transition between village and surrounding open space.



2.0 The Site

2.6 Newnham Croft Conservation Area



Extract from Newnham Croft Conservation Area Appraisal:

Owlstone Road terminates at the junction with a private driveway which leads to an entrance to the Reserve and Owlstone Croft. The house, together with its two cottages, was built in about 1880 as a country house for Major R Calvert, Chief Constable for the county. It was a girls' school in the 1920s and 1930s, and was extended in 1946 when it became a nurses' hostel. It is now a student hostel for Queens' College. The entrance gatehouse, Lodge Cottage, is built using Gault bricks with a slate roof, and has curiously curved eaves detail. The remains of its construction date were once on the dormer but have been lost during the recent repair work. The property is a BLI. Turning into the site, the view is dominated by the four storey block of apartments, probably dating to the late 1940s, which conceal the original house (Owlstone Croft) beyond, and to which it is joined by a three storey link. Owlstone Croft is also built using Gault brick and has been extended to the east with a number of single storey additions, concealing the main part of the building, but some original six over six sash windows can still be seen, similar to the details on the gatehouse. Behind the gatehouse there are some original stable buildings, again somewhat altered and extended. The large garden also contains the footprint of a further modern building, shown on recent maps but now demolished.

Key positive features:

- Long terraces of well preserved early 20th century houses retaining much of their original detailing;
- Original low brick front walls and wrought iron railings, like the ones between Nos. 47 and 49;
- Small front gardens add to the green ambience;
- The backdrop of mature trees in views into the street from Grantchester Street;
- The close proximity of the Paradise Nature Reserve and the River Cam; and
- Owlstone Lodge, a BLI.

Key negative features:

- Some replacement windows;
- Telegraph poles and overhead wires;
- The 1960s street lamps are not particularly attractive; and
- The poor condition and general appearance of the Owlstone Croft site and buildings, although the gatehouse has been recently repaired.

2.0 The Site

2.7 Existing Site Plan



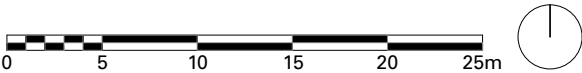
KEY

- Site Ownership Area - 10,607m2
- Block A - Student Accommodation, Study Areas
GEA Footprint - 855m2
- Block B - Student Accommodation
GEA Footprint - 464m2
- Block D - Nursery (GF), Student Accommodation (FF)
GEA Footprint - 296m2
- Porters' Lodge - Staff rest areas, Student Pidgeon holes
GEA Footprint - 78m2
- Stores
GEA Footprint - 72.5m2

Student Accommodation No.
Block A - 29 rooms
Block B - 68 rooms
Block D - 5 rooms
TOTAL - 102 rooms

Site Cycle Storage (Existing)
60 Covered Sheffield Stands (120 spaces)
4 Nursery Covered Stands (8 spaces)

Site Car Parking (Existing)
20 Standard Bays
3 Accessible Bays
1 Service Vehicle bay



2.0 The Site

2.8 Site Photographs



1. Site Entrance - Porters Lodge & Block B



2. Car Park Adjacent to Entrance



3. Cycle Stores and Block D/ Nursery



2.0 The Site

2.8 Site Photographs



4. Lawn to the Eastern side of the site



5. West side of the site - Block A and Block B



2.0 The Site

2.9 Site Opportunities & Constraints

