

Oxford's Historic Churches

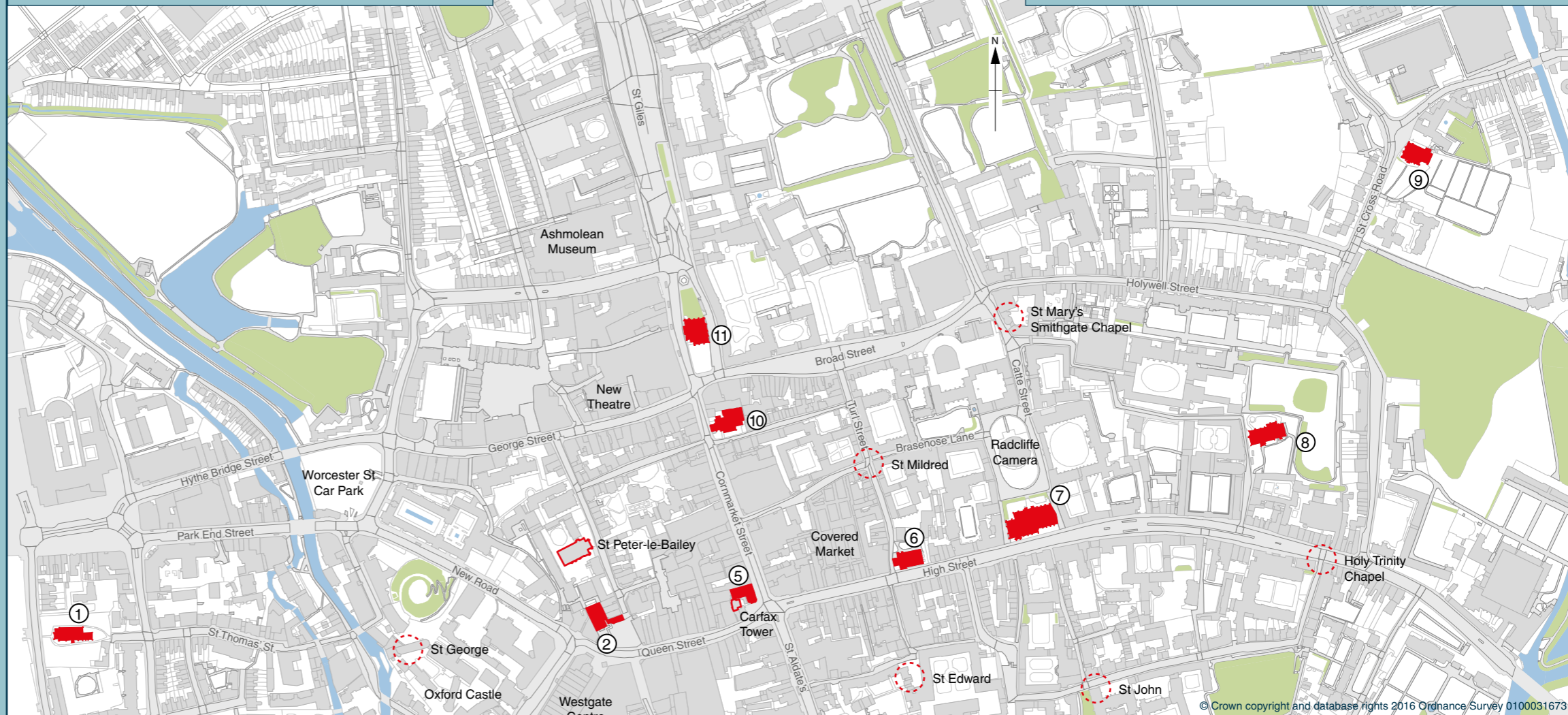
Explore the parishes and surviving churches of the medieval and later town

9 St Cross

The parish chapel of the 11-12th century Holywell Manor, a hamlet quite distinct from Oxford. Beyond the open fields was a park (now the University Parks). Now the Balliol College archives and rare book store. Its extensive cemetery, extending behind the churchyard, contains many well-known Oxford people, including Kenneth Graham (1859-1932), author of *Wind in the Willows*.

10 St Michael at the Northgate

The late-Saxon tower, perhaps built around 1050 may be older than the church, and was part of the North Gate of the town. The church is ancient, and was mentioned in Domesday Book (1086). The later medieval town wall formed part of the churchyard. Now the third City Church, it has the font brought from Carfax by which Shakespeare may have stood as godfather to William Davenant. **The tower and its museum are open to visitors.**



11 St Mary Magdalen

The church lies a short distance outside the North Gate in the middle of the road. Much of the church today dates to the 14th century in Decorated Style, and the tower was rebuilt in the early 16th century, though the church was extensively rebuilt and the Martyrs' Aisle added in 1842 to match the Martyrs' Memorial as a warning to would-be absconders from the Church of England.

12 St Giles

Another suburban church, following on from St Mary Magdalen at the top end of St Giles Street, lined by the homes and farms of those who had land in the open fields of north Oxford. Possibly built as a private church in the early 12th century and then a parish church, it is a very fine example of 12-13th-century Early English Style of architecture. The church was damaged during the siege of Oxford in the Civil War and was used to imprison parliamentary troops captured near Cirencester in 1643.

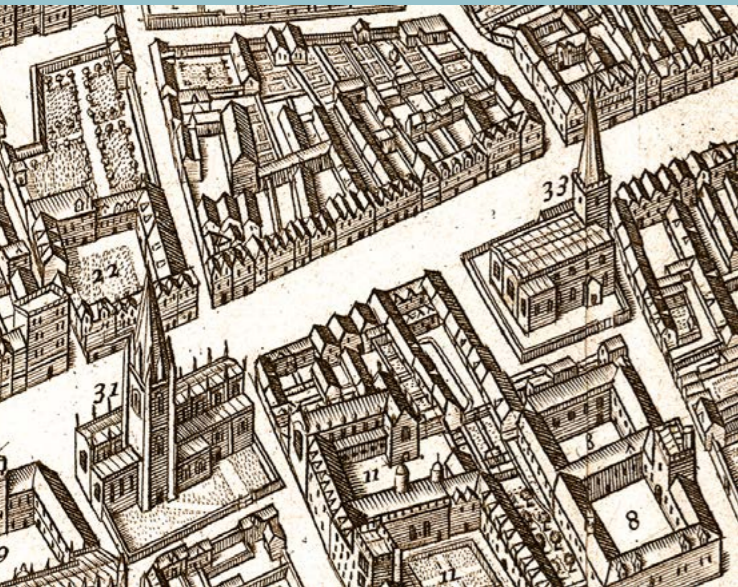
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Like most of the older English towns, Oxford has a fair number of parish churches that came into existence between the 11th and 13th centuries. Some like St Edward, St Mildred and St Michael at the Southgate have vanished, and others have been given over to college use as their parishes disappeared. But a good number have survived and can be seen, at least from the street, at all times, or if open around the time of services and on other occasions. The Three Towers of St Martin, St Mary and St Michael are generally open and all have fine (and different) views of Oxford.

This leaflet is a selection of 12 parish churches that appear on David Loggan's 1675 map view of Oxford. Others have been rebuilt or moved from their original positions, and you can use both the modern map of Oxford (above, north up) and, for a little more of a challenge, Loggan's map (overleaf, north down) to find the churches. Why not use the checklist to keep track of which ones you have visited?

For further information in the historic parishes, see Alan Crossley (ed.), *VCH Oxford IV: The City of Oxford* (1979)

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | St Thomas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | St Peter-le-Bailey | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | St Ebbe's | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | St Aldates | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | St Martin's at Carfax | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | All Saints | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | University Church of St Mary the Virgin | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | St Peter-in-the-East | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | St Cross/Holywell | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | St Michael at the Northgate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | St Mary Magdalen | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. | St Giles | <input type="checkbox"/> |



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If you like maps, see also *An Historical Map of Oxford* (2016) and find out about the forthcoming Oxford volume of the Historic Towns Atlas at

<http://www.historictownsatlas.org.uk/atlas/volume-vii/oxford>



1 St Thomas

A new suburban church (replacing St George in the Castle), built at the end of the 12th century by the canons of Oseney Abbey and dedicated to the murdered Archbishop Thomas Becket (1170). The 12th-century south door ironwork and consecration cross on the north-east buttress of the church can be seen from the outside.

2 St Peter-in-the-Bailey

This church was originally located in the Great Bailey (Queen Street), and Bonn Square is the remaining part of its churchyard. Rebuilt after the tower collapsed in 1726, it was removed in 1874 for road widening and was rebuilt further north, where it is now the chapel of St Peter's College.

3 St Ebbe's

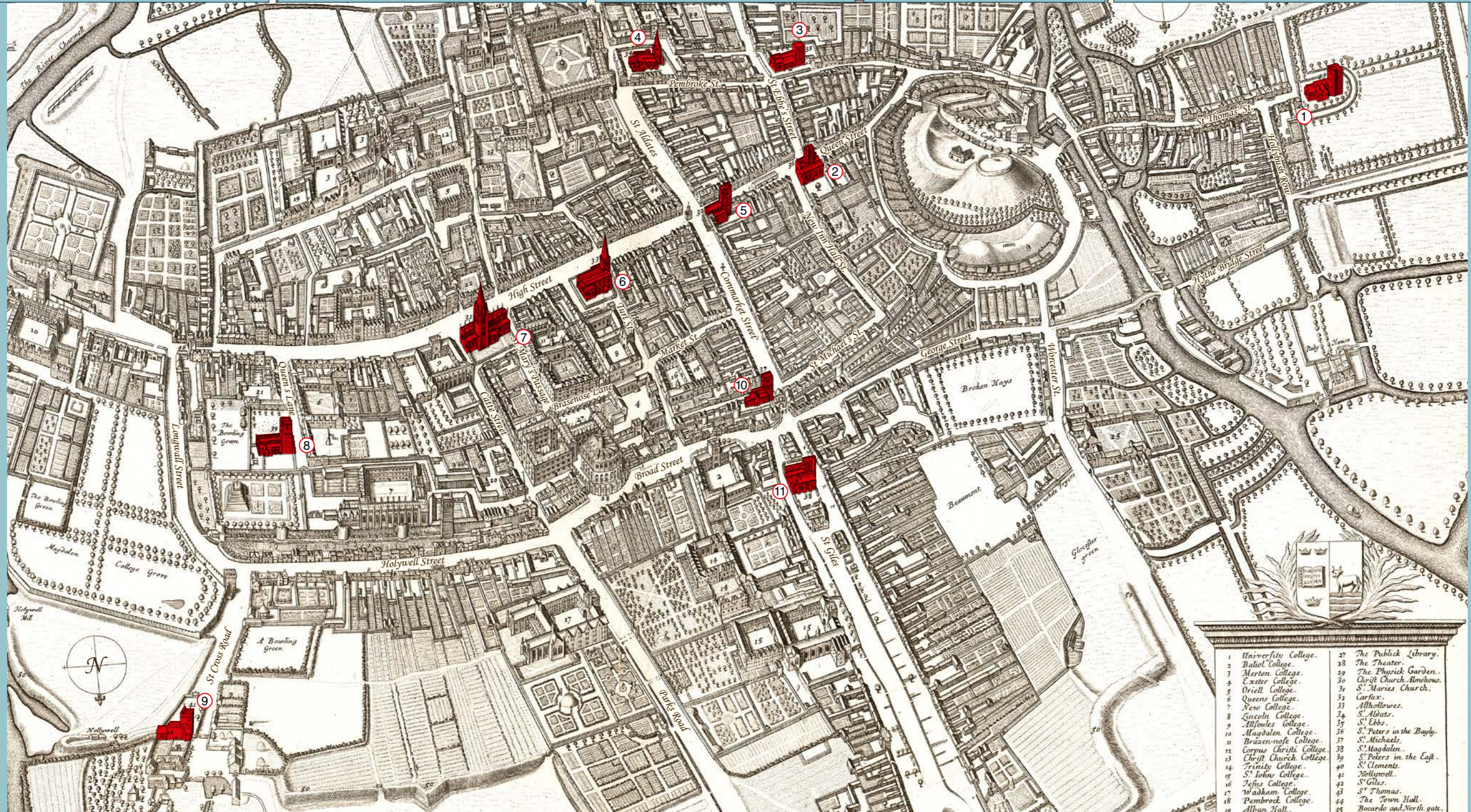
The church was largely rebuilt in 1813, but including the Norman west door. It is documented from 1005, and is dedicated to the 7th-century St Ebbe, a Northumbrian princess and Abbess of Coldingham Berwickshire (now Borders Region).

4 St Aldates Church

This parish church (perhaps by the 'Old Gate') dates from Saxon times, and part of a Saxon cross-shaft was found in recent excavations; however most of the church that you can see today is 19th century.

5 St Martin's, Carfax

The original City Church recorded from 1032, and where the townsmen first met before moving to the Guildhall across the road. In 1820 it was demolished and rebuilt (except for the tower) and when the new church was removed in 1896 for the 'Carfax Improvement Scheme' the tower remained, with the chiming quarter boys retained by the clock. **The tower is open to visitors.**



6 All Saints

The medieval church of 12-13th century was removed after the spire collapsed in 1700, and replaced with a fine Palladian design under the influence of Henry Aldrich (Dean of Christ Church) and the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor. All Saints was the second City Church, but in the 1970s became the library of Lincoln College, when the Palladian interior proportions were altered by the insertion of a new floor.

7 St Mary the Virgin (University Church)

The University Church, with a fine 13th-century spire and mostly rebuilt in the 15th and 16th centuries in Perpendicular style. Used as an administrative centre for the medieval university, with the main meeting place (Congregation House) in the vaulted chapel that is now The Vaults cafe, above which the first university library was added in the 14th century. The trial of the Protestant bishops was held here in Queen Mary's reign, and in the 19th century the preaching of J H Newman was a highly influential part of the High Church 'Oxford Movement'. **The tower is open to visitors.**

8 St Peter-in-the-East

A major Norman church with a 12th-century crypt beneath a vaulted chancel, with a priest's room above; rebuilt and extended in the 13th and 14th centuries, and since closure in the 1960s now the library of St Edmund Hall. It was first recorded in 1086 and was possibly part of a large extra-mural parish extending over north Oxford. The exterior can be seen from the churchyard when the hall is open, and a medieval stone coffin blocking a doorway is seen from the road beside the tower.

1	University College.	27	The Publick Library.
2	Balioi College.	28	The Theater.
3	Merton College.	29	The Physick Garden.
4	Exeter College.	30	Christ Church Almshouse.
5	Oriel College.	31	S ^t . Maries Church.
6	Queens College.	32	Carfax.
7	New College.	33	Altholwell.
8	Lincoln College.	34	S ^t . Albates.
9	Allsoules College.	35	S ^t . Ebbs.
10	Magdalen College.	36	S ^t . Peters in the Bayly.
11	Brasen-nose College.	37	S ^t . Michael.
12	Corpus Christi College.	38	S ^t . Magdalen.
13	Christ Church College.	39	S ^t . Peters in the East.
14	Trinity College.	40	S ^t . Clements.
15	S ^t . Johns College.	41	Hollywell.
16	Jehus College.	42	S ^t . Giles.
17	Wadham College.	43	S ^t . Thomas.
18	Pembroke College.	44	The Town Hall.
19	Alban Hall.	45	Boarado and North gate.