

Wheatley stone

References from W. Hassall, 'Wheatley Records', *Oxfordshire Record Society*, (Oxford, 1956).

This is a Corallian limestone formed from compacted broken shell and coral fragments. As such it has no veins so can be freely carved in all its planes. It was used from the late 13th century for buildings in Oxford, Abingdon Abbey, Cuddesdon, Wallingford and Windsor Castle, being carried mainly in carts.

Lye Hill quarry had this limestone to a depth of 50ft, elsewhere it was less.

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21	Building accounts from 13C and 14C show that Wheatley stone was being carried from its quarries in carts to Windsor Castle, Wallingford and Oxford
22	The chancel of Merton College chapel was one of the earliest Oxford buildings to have definitively used Wheatley stone.
24	Wheatley stone used for Abingdon Abbey, Wallingford Castle, Exeter library in 1383 but destroyed in 1708, Queen's College chapel in 1378-9 but also destroyed at the end of 17C
36	In addition to the above, Wheatley stone used in Magdalen College in 1474 and Christ Church in 1525
40	April 1365, 5718 ft of 'Whatele' stone bought for Windsor Castle at 2.5d per foot

Headington quarry appears to have usurped Wheatley as a source of stone for Oxford buildings by 1400. It is a reasonable assumption, however, that Wheatley quarries were used for the many existing stone buildings in Wheatley which date from the 16th to 19th centuries, with the new Church built by Street in 1856 being the last major stone building which used Wheatley stone.

Summary

Wheatley stone was much in demand in the 13th and 14th centuries for Windsor castle and Wallingford castle, Abingdon Abbey, and in four Oxford colleges – Merton, Queen's, Exeter, Christ Church and Magdalen, although some of these structures were subsequently destroyed. Later probably used for local stone dwellings 16C-19C, and for Church in 1856.