

Comments for Planning Application 13/00832/FUL

Application Summary

Application Number: 13/00832/FUL

Address: Former Ruskin College Site Walton Street Oxford Oxfordshire

Proposal: Redevelopment of existing student accommodation and teaching site comprising the demolition of all buildings, with exception of the 1913 Ruskin College facade to Walton Street and Worcester Place, and erection of 90 student study rooms, 3 Fellows/Staff residential rooms, teaching facilities, library archive social space, landscaping and associated works.

Case Officer: Angela Fettiplace

Customer Details

Name: Mr William Clarke

Address: 19 Worcester Place Oxford

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbours

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Effect on adjoining properties
- Effect on character of area
- Height of proposal
- Noise and disturbance

Comment: I object to the proposed building on several grounds; mainly that the building along Worcester Place and Ruskin lane is too high and not in character with any of the buildings around it. Furthermore I believe that the proposed building will have a particularly detrimental effect on the grounds and inhabitants of Worcester College.

Additionally I agree with the comments about noise, increased traffic and contradictory statements about bicycle storage in the plans, made by Silvia Pugliese of 26 Worcester Place.

My main objection concerns the utter inadequacy of the investigation and conclusions of the supporting document Heritage impact assessment submitted by the building designers. The section on the impact to Worcester College is insufficient, considering the wrong questions or just incorrect.

From the supporting documents PROPOSED RUSKIN LANE ELEVATION and PROPOSED SECTION 09 we can see that the height of the proposed building is 74.6. By extrapolating the height of the second floor [$68.1 - 64.8 = 3.3$], a presumably valid calculation as both bedrooms are labelled as identical, we can say the fourth storey i.e. before any significant roof slope, will rise to 71.4.

From documents PROPOSED RUSKIN LANE ELEVATION and EXISTING RUSKIN LANE ELEVATIONS we estimate the height of the current Worcester College Ruskin Lane building. The ground level is approximately 58.0 and the roof 68.3; the height is therefore 10.3. The new building rises to 73.5 from a ground level of 58.5 so is 15 high. Even at the bottom of the roof (approx. 68.1) it remains the same height as the current Worcester building (including roof). The increase in ground level means that visually the building is higher.

Even excluding the fourth story of the proposed development as roof the elevation of the three lower storeys of the proposed building is the same height or higher than the existing Worcester College Ruskin Lane building, especially if the roof of which is excluded!

The comment being of the same height in elevation located on page 12 in the document Heritage impact assessment is therefore shown to be incorrect. Furthermore the second part of the sentence albeit with an additional floor within the roof is inappropriate in this context as the additional floor in the roof accounts for over 20% (3.3/15) of the buildings height above ground level, i.e. it is not negligible.

The existing and proposed building plans show that although the statement and set back from the site boundary is true it fails to draw attention to the fact that the only visible buildings, at the west end, from Worcester college are set back significantly further.

The document continues in its inaccuracies, labelling rooms of continual residence as of minor significance, here: As regards views towards the observatory from Worcester College, these are available currently only from rooms of minor significance at higher level in the north range

As is evident from the same supporting documents the proposed building is 46% higher (excluding ground level increase which would put it at 50%) than the current existing Ruskin lane building. These figures are even greater when the proposed building is compared to the existing Ruskin College buildings. The incorrect first statement and significant additional height demonstrated mean the earlier statement neither is it considered overly large in height or massing in relation to adjacent buildings or views from the adjacent park and garden. The same considerations apply in the case of the proposed new range for the Ruskin College site., located on page 10 & 11 in the same document, cannot be justified!

I believe that the large deviations from the existing and surrounding buildings proportions render application of the opinions of the 2006 Worcester College Planning Officers to this case invalid. The arguments put forwards by the building designers for no significant impact on Worcester College would therefore be obsolete. The lacklustre way that the designers have approached the impact on Worcester College only leaves me doubting the sufficiency of the plans as a whole.

