

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 Richard Harman

Address: 28 Worcester Place Oxford

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbours

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Amount of development on site
- Effect on adjoining properties
- Effect on character of area
- Effect on privacy
- Effect on traffic
- Height of proposal
- Light - daylight/sunlight
- Noise and disturbance
- On-street parking
- Other - give details

Comment: I am broadly in favour of replacing this extremely ugly building however I have specific objections to part of the plans which adversely affect myself and my neighbours and would seriously diminish my day to day enjoyment in living in the area and should be altered in the plans before go-ahead is given.

(1) The Auditorium/Lecture Hall (directly across from 23,24 Worcester Place).

It would be helpful to have something explicitly written into the planning permission, giving restrictions or guidelines as to its use. In the public displays, Exeter themselves stated: "the auditorium is intended principally for use as a lecture theatre for students, though the College would like to make it available for occasional public lectures or recitals". So, it would be good to have something explicitly mentioned in the planning permission that it will ordinarily be used for quiet purposes, such as lectures (and not ordinarily used for anything loud, such as electronically produced or electronically enhanced music).

It would also be helpful to be reassured about the thickness and soundproofing quality of the materials used in its construction.

The curved wall facing Worcester place should not be made from a shiny metallic material that would reflect light into the houses opposite.

(2) A large number of undergraduates will be using the site, and it would be helpful to have a comment written into the planning permission that there should be 24 hour pedestrian access via the main entrance on Walton Street, and that students should be encouraged to use this. I am merely requesting here that a comment along these lines be included in the the planning permission.

(3) The proposal includes cycle racks "for visitors and local residents" opposite the houses at 27,28 Worceser Place. These are absolutely not welcomed by me and are definitely not a "benefit" for local residents. These racks should be placed within the site itself say in Ruskin Lane behind walls and out of sight of us neighbours as they will inevitably be a source of noise and untidiness, on what is traditionally a quiet residential street.

Incidentally, visitors should ordinarily be using the the main entrance on Walton Street, so if there were to be cycles racks, it would be better to have a small number (purely for visitors) on Walton street (as part of the extended pavement area).

It would be better for the pavement on Worcester Place to be left alone (not extended) and for this to be residential parking.

(4) There is a proposal to plant 3 trees directly across from number 27,28 Worcester Place. I approve of the trees but these should be potted (together with official documentation that they are potted) so that the root systems cannot affect the houses directly opposite and they should be of a species of tree which cannot grow too high.

(5) The proposed portion of the building opposite 27,28 Worcester Place (to be joined directly onto the historic building) is higher than the building it is replacing. This adversely affects the light of 27/28 and 23-25 Worcester Place. This building should be more modest in scale, both in width and height.

(6) The loading area should be arranged so that service vehicles do not block Worcester Place (a narrow one-way street), presumably by tapering the pavement in front of the gate so that vehicles can tuck close to the gate (like a driveway). It seems obvious that the opportunity should be taken for the Westernmost pathway to be a road for service vehicles; it would surely be more sensible (and less disruptive for local residents) for vehicles to enter the site via Walton Street and unload internally.

There should be a restriction that loading and unloading, should not happen at unsociable times. Perhaps the area at the main entrance on Walton Street could alternatively be used for service vehicles.

(7) We would hope for assurances as to regulations and policing of noise in student areas, with thick double glazing, and College security be mandated to keep an eye on noise in all parts of the buildings including the Western part of the site.

(8) It is extremely inconsiderate that some student rooms are proposed on the building immediately opposite 27,28 Worcester Place (the 2nd and 3rd floors are proposed to be student rooms); these will be right on the pavement, directly opposite residential houses which are

themselves right on the pavement, and they will be replacing a structure previously used as offices.

It would surely be more courteous to local residents for the rooms of this new building which have windows on Worcester Place to be used to offices, rather than student accommodation.

(9) More generally, the proposals are cramming too much into the space available, including numbers of people (more than the number effectively using the site previously), building height and proximity to the street. The broad design is reasonable, but it must be softened, reduced in height and size (particularly the portions on Worcester Place), and preferably moved slightly back from the street, and reduced in total capacity (by about 15-20 rooms).

The proposed design has been highly insensitive to the residential housing on 24-28 Worcester Place.