

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Registered charity no. 259055

Listed Buildings Sub-Committee

138 Marlborough Road, Oxford OX1 4LS; 01865 242760; lbsecretary@oahs.org.uk

Mr Michael Crofton-Briggs
Planning Control and Conservation Manager
Oxford City Council
St Aldate's Chambers
109 St Aldate's
Oxford OX1 1DS

13 May 2013

Our ref: 15/13

Dear Mr Crofton-Briggs

Re: 13/00837/CAC & 13/00832/FUL

Former Ruskin College site, Walton Street, Oxford

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.

Our caseworkers have examined these proposals, and we wish to object to them on the following grounds:

1. The Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Option is flawed in respect of the answer to question 6, 'Is the development of more than local significance...?' which has been answered in the negative, whereas it is clear from the interest taken in the scheme by national bodies such as the Victorian Society, that the building is of national significance, and the site has considerable environmental sensitivity. In view of a recent planning approval given in Oxford City where the lack of an EIA has resulted in a disputed decision, we would urge the council to reconsider this and require the applicants to prepare an EIA which should take into account the points made by the Victorian Society and certain others as detailed below.
2. The damage to the 1913 Ruskin College building is excessive and unacceptable:
 - a. More of the interior should be retained, in particular the fine rear wall of the 1913 building. The proposal documents claim to treat the building as if it were listed, yet the total destruction of everything but the façade makes a mockery of this ideal. The applicants should be asked to submit new proposals which work with the grain of the present building, not against it.

continued overleaf.....