

# 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 Steven Young

Address: Worcester College Walton Street 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
- General dislike or support for proposal
- Height of proposal
- Light - daylight/sunlight
- Not enough info given on application
- Parking provision

Comment: I wish to register the following objections to the proposed plans:

- 1) The proposed building is not in keeping with the surrounding area. The shape and general design of the roof is hideous and completely out of place in an area with traditional architecture. The use of 'varied massing' is described by the Exeter College in their Design and access statement as 'unusual' and I feel that this is an understatement and was unable to find absolutely any justification for such a radical design in the documents they submitted. Such a design is even more out of place given that the site in question is part of the Jericho Conservation Area.
- 2) The proposed building is too high, and Exeter College have tried to squeeze too much onto the site. Whilst during its recent period of building work Worcester College opted to build lower buildings (E.g. Ruskin Lane building, Staircase 24) which are in keeping with the roof lines/heights of the surrounding area, this proposal does not show the same respect for neighbouring

properties. The proposed building will ruin these attempts to try and ensure all new development is in keeping with the local area, and represent an eyesore in an otherwise beautiful and traditional area. I am also concerned by the plan for Exeter to build their new building right up against the boundary of Worcester College. Currently there is an open area between the boundary and Ruskin College, and I feel that the loss of this will make the site appear overly cramped and increase the damage to the views and general atmosphere of Worcester's orchard. The building that Exeter propose is too large in its present form (both in height and ground covered) for the size of the site.

3) The proposed building would cause irreparable damage to the views currently enjoyed by thousands of students and visitors to Worcester College each year from the orchard. The proposed structure would tower over the orchard, removing the sense of privacy and tranquility of the area. One of the great charms (and one of the reasons so many local people and visitors can be found relaxing in the grounds of Worcester each day) of the orchard is the feeling that you are no longer in a built up residential area. This atmosphere has been sympathetically protected by Worcester during all of its building projects in recent years, with care taken to avoid overly high or eyesore buildings. One only has to come and visit Worcester on any afternoon to see the number of people who come to relax in our grounds, and the effect that this proposal will have on their enjoyment of what is very much a public facility needs to be considered. I do not believe that Exeter College has given this problem sufficient consideration, especially given the extremely small section in their Design and access statement on this issue that does nothing to alleviate these concerns.

4) The materials proposed for use on the roof are likely to cause significant amounts of glare that will cause an irritation for both neighbours and those enjoying Worcester's orchard. Exeter state that they intend to use 'stainless steel roof tiles' on the roof, but do not detail any measures that will be taken to avoid the problem of glare for neighbours. Their own pictures of the mock up tiles seem to show that the material is highly reflective, so I am extremely concerned about the effect that this will have on those living near to the proposed building.

5) The materials proposed for use on the roof are ugly and not in keeping with the local area at all. The use of stainless steel roof tiles would mark a significant change from the materials currently used in the area, and I am not convinced that this change is either necessary or sympathetic to the overall character and appearance of the area.

6) The proposed building will overlook significant amounts of Worcester College accommodation, and consequently result in a loss of privacy for its occupants. Due to the fact that the proposed building is so high, it means that some overlooking of Worcester accommodation is inevitable. This is unacceptable, especially in light of the number of people who would suffer from this. The height of the proposed building must be reduced to take into account the right to privacy of existing residents.

7) Exeter College have not provided sufficient details explaining how their students will drop their

belongings off at the beginning and end of each term and what (if any) provision will be made for their families cars whilst this is done. I believe this to be unacceptable given the congestion that significant numbers of cars arriving at once, and parking up for extended periods would cause. Some form of concrete proposal should be made and discussed with local residents to deal with this problem at the planning stage, rather than when it is too late.

8) This proposal will have significant impact on the listed buildings of Worcester College. The main quad and lodgings of Worcester College are currently listed, and enjoy views out into the orchard. If this proposal is accepted, then these views would be irreparably damaged and have a fundamental impact on the view and atmosphere that is currently enjoyed from these buildings.

In summary, the proposed building would be completely out of place with the surrounding area. I am sympathetic to the need for more student accommodation in Oxford, but this cannot come at the cost of irreparably damaging what is one of the most pleasant areas in our city. I therefore hope that this proposal will be rejected, until such a time that Exeter College are able to reassess and take into account the significant damage that their current plans would cause.