

The South Jericho Residents' Association (SJRA)

August 1st 2013

This document explains our objections to:

Planning Application No.13/00832/FUL .
Former Ruskin College Site, Walton Street, Oxford

The SJRA was constituted on July 7th 2013 and covers the area:
Worcester Place to Richmond Road including Walton Street (west side)
and Walton Lane.

Chair: Chris Johnson

Secretary: Mary Keen

Treasurer: Nicky Schlatter

Distribution list:

West Area Planning Committee:

Councillor Oscar Van Nooijen (Chair)

Councillor Michael Gotch (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Elise Benjamin

Councillor Anne-Marie Canning

Councillor Bev Clack

Councillor Colin Cook

Councillor Graham Jones

Councillor Bob Price

Councillor John Tanner

Councillor Susanna Pressell, Jericho & Osney Ward, Oxford City Council

Angela Fettiplace, Planning Officer, Oxfordshire County Council

Andrew Cooper, Case Officer , Transport Development Control, Oxfordshire County Council

Nicholas Worlledge, Head of Conservation, Oxford City Council

Professor Victor Flynn, 25 Worcester Place

Chris Johnson, 24 Worcester Place

Mark Johnson-Watts, 2 Walton Lane

Mary Keen, 4 Walton Street

Marya Lewis, 13 Walton Street

Nicky Schlatter, 27 Worcester Place

Sir Stephen Sedley, 15 Walton Street

Executive summary

Our **key points of objection** to the proposed new Exeter College building, on the former Ruskin College site, are:

1) Extra height and impact on light

- The Ruskin building is already extremely high and would not meet modern planning requirements so our homes **are already short of light**, even at maximum elevation of sun, and our houses **should not suffer the further deterioration** that would result from this proposal.
- Our independent daylight/sunlight analysis illustrates the impact (see diagrams enclosed). Even (apparently) marginal deterioration in available light is a serious issue for local residents.
- The buildings in the proposal **should be scaled back** so there is no increase in height; it is simply too overbearing, and overlooking, and is not suitable for a residential street in its current form.
- The auditorium was presented in February 2013 as the same height as existing building. Yet in the submitted plans it is 1.3 metres higher. This will reduce light for the residents of 23-25 Worcester Place.

2) Bicycle Stands

- We are in favour of cycling wherever it is possible. Our objections are:
 1. Students will cycle the wrong way up Worcester Place (a one-way street)
 2. The on-street racks will give rise to disturbance to the residents directly opposite. They are likely to be vandalised and use up highway that would otherwise be available for residents' parking.
- Cycle storage should be provided within site using Walton Street entrance.

3) Inconsistencies in the presentations and the proposal

- The two large high dormer windows are almost completely hidden in the visualisation (see diagram 6 on page 9). Why were they not displayed clearly?
- We were told by Turnberry, Exeter's consultants, that the cycle stands were proposed by the Highways authority. Yet when we spoke to the transport case officer he told us that Exeter had requested the cycle stands because there was no room within the site.
- The Auditorium increased in size after the initial presentations.

We are very concerned about these inconsistencies and feel we must be allowed the opportunity to check the accuracy of the diagrams in order to understand precisely what is being proposed. We have requested the 3d CAD data three times without success and with no satisfactory justification.

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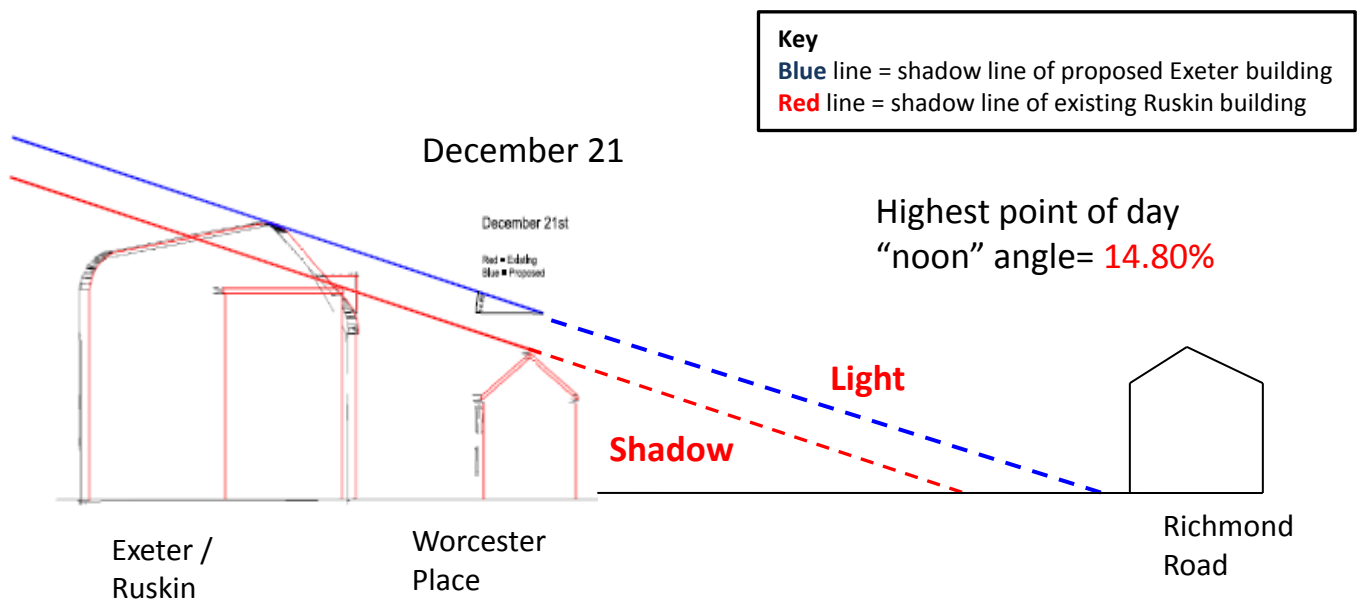
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Diagram 1: Deterioration of direct light at highest point of day (Dec 21st)

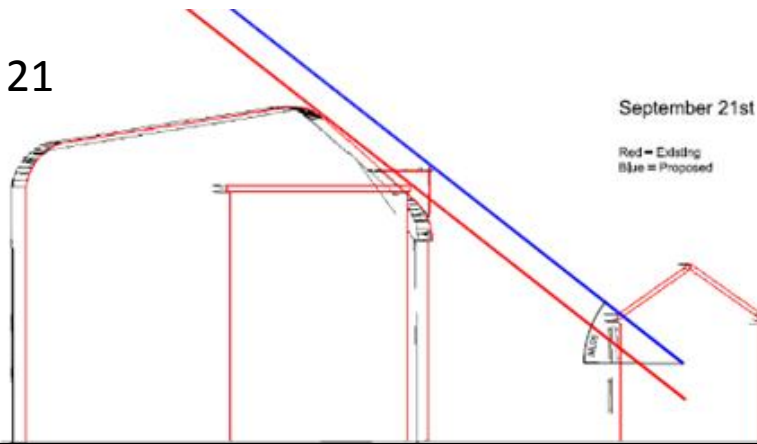


- This diagram represents the reduction in direct sunlight, during winter months, if the new building proposed by Exeter College (on the former Ruskin College site in Worcester Place and Walton Street) is approved.
- The angles have been drawn at the section directly opposite 28 Worcester Place (referred to as "Section D" in Exeter's plans).
- The SJRA commissioned this analysis from a sun and shadow specialist consultancy and it is based on the Solar Noon Elevation angles.
- **We consider that the additional height should be scaled back.**

Diagram 2: Deterioration of direct light at highest point of day Sep - Dec

Source: Twenty16 Design Ltd

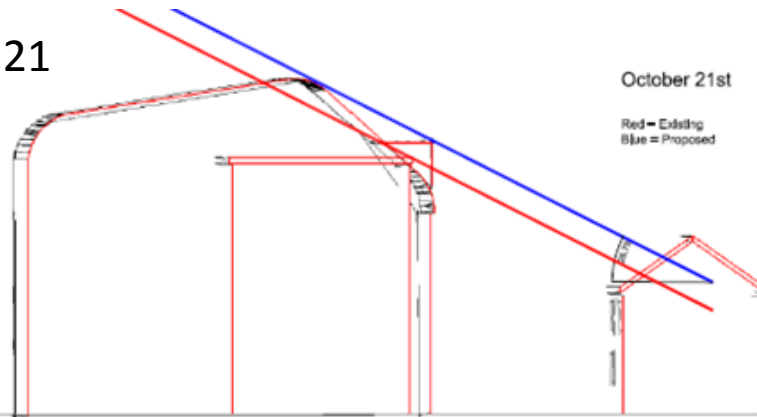
Sep 21



Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 38.05%

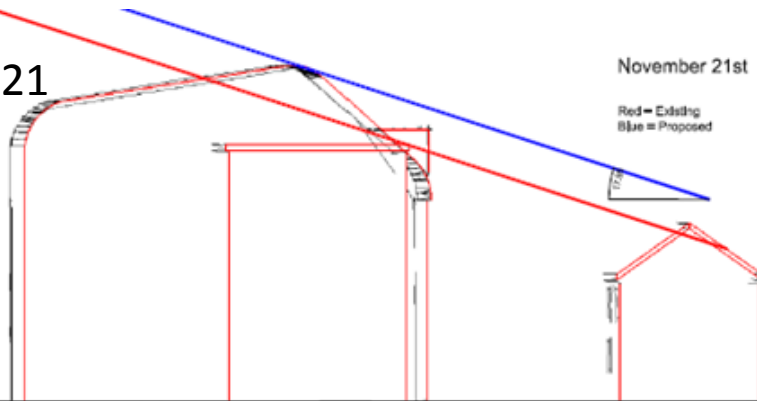
Note: differential now
reduced by smaller dormers
(Section D)

Oct 21



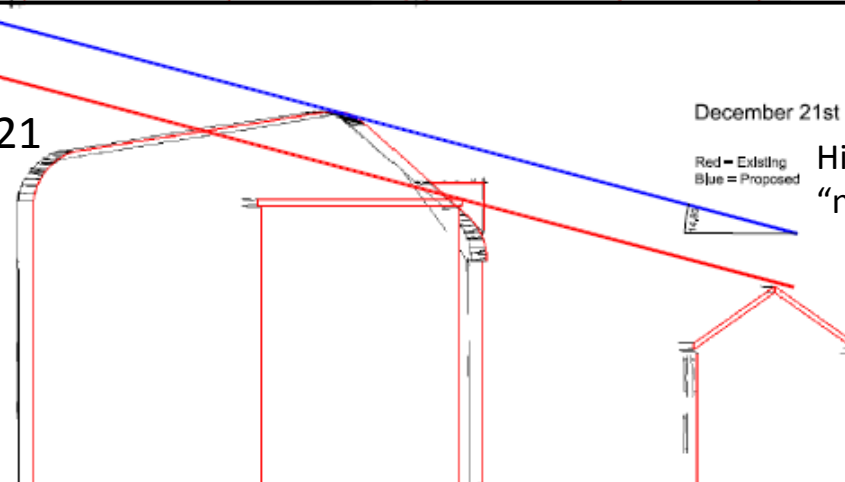
Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 26.75%

Nov 21



Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 17.95%

Dec 21



Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 14.80%

Key
Blue line = shadow line of
proposed Exeter building
Red line = shadow line of
existing Ruskin building

Diagram 3: Deterioration of direct light at highest point of day Jan - Apr

Source: Twenty16 Design Ltd

Jan 21

January 21st

Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 18.25%

Red = Existing
Blue = Proposed

Key

Blue line = shadow line of
proposed Exeter building
Red line = shadow line of
existing Ruskin building

Feb 21

February 21st

Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 27.76%

Red = Existing
Blue = Proposed

Mar 21

March 21st

Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 37.86%

Red = Existing
Blue = Proposed

Note: differential now
reduced by smaller dormers
(Section D)

Apr 21

April 21st

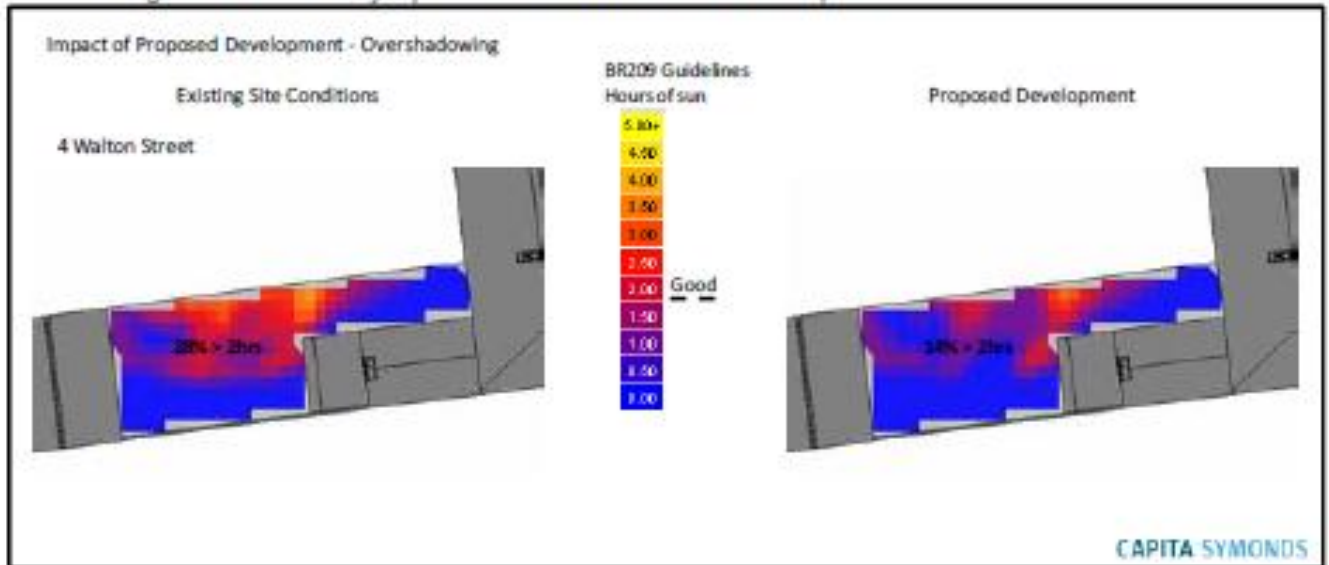
Highest point of day
"noon" angle= 49.59%

Red = Existing
Blue = Proposed

Note: differential now
reduced by smaller dormers
(Section D)

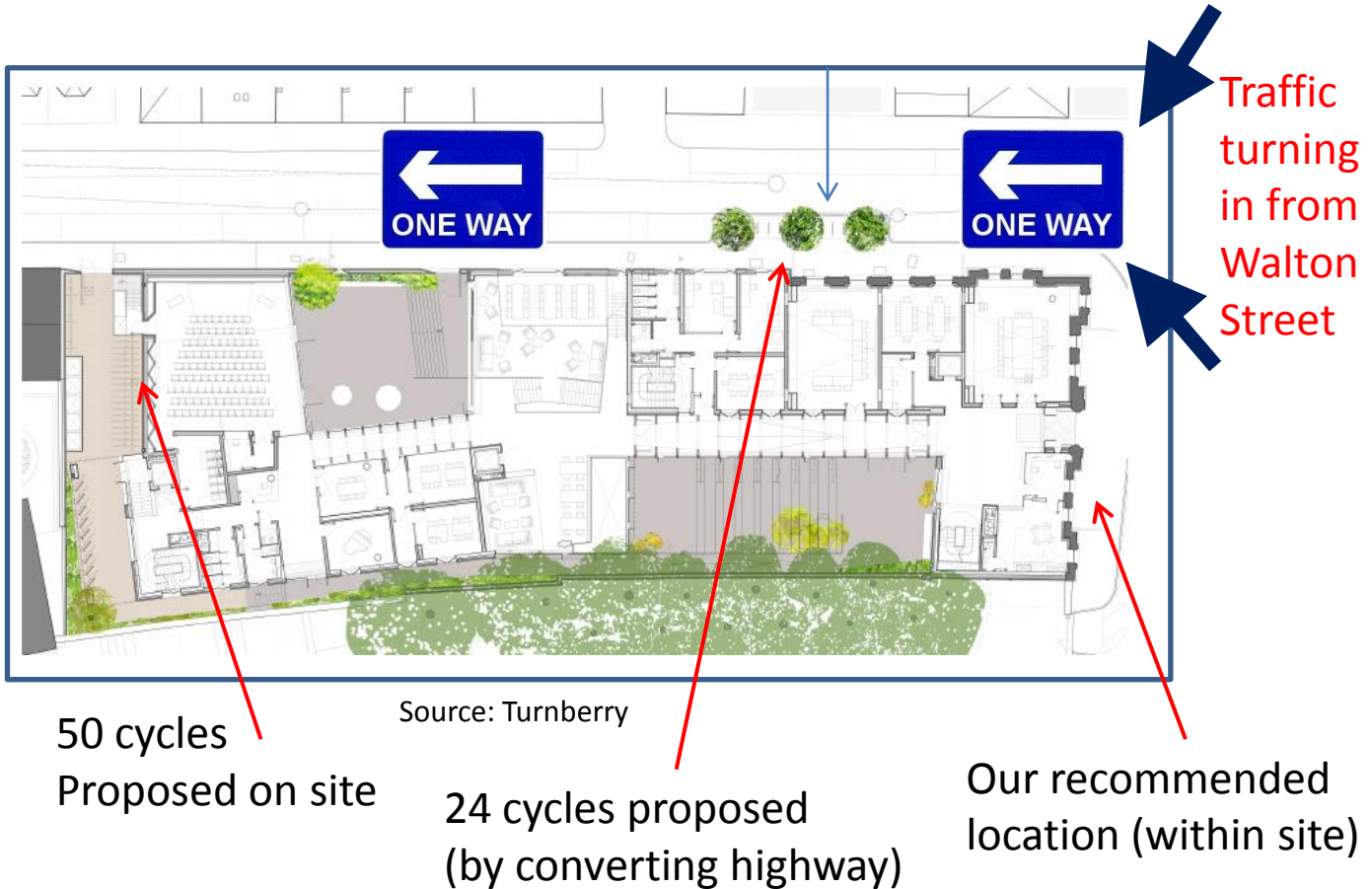
Diagram 4: Deterioration of light for 4 Walton Street

Figure A.4b: Amenity Spaces - Hours of Sunshine on Equinox



- The light deterioration for 4 Walton Street was presented to us using the diagrams above
- The analysis is based on sunshine at Equinox when the impact on light is minimal yet the reduced hours of sun are very pronounced
- This analysis should have been based on the winter months when light is most scarce
- This serves to demonstrate the impact of much increased height of the proposed building

Diagram 5: Cyclists are likely to head towards one-way traffic



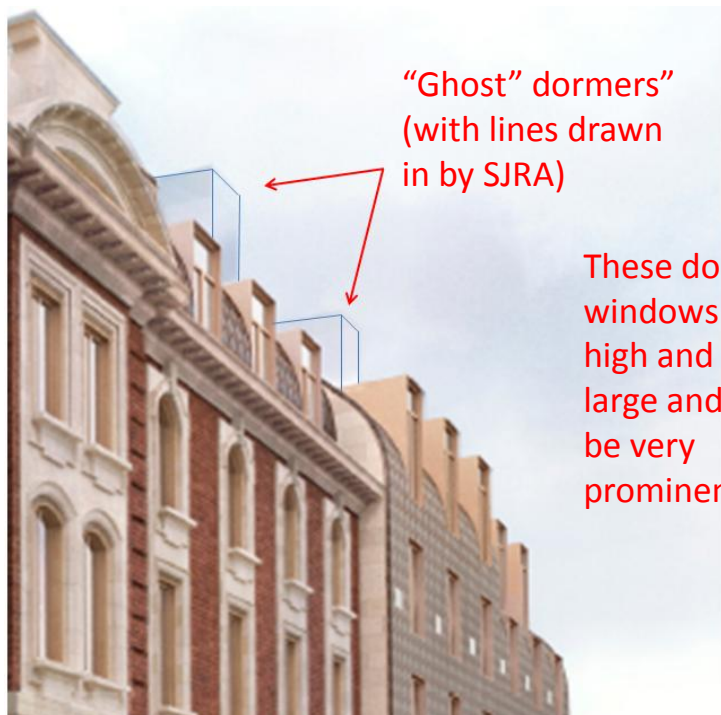
We are in favour of cycling wherever it is possible. Our objections are:

1. Students will cycle the wrong way up Worcester Place (a one-way street)
2. The on-street racks will give rise to disturbance to the residents directly opposite, they are likely to be vandalised, and use up highway that would otherwise be available for residents' parking.

Cycle storage should be provided within site using Walton Street entrance. We think the only safe solution is for Exeter to revise their proposal to create access for cycles via the front of the building, facing Walton street, where there is an entrance and the building could be redesigned to accommodate all 74 cycles.

- Worcester Place is a one-way street with frequent traffic turning in from Walton Street “the entrance to Jericho from city centre”.
- There is danger for cyclists cycling the wrong way up Worcester Place and emerging into Walton Street.
- The local residents have no recollection of cyclists from Ruskin using Worcester Place.

Diagram 6: “Ghost” dormer windows are very hard to see in the visualisations



These dormer windows are high and large and will be very prominent

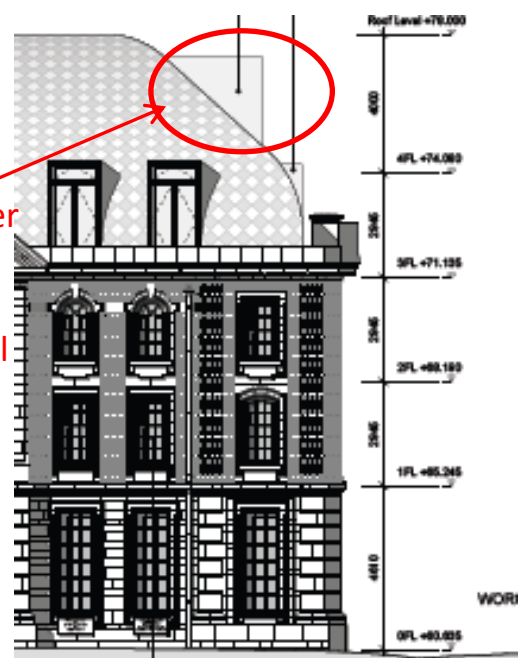
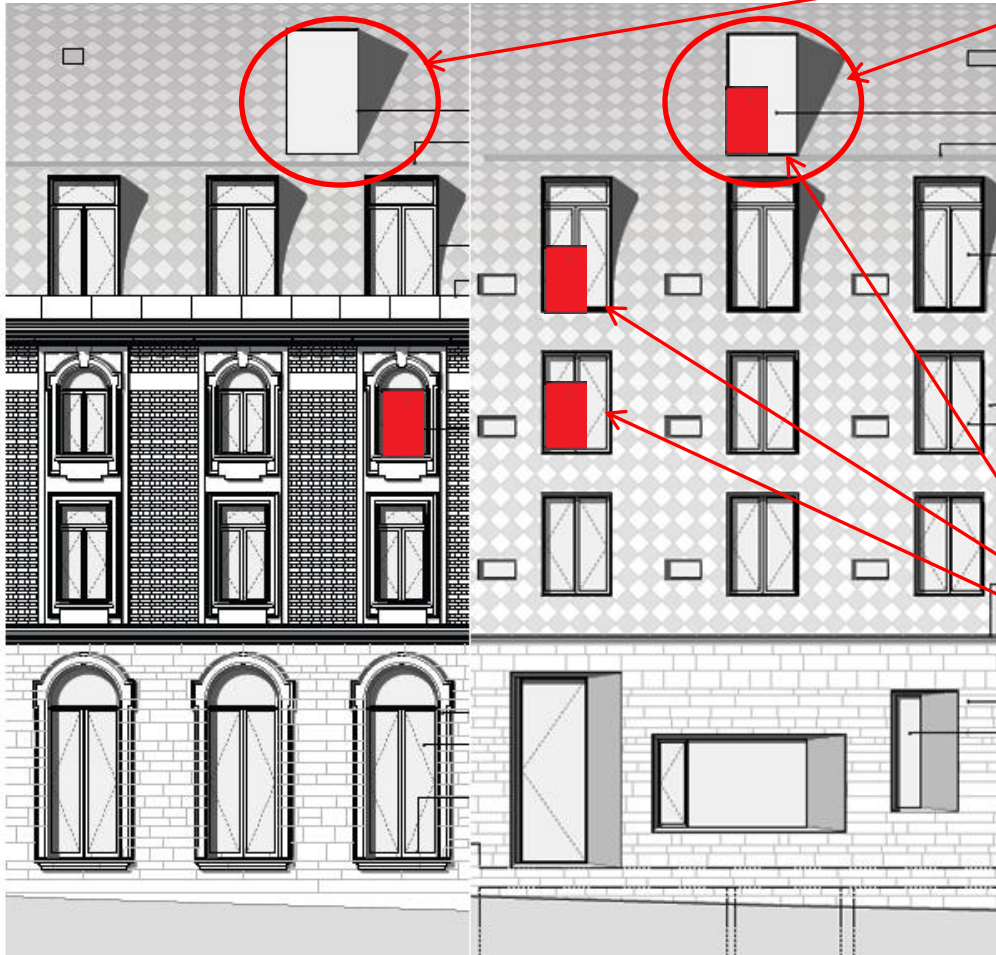


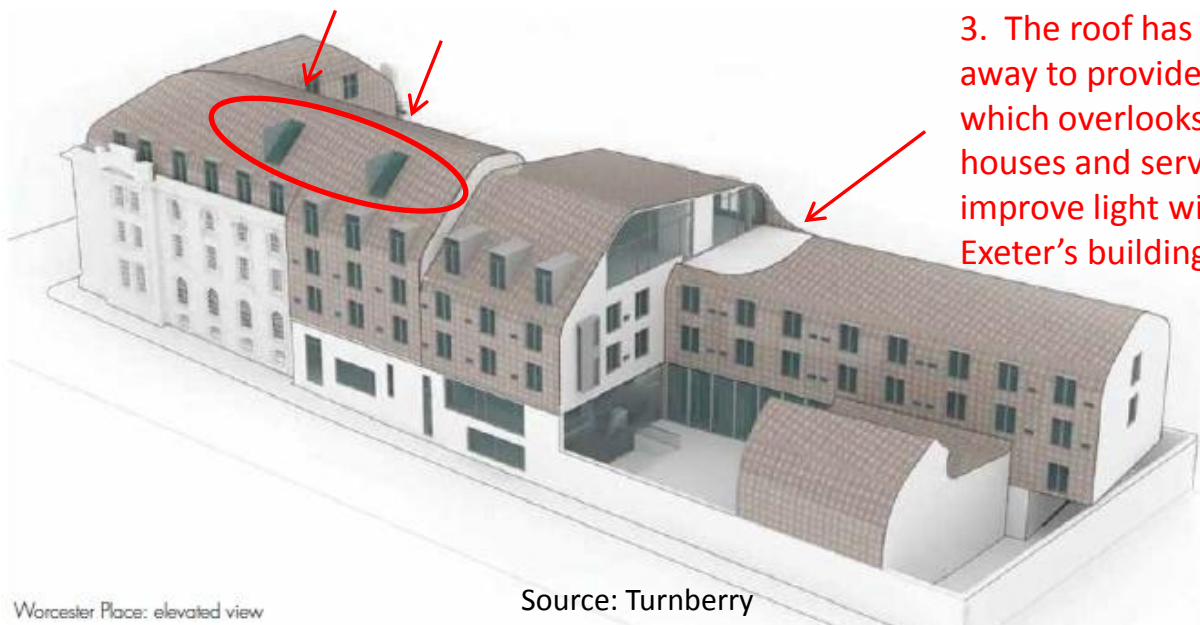
Diagram 7: There is much more glass in windows overlooking our houses



1. These two dormer windows are significant and should have featured clearly on the visualisations

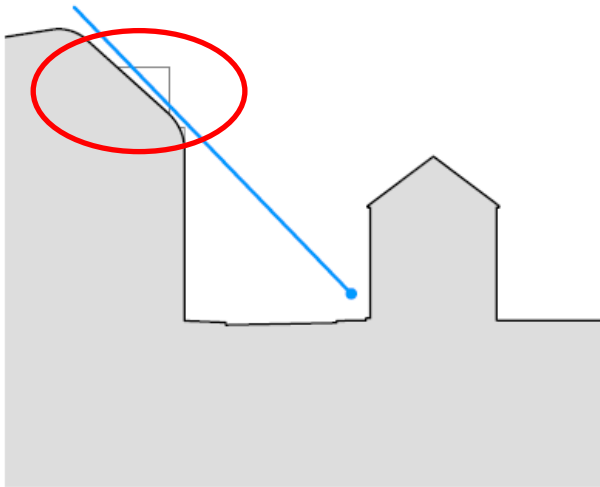
The dormers should be made less prominent with recessing or parapets.

2. The windows in the new sections are much larger than those in the original building.

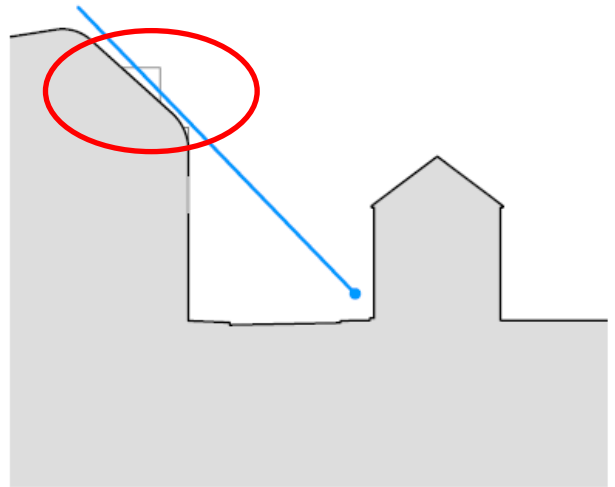


3. The roof has been cut away to provide a balcony which overlooks our houses and serves to improve light within Exeter's building


Diagram 8: Three of the eight dormer windows have been reduced



Section D - Planning Proposal



Section D - Proposed Reduced Dormer Windows

<p>Key Plan</p> 	<p>1. Do not scale drawings. All dimensions to be checked on site. Errors to be reported to architect. To be read in conjunction with all relevant architects services and engineers drawings.</p> <p>2. Contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers to verify any critical dimensions on site prior to fabrication of any building element. Any discrepancies to be reported to the architect.</p> <p>3. This drawing to be read in conjunction with all relevant specifications, engineers and specialists consultative information and any discrepancies reported prior to installation.</p>	<p>ABA</p> <p>Alison Brooks Architects Ltd Studio 101, Highgate Works, 101 Highgate Road, London N6 6DT T: 0207 267 8177 F: 0207 267 8177 E: info@alisonbrooksarchitects.com</p>	<p>Project : EXETER COLLEGE WALTON STREET QUAD</p> <p>Title : Section D - Dormers</p> <p>Client : EXETER COLLEGE</p> <p>Scale : 1:200 @ A3</p> <p>Date : 23.07.13</p> <p>Drawing : 2344_SK358</p>
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➤ Turnberry advised on July 23rd that the three dormer windows in the middle section (Section D) will be reduced in size

➤ We acknowledge this small improvement **but the SJRA is not satisfied with the impact of forward placing and with remaining dormers windows that remain unchanged**



Worcester Place: elevated view

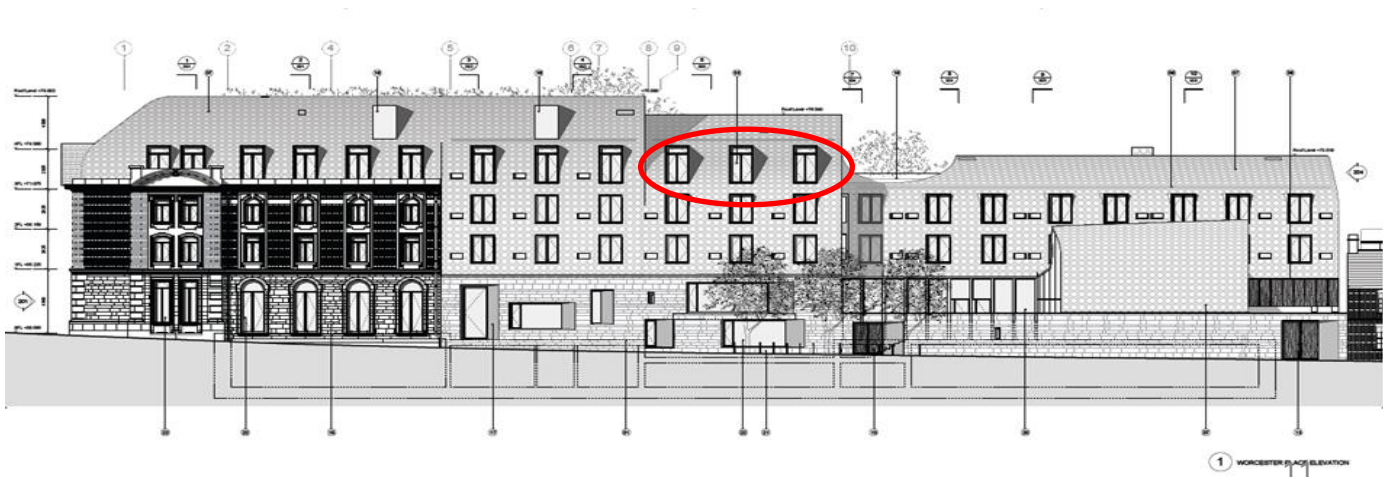
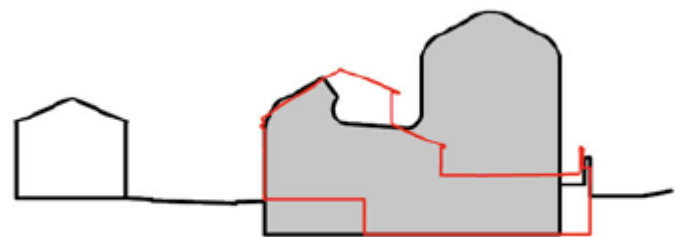


Diagram 9: The auditorium increased in height

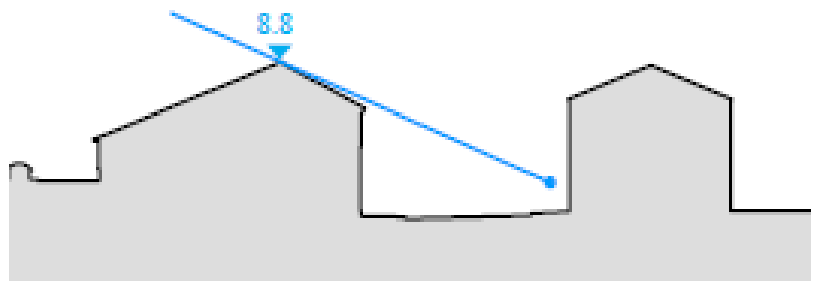
The auditorium was originally presented as the same height as existing buildings .

Yet in the submitted plans it is 1.3 metres higher. This would reduce light for the residents of 23, 24 and 25 Worcester Place

This diagram was presented by Turnberry in February 2013 clearly indicating no increase in height

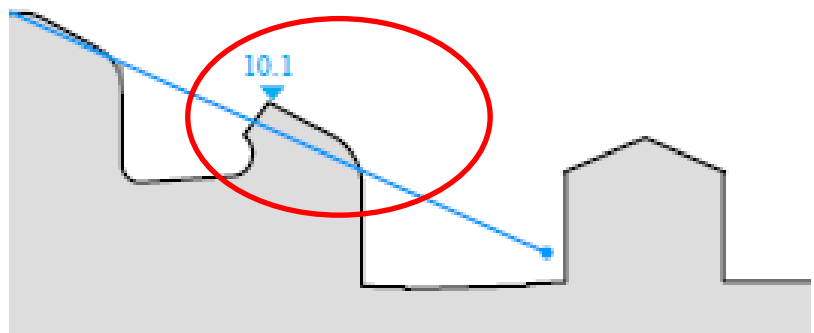


Section through Worcester Place



Section F - Existing

The planning application, as presented to residents on June 10th 2013, includes an extra 1.3 metres of height.



Proposed

Diagram 10: Visualisation vs Comparison , Worcester Place eastwards



Visualisation

http://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/C7712F75AFC3F916244D7D179FB393B4/pdf/13_00832_FUL-VISUALISATION_BOOKLET-1358099.pdf



Comparison

The view facing east along Worcester Place

Note: We have asked Turnberry whether the visualisations represent verified views or artists impressions

Diagram 11: Visualisation vs Comparison , Worcester Place from Walton Street



Visualisation

http://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/C7712F75AFC3F916244D7D179FB393B4/pdf/13_00832_FUL-VISUALISATION_BOOKLET-1358099.pdf



Comparison

The view facing west from the junction of Worcester Place and Walton Street

Note: We have asked Turnberry whether the visualisations represent verified views or artists impressions

Diagram 12: Visualisation vs Comparison , from Walton Street and Richmond Road junction



A New Quad at Walton Street
Visualisation Book

March 2013

ABA

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Visualisation

http://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/C7712F75AFC3F916244D7D179FB393B4/pdf/13_00832_FUL-VISUALISATION_BOOKLET-1358099.pdf

Picture taken
May 26th 2013
C Johnson



Comparison

The view facing south from the junction of Richmond Road and Walton Street

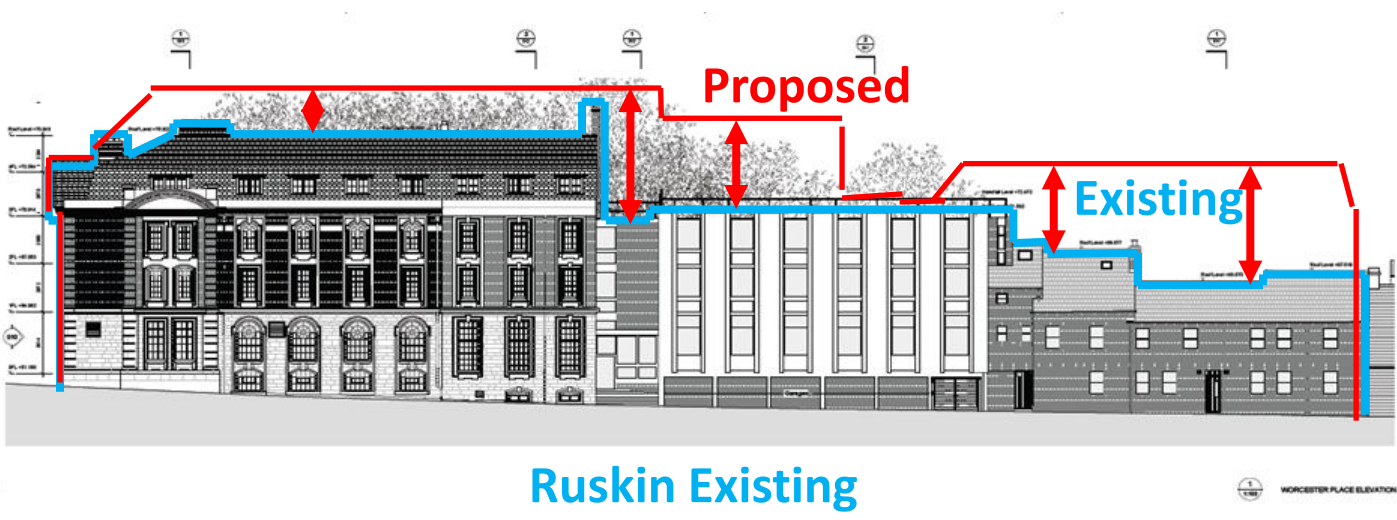
Note: We have asked Turnberry whether the visualisations represent verified views or artists impressions

Diagram 13: Elevation comparison shows much increased height

Key

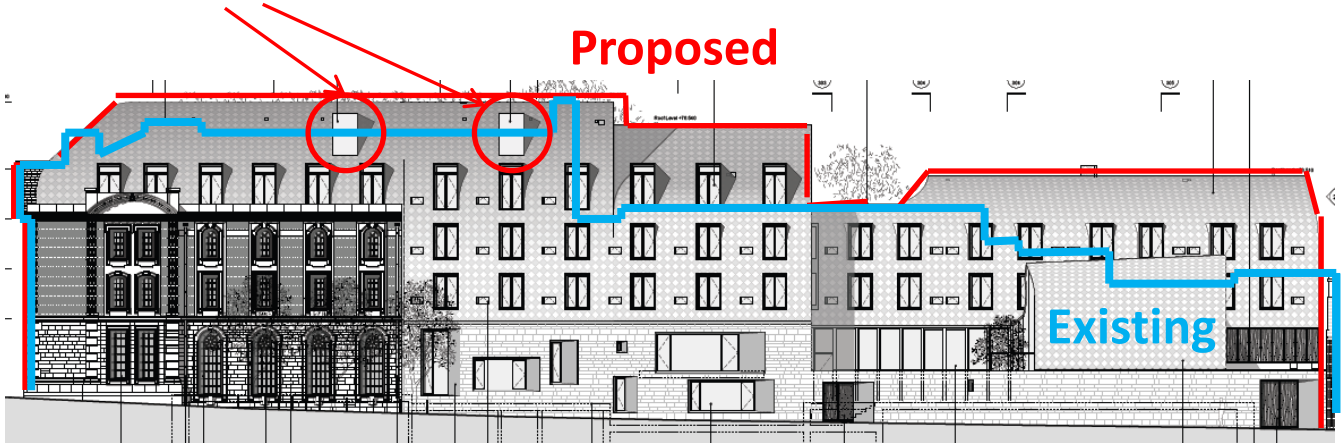
Red line = height of proposed Exeter building

Blue line = height of existing Ruskin building



Ruskin Existing

These dormer windows appear to be higher than the existing building



Exeter Proposal

The elevation height opposite Worcester Place would be increased significantly

Diagram 14: Letter published in The Oxford Times

The announcement that the celebrated architects Glenn Howells have been appointed to design the John Lewis store will advance the growing conviction, "a new Westgate, it really is going to happen".

And it now looks equally certain that the redevelopment will realise another long hoped for ambition for the city centre, the pedestrianisation of Queen Street.

Many still wonder how shoppers in Oxford's busiest shopping street tolerated for so long the shopping nightmare that was Queen Street — being crammed on narrow edges of pavement to make way for the endless stream of buses and passenger queues.

There can be no doubting the removal of bus stops from Queen Street in 2009 significantly eased the disquiet — but as the county council's grand Transform Oxford project fell victim to spending cuts, there remains a feeling of unfinished business.

Westgate clearly provides the opportunity to pedestrianise the street, creating the marvellous prospect of a fully pedestrianised shopping area stretching right from Thames Street to Beaumont Street (well, apart from George Street, which should surely follow).

County council leader Ian Hudspeth is right to insist the bus firms must be involved, while the companies remind us the devil will be in the detail. It certainly is, with St Aldates already jam packed with bus stops and the quest for a bus turning point still to be resolved.

Major projects at Frideswide Square, with new roundabouts, and at Oxford Railway Station offer the opportunity to improve bus routes through the city centre. But they present danger too of further delay, if Queen Street's pedestrianisation becomes dependent on even more costly and complex schemes to the west.

Peace together

News that the number of complaints about the behaviour of Oxford Brookes University students has fallen is welcome.

The introduction of student community wardens to act as intermediaries between residents and students has clearly made a difference.

Some young people, often away from home for the first time, will, unfortunately, be less aware than they ought to be of the annoyance they can cause to others with noise, litter and antisocial behaviour.

But it seems that a simple, stern reminder that their high spirits are not always appreciated by professionals and families living nearby is often all that is needed to calm potentially poisonous neighbourhood divisions.

It would, perhaps, be cynical to suggest that a fall in the number of students has had anything to do with the reduction in complaints.

Oxford Brookes has invested thousands of pounds in its community warden scheme and must be congratulated for that.

Figures show that complaints fell from 205 last year to 145 this year, which, while demonstrating a clear improvement, show there is still plenty of work to be done.

Council careless over protecting city views

Sir — You have published letters suggesting that it is no great loss if Oxford University's oversized blocks of graduate flats obscure the view from Port Meadow of the tower of St Barnabas Church in Jericho.

But its tower, Italianate in contrast to Gothic, makes a distinctive and historically important contribution to the Oxford skyline.

St Barnabas was designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield and built in 1869-72 at the expense of Thomas Combe, Printer to the University. Sir John Betjeman, in his 1938 book on the city, says that it "stands out as by far the best Victorian church in Oxford".

When I came back to live in Oxford in 1961, there was still criticism of the impact on the view north from Port Meadow of the huge post-war extension to the Wolvercote paper mill which had been reluctantly permitted because it was said to be essential to keep the mill in business. It is ironical, now that the paper mill has ceased to exist, that the university should do similar violence to the view south from Port Meadow with far less excuse.

The city council has become culpably careless about the protection of such views. The university, like any developer, wants to get as much as it can on a site. The high buildings policy was deliberately framed to allow filigree additions to the skyline like the zigurat on the Said Business School, but not long unbroken runs of roof.

Mark Barrington-Ward
Oxford

Case for a tunnel

Sir — A forgotten aspect of the Roger Dudman development is that it has closed the very useful cycle path that led from west of the railway station to Port Meadow, Walton Well Road and North Oxford.

Cyclists who used to use this route are now forced to brave the dangerous roads under the railway bridge, across Frideswide Square and beyond. Hundreds of inhabitants of the new flats will be added to their number.

There is a case for demolishing the northern-most block of flats or making a tunnel through it.

P. Stewart
Oxford

Scale back proposal

Sir — The article (May 23), about Exeter's proposed development plans for the former Ruskin site in Walton Street states "...the plans have been broadly welcomed by the Jericho community" and an earlier article on April 25 about the same proposal included a quote attributed to Paul Hornby of the Jericho Community Association "...we have no objections to the size and context..."

As residents of Worcester Place, Walton Street and Walton Lane, our houses fall directly under the extra shadow that would be imposed by the much greater height and extended roofline of the proposed building.

We would spend half of the year in the shadows and the other dazzled by the enormous shiny new roof and large glazed areas.

We know that Exeter will want good relations with their new neighbours but to do this they must scale back the height of the proposal.

The positive comments attributed to Mr Hornby were based on a Jericho Community Centre meeting on Monday, February 11, that he did not attend in person.

If he had, he would have heard several of us making clear our significant concerns about height, noise and glare.

The Oxford council website includes 75 public comments of which only two are positive. That feedback reveals the true story.

The council has recently approved, against the strong opinion of local residents, very tall University buildings on Port Meadow and Walton Street; the Exeter plans for the former Ruskin site would similarly create new buildings far higher than those they are replacing, dominating the housing in the surrounding conservation area.

This should be of concern not only to those who will live in the shadow of these buildings but also those who do not wish the character of Jericho to be overwhelmed by oversized University buildings.

Professor Victor Flynn
Chris Johnson
Mark Johnson-Watts
Mary Keen
Nicky Schlatter
Oxford

Lorries pose dangers

Sir — With the rebuilding of the Clarendon Shopping Centre coming on apace, and Hansons being the contractor delivering concrete along New Inn Hall Street on UK National Cycle Route 57, now is a critical reminder to all cyclists, especially women, of the danger.

Stay well back behind the truck and in the vision of the driver's mirrors, so that you can see the driver's eyes. If you take your hands off the handlebars, the driver knows you are stationary and can make a manoeuvre safely and quickly.

Why do I specifically target women cyclists? Unfortunately the authorities are



Warning: Cyclists must be on their guard

unwilling to release the vital statistics, erroneously citing data protection laws, but it appears to me, with more than 30 years of following cycle safety in the UK, that of all the cyclist fatalities, 80 per cent involve heavy goods vehicles, and of all the different types of HGV, 80 per cent are what are regarded as 'tipper-style' trucks of three specific types: skip lorries, concrete mixers and refuse trucks.

About 20 per cent of cyclists are female, but they seem to be involved in 80 per cent of cyclist fatalities, usually with the vehicles described above.

I don't know why this appears as it does — and the authorities don't really seem to be interested.

I urge readers to discuss the contents of this letter with family, friends, neighbours and loved ones. And do please comment on the 80 per cent ratios.

Readers' letters from previous weeks are archived online...

oxfordtimes.co.uk/news

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