

From: bev [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 September 2013 14:40
To: WORLLEDGE Nicholas
Subject: Former Ruskin College Site, Walton Street

Dear Mr Worlledge

I've recently been contacted by OGT with regard to the proposed development of the former Ruskin College Site on Walton Street (**Ref: 13/01075/LBD**). Unfortunately I was unable to respond within the time frame required but in any case find that there are key documents apparently missing from the online submission, thereby compromising any response which might be made.

TREES

My particular concern regards a lack of information regarding to the trees which are immediately adjacent to the proposed development. In particular, I have been unable to locate the following documents/information within the online submission;

- a) Details relating to the age, size & identification of the trees on the immediately adjacent boundary with Worcester College, including **BS5837 Tree Survey**. I would expect to see this in any application of this magnitude.
- b) Details of proposals relating to these trees. The proposal plans imply that these trees will be retained, although it is difficult to envisage that this will be possible given the proximity and extent of the existing root runs and canopies. Indeed should they be retained in their current extent, it is difficult to appreciate that that there will not be a longer term intention to remove overbearing limbs or entire trees for amenity reasons.
- c) Relevant landscape conservation plans or historic maps (Oxford Town Plan c.1878) which might contribute valuable information in respect of the age and significance of these trees.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

I further would like to draw issue with the Statement of Significance p.30 in which it is stated

Firstly that.....

“Most of the south boundary is lined with evergreen holm oak trees, presumably planted by Worcester College with the intention of masking Ruskin’s new buildings.”

From a cursory study of the historic material available, the trees in question appear to be situated outside of the Worcester Garden Boundary wall and within former Ruskin Lane; secondly that there are trees shown in this location on the 1878 Town Plan (which has not been reproduced in the submission documents) thereby calling into question their date, historical ownership and purpose of planting.

And secondly that...

“The trees are now mature and almost completely hide the Ruskin buildings and overshadow most of the site. They are not prominently visible to the public from Walton Street or any other vantage point.”

Noting that the submission photographs clearly indicate that these trees are visible from within the Worcester College Grounds (see photograph p.31) and from Walton Street (see photograph p.29) and therefore provide important public amenity which should be accommodated rather than compromised by future building work.

Please accept my apologies for writing so late to you with regard to this application, however I feel sure you will appreciate that the retention of mature trees within the urban framework is increasingly a matter of public concern and that in this case insufficient information has been made available as to the relevant arboricultural issues; whilst at the same time public attention has been deflected on the basis that these trees will be (and can be) retained within the current building proposals and forward use of the site.

Yours sincerely

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