

EXETER
COLLEGE
OXFORD

A New Quad at Walton Street
Planning Addendum Statement
October 2013

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Summary of Process

1. Summary of Process

1.1 Introduction

The planning and listed building consent applications to which this statement relates were due to be determined by the West Area Planning Committee on the 10th September, with a recommendation for approval from officers. However, at the beginning of the meeting, a number of legal points were raised by Worcester College, with the result that the Committee decided to defer their consideration of the application in order to allow time for these points to be reviewed. Exeter College subsequently obtained legal advice, which concluded that there was no substance to the points raised. That advice is attached at Appendix i.

In the knowledge that there would be a delay to the application's hearing at Committee, the College opted to use this time to clarify aspects of the evidence base.

Section 1.2 of this Statement provides clarification on the extent of community access to the new building and the approach to cycle parking provision. This is followed in Section 1.3 by a consolidated statement of the public benefits arising from the proposals, related to the NPPF tests and the Heritage Assessment and Justification, attached at Appendix ii.

Section 2 begins with a continuation of the approach outlined in the Supplementary Planning Statement July 2013 to the treatment of the Ruskin Building windows. This is followed, at section 3, by a presentation of the new 'verified views' that have been prepared since Committee in order to reassure residents that the original visualisations were a true representation of the proposals. There is also an update on the progress made in respect of selection of the roof material and of the screening to the 3rd floor Fellows terrace, at Sections 4 & 5 respectively. Finally, Section 6 provides a review of the relationship of the meridian line to the site.

1.2 Clarifications

i) Community Access

The seminar rooms and auditorium located on the ground floor of the new building are designed primarily for teaching purposes. From the outset of the project however, the College has intended that these rooms should be designed as flexible spaces and used to support the life of the college through the staging of events such as recitals or readings. Not only would many of these events be open to the public, but when the rooms are not in use, they would be available for use by external parties for appropriate meetings. This arrangement is exactly as is the current arrangement at Turl Street, which works very successfully. The difference of course is that the facilities will be much closer to residents of Jericho and we would expect greater participation and interaction as a result.

ii) Cycle Parking

A concern raised by residents during the consultation process has been the provision of cycle parking spaces on Worcester Place. The reason for the concern is the potential for noise to be created by bikes being parked, which may cause a nuisance to the occupants of the dwellings directly opposite. In response, as part of the July Supplementary document, the Project Team moved the position of the Worcester Place cycle spaces closer to Walton Street, further away from the majority of residential properties.

The residents have asked for all cycle spaces to be provided within the site, but the Highway Authority is of the view that all visitor parking should be located on street to prevent visiting students from attaching bikes to railings. The on-street stands also allow residents and others attending public events at the College to use this facility.

It is considered that the prospect of nuisance arising from the cycle spaces on Worcester Place is very low and outweighed by the benefit of providing additional cycle provision in this location and the removal of the existing undercroft parking which has been a focus for anti-social behaviour in the past.

1.3 Public Benefit case

Introduction

In light of the publication of new draft National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), we have opted to re-present the public benefits of the proposals in response to the tests set out in the draft guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The assessment of the level of harm caused to a heritage asset as a result of development and the factors which may constitute a material consideration weighing against that harm are set out in Paragraph 132 of the NPPF. As confirmed in the Heritage Statement and Justification (October 2013), the Officer's Report to Committee (September 2013) and English Heritage's consultation response (16th May 2013) the application proposals would amount to "*less than substantial harm*" to the significance of the building and therefore that harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal in the determination of the applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

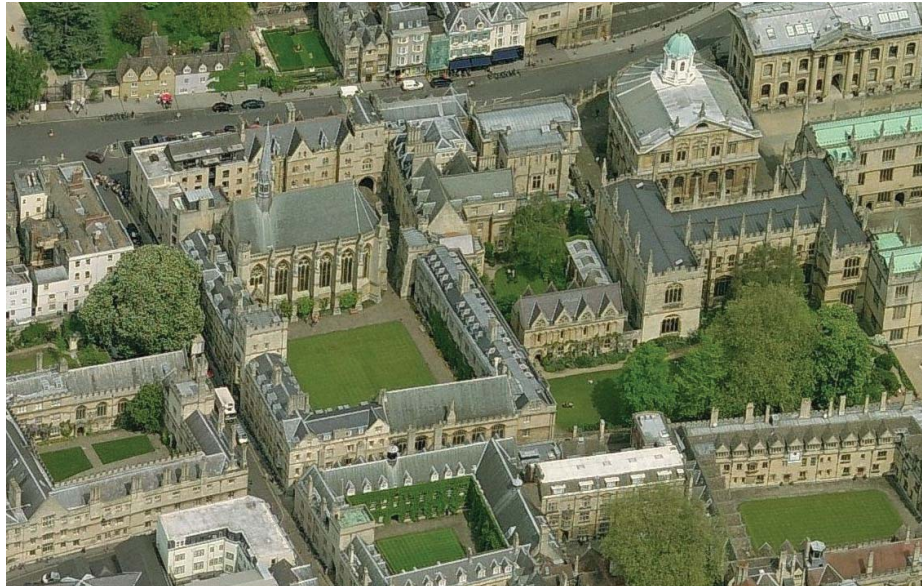
The draft NPPG defines 'public benefits' in the widest sense. They include any aspect of a development scheme that delivers economic, social or environmental progress, as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 7), and is of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large.

Exeter College's vision for the new Walton Street Quad is to combine the best of Exeter, Oxford and Ruskin's collegiate tradition with a modern architectural solution to form a distinctive new site. From the outset of the project, the guiding principles set by the College have sought to deliver public benefits as defined above. Those principles seek to:

- consolidate the College's facilities within the City Centre;
- meet the College's scholastic, residential and social needs in modern facilities;
- improve accessibility across the College Estate;
- deliver a rare book archive to house the College's important special collections;
- maintain the presence of Ruskin College at Walton Street through the provision of a dedicated Ruskin room for use by Ruskin College for teaching and learning purposes;
- deliver a low carbon, sustainable and adaptable building; and
- ensure other supporting facilities, such as the lecture hall, can be accessed by the community, Ruskin College, researchers and other visitors.

1.0 Summary of Process

As such, from its inception, the proposals for the site have had at their heart the desire to deliver benefits to the City at large, as well as to the members of the College. These benefits are considered in greater detail below, organised into the themes identified in the NPPF of economic, social and environmental.



The Turl St Campus

i) Meeting Student Housing Need

Exeter College consists of nine sites, the majority of which sit outside the City Centre. The Turl Street campus, which consists of two quadrangles and a beautiful and famous garden, has become a hub of bustling student activity; yet it now offers few opportunities for evolution to meet the modern needs of a world-class College and only offers one accessible residential room.

Exeter is by no means alone among Oxford Colleges in seeking to both extend and centralise its residential offer to students. A review of recent planning applications by the colleges indicates great activity in this area and a number of recurrent themes in terms of their objectives in progressing development schemes:

- facilitating the release of off-site properties, thus reducing pressure on the private rental sector in Oxford;
- provision of new or upgrading of existing accommodation to provide en-suite study bedrooms. Room sizes of 17-18sqm is the norm;
- provision of accessible rooms;
- additional social and teaching space; and
- the desire to make the most efficient use of existing sites.

Were Exeter not to have purchased the Ruskin site, the most likely end user would have been another Oxford college. At the time of the sale, the site was allocated in the Local Plan for University uses, including teaching, administration and student accommodation, with no other use deemed acceptable. Although this policy has since been superseded by the Sites and Housing Plan, it is clear that a student residential-led scheme is still supported in local planning policy.

The Sites and Housing Plan background paper on sites for student accommodation identifies that, as a site which is owned by a college, the Ruskin site is *“particularly appropriate to provide student accommodation because the student accommodation is much more likely to be delivered”*. The relating policy, HP5 of the Sites and Housing Plan, encourages new student accommodation to be located on an existing university campus, higher or further education college or other hospital or research campus or in the City Centre. On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that the most viable use for the building is student accommodation and other education uses. Moreover, given the themes identified above, it can also be concluded that any other College would have formed a similar brief for development of the site to that of Exeter.

The proposals which comprise the Listed Building Consent and Planning Applications will deliver modern, accessible student accommodation in close proximity to the College, thereby helping to address the existing shortage in the City and releasing other sites for private residential use, thereby helping to relieve pressure on the already limited housing stock in the City.

Far from generating a revenue for the College, each student room is funded largely from philanthropy, representing a ‘mini-bursary’ to students and helping to ensure that no student is deterred from applying to or taking a place at the University on financial grounds.

Moreover, the new quad at Walton Street is intended to function in a collegiate way, not just as an undergraduate hall of residence. The College wishes to achieve a high level of interaction between Fellows, graduates and undergraduates in shared social spaces, which should be a natural interaction and should be an attractive feature of Walton Street, encouraged by the new spaces of its built environment. Through its plans for Walton Street, the College is seeking to ensure that as many of its students as possible will enjoy the experience of living within an academic community of multi-disciplinary scholars, helping to ensure their successful integration into college life.

As such, the proposals will meet a defined need, a planning policy objective and contribute towards making the University more accessible to those with less means.

ii) Continuing the Tradition of Education Use

The development of the Ruskin building is an opportunity for Exeter College to redefine the core qualities of Oxford college life and consolidate its activities within a central location, just a short distance from its Turl Street campus.

Before acquiring the Ruskin site, the College investigated other potential sites that could accommodate its needs. However, none offered the opportunity that the Walton Street site does to develop integrated student accommodation, teaching and social spaces on the collegiate model in the centre of Oxford.

As well as 90 student rooms, the proposals will provide seminar and teaching rooms, Fellows' accommodation, a rare book archive, lecture hall, Porter's Lodge, a retained 'Ruskin' room, a café and communal social spaces including a common room and music practise room, north and south quadrangles and a learning commons. The mix of teaching, social and residential uses proposed are very similar to that provided by Ruskin College until recently on the site.

The spatial organisation of the new interior respects the existing plan form in terms of the split between administration and lecture spaces and the location of staircases and circulation spaces. Positions of floor levels also ensure that the internal layout has an appropriate relationship to the architecture of the retained facades. These aspects of the proposals contribute to preserving the significance of the listed building over the longterm.

For Exeter, making efficient use of the site and delivering a scheme that is sustainable is vital. It is intended as a fully functioning 3rd Quadrangle, not simply a satellite site providing only student accommodation. By sustainable, the College seeks to deliver a building that is not just energy efficient, but one that can meet the demands of modern teaching, access and student experience over the longterm. Indeed, the College's brief required a building that was designed for a very long service life as well as being of the highest design quality.

As such, Exeter's custodianship of the building will secure its long-term viability and conservation, thereby avoiding the potential for successive harmful changes resulting from repeated failed uses.

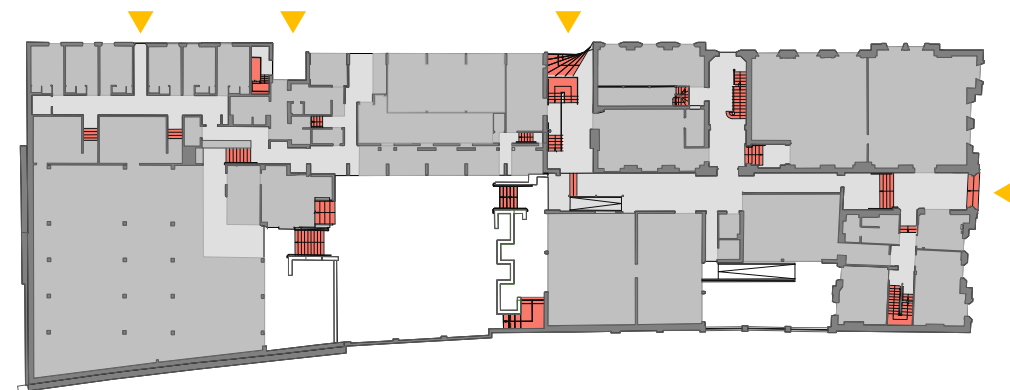
iii) Accessibility

A major component of the design brief is for the new Walton Street quadrangle to be fully accessible and barrier-free, to all segments of the student body, teaching and administrative staff, visitors and the general public.

One of the key challenges of the Ruskin Building is its inaccessibility from the street, with steps, wheelchair lift and temporary entrance hall raised flooring. There are currently 20 separate staircases connecting the various levels that make up the ground floor of the existing building). The stepped and irregular levels across the existing site reflect the accretion of uncoordinated site development over time.

The proposals will deliver modern and fully accessible student accommodation and teaching facilities. Whereas most such projects seek to deliver a proportion of accessible accommodation, the entire Ruskin site will be completely accessible, thereby exceeding the typical standard in this regard. In order to facilitate a fully accessible design the scheme proposes level access to the entire building, following the principles of the 1907 Joseph and Smithem competition design.

The result will be a fully accessible, barrier-free Oxford College.



1.0 Summary of Process

iv) Community Access

We have already discussed how the College makes certain events at the Turl Street campus open to the public and also makes seminar rooms available to the public to hire. The intention is that this offer would be extended to the Walton Street Quadrangle, thereby meeting a well-established local need.

v) Rare book archive

A key requirement for the new Exeter Campus at Walton Street is to provide much needed facilities for the College's Rare Book Collection. The Library at Turl Street was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in the neo Gothic style. Described as one of the College's most creative spaces, this 'crumbly' building that inspired Tolkien can continue to function as the main library for students and academics. However beautiful, this building lacks the necessary facilities to store the College's extremely important Rare Book Collection for future generations.

The Exeter College Special Collections include 189 medieval manuscripts some of which are unique historic documents. The early printed book collections, in particular the 77 incunabula, form an important focus for research scholars. The Collection is currently stored in unventilated basement rooms within the library, which makes it difficult to access, and puts it at risk from fire and periodic flash flooding.

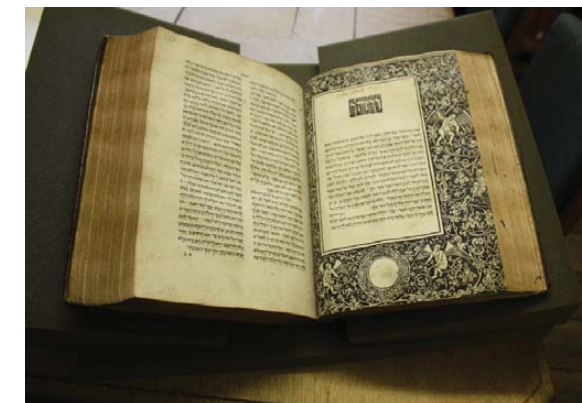
A new library archive at Walton Street will house the collection in a waterproof storage facility that will meet the highest standards of archival storage, and protect it from fire with a gas suppression system. An adjacent secure reading room will allow improved access to the collection for visiting academics, and will also contain working space for two part time librarians to professionally manage the collection.



Proposed Archive system



Soncino Bible



Book of Hours, Circa 15th Century

vi) Public realm & streetscape

The proposals will bring direct improvements to the quality of the streetscape and setting of the building:

- the sense of permeability of the site will be increased by opening up a new courtyard on Worcester Place, allowing more sunlight to enter the street;
- lowering the sills of the ground floor windows in the 1913 façade, will improve the relationship of the building to the public realm and represent the building's new accessibility.
- the fabric of the retained facades will be cleaned and restored with a timber gate reinstated beneath the entrance arch.
- the public pavement in front of the main entrance on Walton Street will be widened and the short stay parking bays directly in front of the building entrance relocated.
- on Worcester Place, new trees will be planted and a more active frontage will be achieved, displacing the existing undercroft parking; and
- the modern extension will be of the highest quality design and finishes, including ashlar stone to high level, complementing the retained facades.

The culmination of these elements of the scheme is to provide a real and longterm improvement to both the setting of the listed building and the streetscape, which is of benefit to all.

**Summary and conclusion**

In summary, the proposals will deliver the following public benefits:

- contribute to providing modern, accessible student accommodation in proximity to teaching locations;
- relieve the pressure on the Turl Street Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings to provide additional teaching and social accommodation;
- deliver modern and fully accessible student accommodation and teaching facilities
- maintain the presence of Ruskin College at Walton Street;
- retain the sense of the existing plan in terms of the uses, spatial organisation of the building and relationship to the architecture of the retained facades;
- secure a longterm, viable use for the listed building;
- improve the setting of the building and streetscape through public realm improvements;
- deliver a space which will be available for use by the public; and
- protect and preserve the College's rare books and special collections, ensuring their longterm availability to visiting scholars

In conclusion therefore, it is considered that the alterations to the Ruskin Building will amount to 'less than substantial' harm and are outweighed by the public benefits accruing from the proposals.

2.0

Ruskin Building Windows

2.0 Ruskin Building Windows

2.1 Original Ruskin Windows

The current windows of the Ruskin building were most likely installed during construction, some 100 years ago. The sash box is untypically exposed within the opening of the window giving the frames a substantial presence in the elevation. The original drawing of 1913 shows similar thick timber glazing bars to all floors, but as executed the ground floor windows are of metal rather than timber,

with a different pane size from those above. It is unclear if the internal timber casement windows behind the fixed metal pivot window of the ground floor were added at a later date, for acoustic and thermal reasons, or during construction.

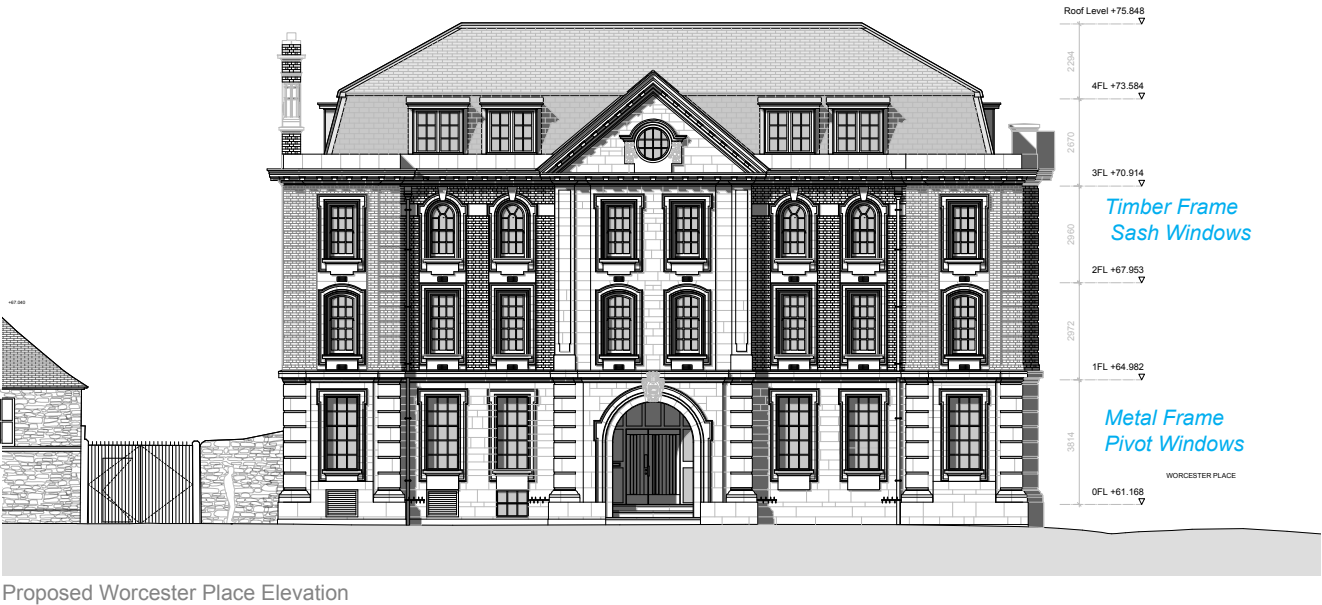
- The cill level of the ground floor windows reflects the elevated internal floor level (approx. 1.7m above street level)



Upper floor windows to be restored/replicated



Ruskin Building view from Walton Street



2.2 Design Progression

Proposal at Planning Submission. March 2013

The Project Team originally proposed to replace the existing deteriorating sash windows with new casement windows to provide greater thermal and acoustic performance. The more open frame of casement windows with opening fanlight would provide better lighting and natural ventilation to the public spaces on the ground floor as well as the student rooms. Along with the new roof, the intention for the replacement was to add a new layer of meaning representing both Ruskin's heritage and Exeter College at the Walton Street site. However during the consultation process the significance of preserving the window detail of the Ruskin elevation was highlighted.



Changes to the Ruskin Building proposed at Planning submission. March 2013

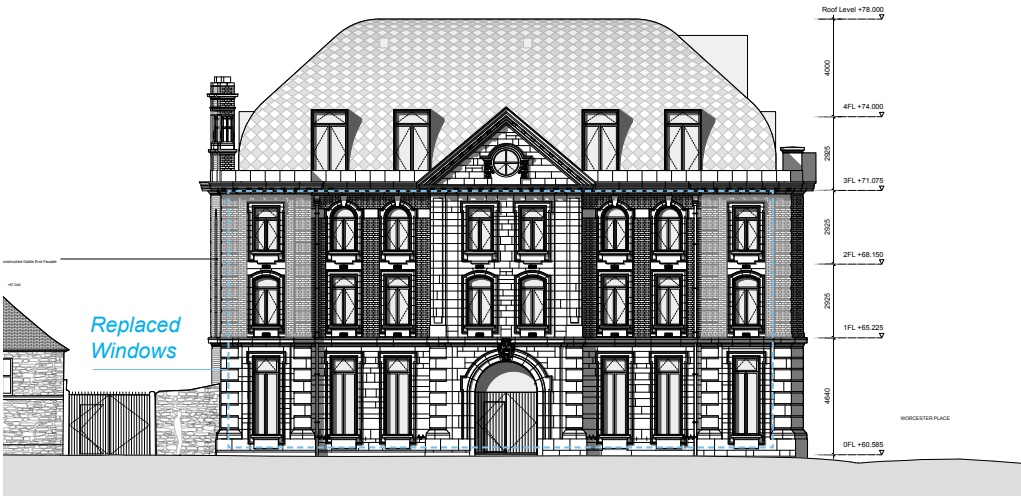
Amended Proposal, July 2013

During the application process the team changed its approach of using casement windows as a universal replacement for all the Ruskin building windows. A like-for-like restoration and replacement approach has been adopted instead.

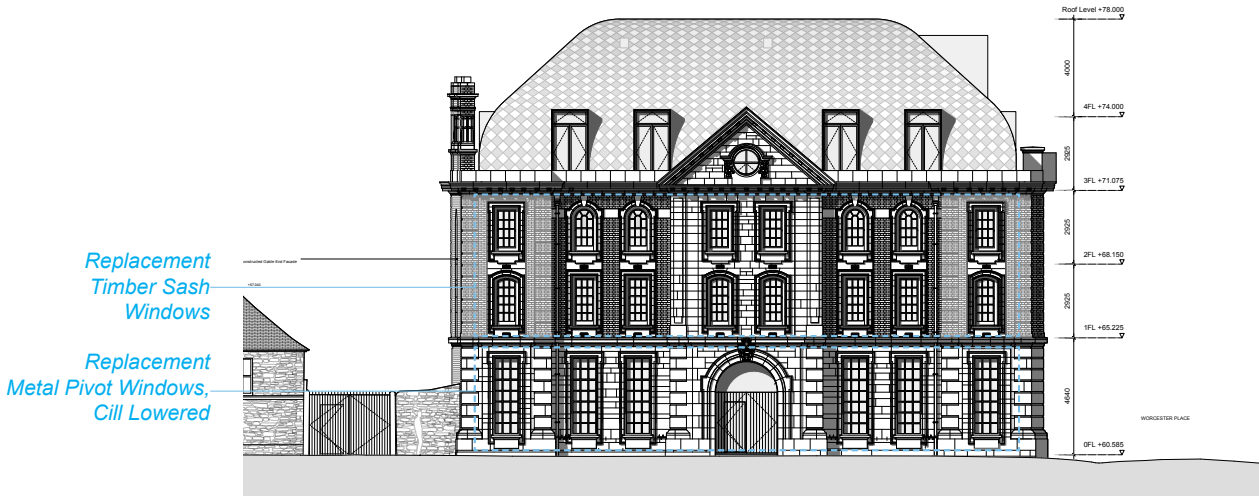
The ground floor windows will be replaced with new double-glazed thermally broken steel-framed windows with glazing bars to match the existing. The upper floor windows will be replaced with an exact double glazed timber sash replica or restored, subject to further investigation of the window frame conditions.



Ruskin Building retained facade and retained windows visualization



Walton Street Elevation Proposed at Planning Submission Stage



Walton Street Elevation Proposed at Supplementary Planning Submission Stage. July 2013



Worcester Place Elevation Proposed at Planning Submission Stage



Worcester Place Elevation Proposed at Supplementary Planning Submission Stage. July 2013

2.0 Ruskin Building Windows

2.3 Current Proposals

Design Approach

The revised proposals for the Ruskin Building's retained, Listed facades include replacement of the timber sash upper storey windows and replacement of the metal framed windows to replicate or reflect as closely as possible the original designs.

The proposed alterations to the sill level ground floor windows of the Ruskin Building's retained facades are a result of four prime considerations:

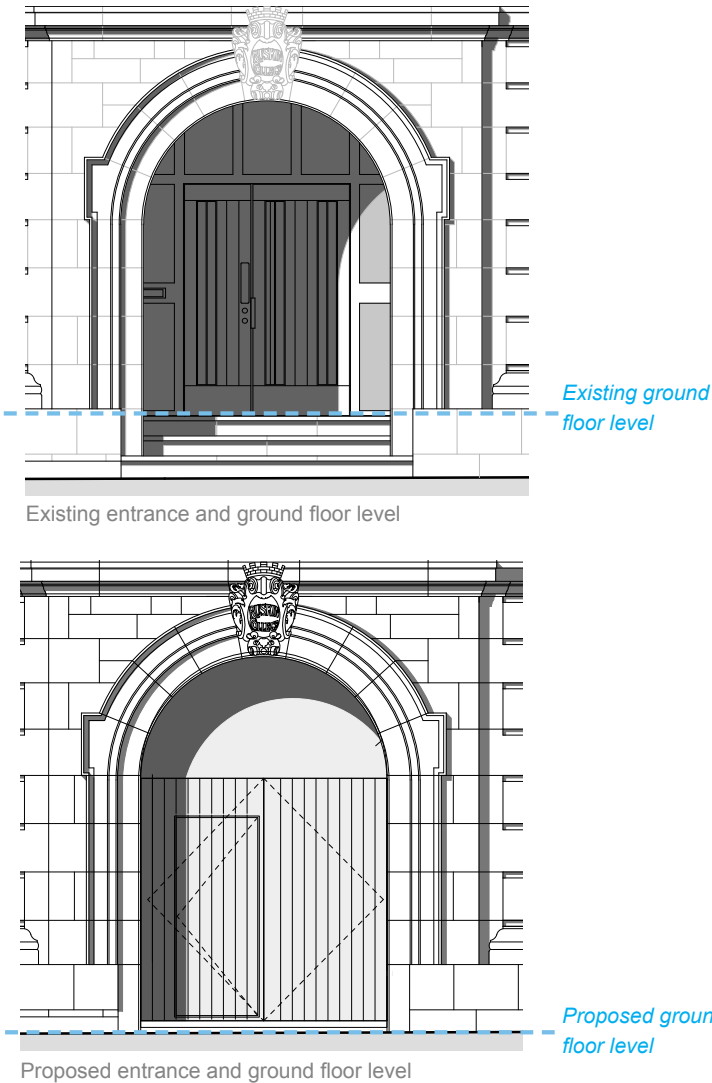
1. To adapt the Ruskin Building's facades to respond to the now fully accessible, barrier-free accommodation on the site to the widest possible student, staff and academic body as well as visitors and members of the public.
2. To preserve and enhance the building fabric, externally to restore and repair its architectural features, its dedication plaques. Internally the wall and window constructions are being upgraded to meet current energy and sustainability performance standards and guidelines.
3. To adjust the relationship of the building and its fenestration appropriately to accommodate the new lowered floor level: internally to provide good daylight, a proportionate relationship to the internal rooms and ceiling heights; and to ensure a degree of visibility to the exterior above cill level, both for the able-bodied and for wheelchair users
4. To improve and enhance the quality of the public realm outside the Ruskin Building through lowering the ground floor sill level, which will provide a greater sense of openness and safe overlooking of the street.

Window Elongation on Ground Floor

Restoring level access is a key design principal of the proposal. Once the ground floor has been lowered to make the whole building accessible from Walton Street the ground floor window openings become uncomfortably high above ground floor level to serve their purpose.

Lowering Windows to match the new floor level

For this reason the Project Team proposes to add an extra panes of glass to lower the sill of the ground floor windows. This allows extra window height for increased light levels and a proportionate relationship to the new primary floor level.



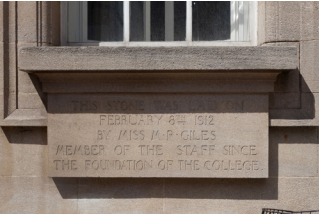
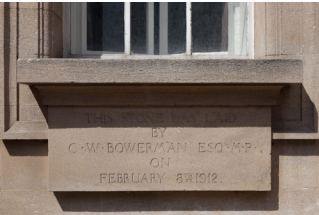
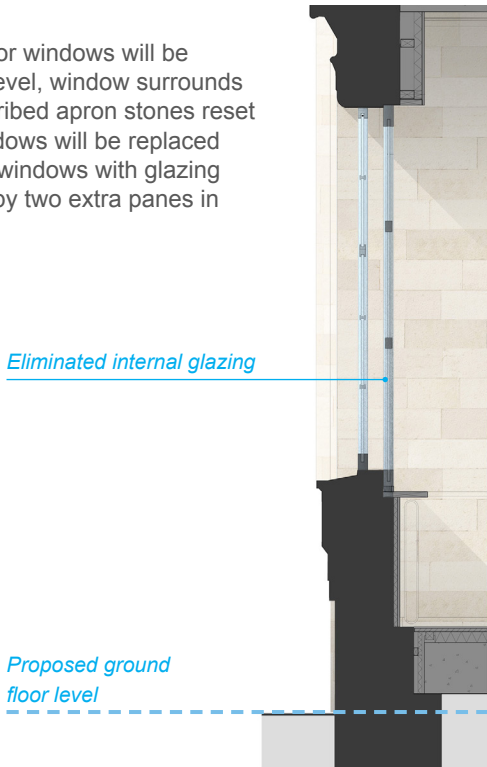
Lowered ground floor, windows not extended



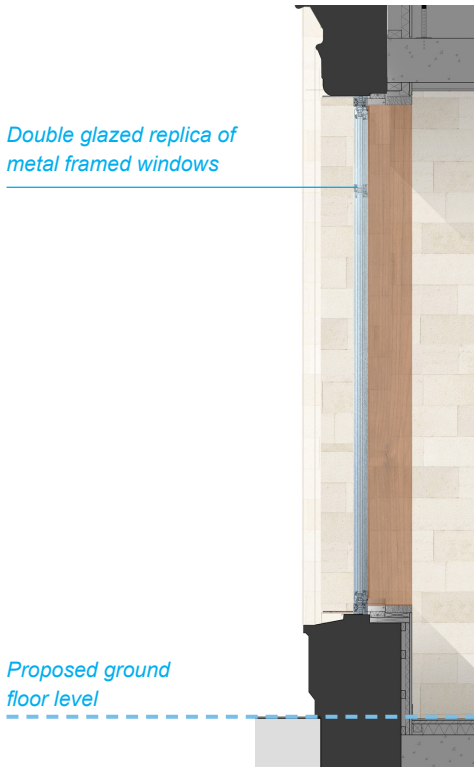
Lowered ground floor, windows extended

Walton Street Windows

The sills and aprons of the ground floor windows will be lowered to suit the new ground floor level, window surrounds will be extended and the existing inscribed apron stones reset at a lower level. The ground floor windows will be replaced with new steel-framed double glazed windows with glazing bars to match the existing, extended by two extra panes in height.



Retained Inscribed Aprons



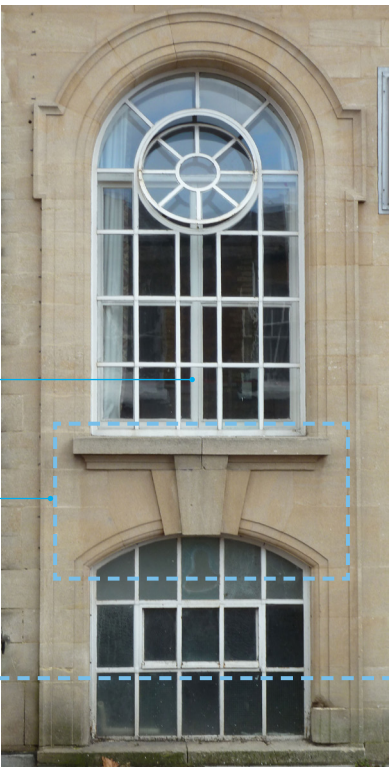
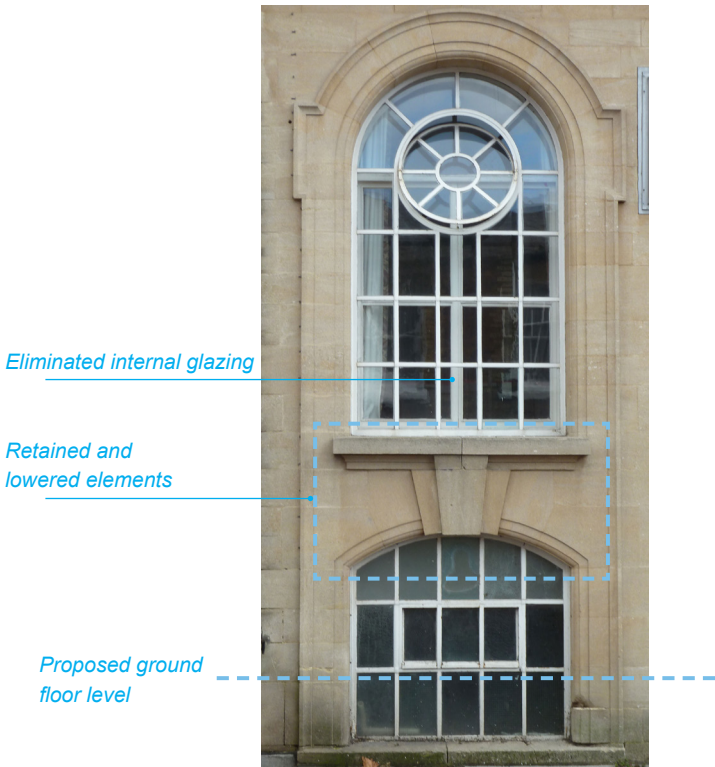
Walton Street Existing window type2



Proposed Replacement

Worcester Place Windows

The sills, aprons, arches and keystones of the ground floor windows on Worcester Place will be lowered to suit the new ground floor level, window surrounds will be extended and the remainder of the second window into the basement filled in with matching stone. The window frames will be replaced with new steel-framed double glazed windows with glazing bars to match the existing, with two extra panes in the height. The existing secondary internal glazing, thought to have been added to mitigate external noise and heat loss, will be removed.



Worcester Place Existing window

Eliminated internal glazing



Worcester Place ground floor windows



Proposed Replacement

Proposed ground floor level
Stone infill

2.0 Ruskin Building Windows



Current Proposal

2.0 Ruskin Building Windows

Walton Street Ground Floor Windows - Determination of Sill Height

ABA have engaged in detailed studies, photographs, measured drawings and on-site advice from English Heritage to determine the most appropriate position for the lowered cill at ground floor level along Walton Street and Worcester Place. The projecting bays of the Ruskin building's primary facades have been used as a point of reference in determining the relationship of the cill level to the various elements of the pedestal that forms the base of the projecting bays such as the curved base mould that sits above a rectilinear plinth.

Bottom of proposed window cills in line with dominant shadow gap of the curved mould

curved base mould

rectilinear plinth



Walton Street

Bottom of proposed window cills in line with dominant shadow gap of the curved mould



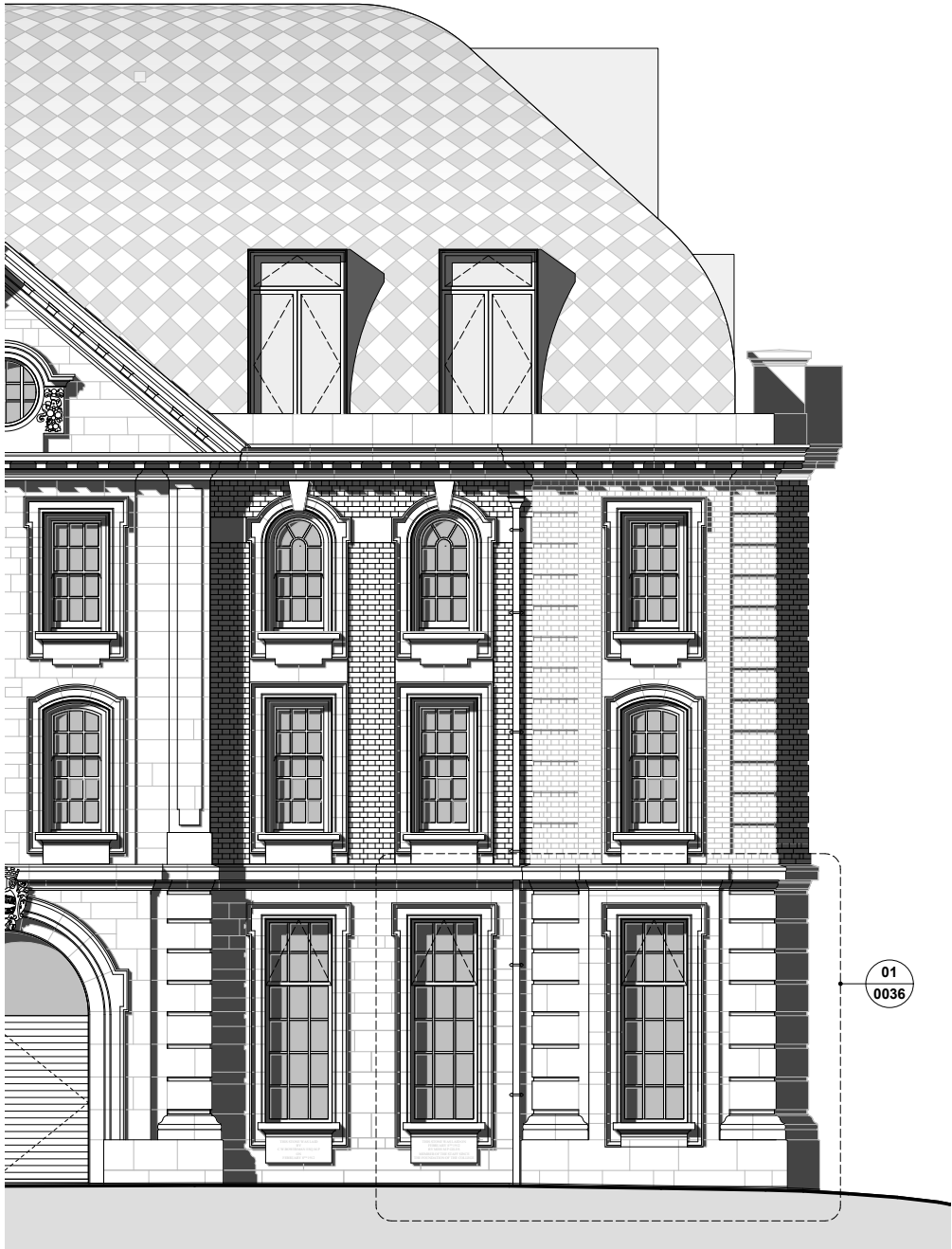
Walton Street - The projecting bay detail



For the ground floor windows on Walton Street and first pair of windows on Worcester Place, the deep relief and shadowing of the raiussed base mold has been identified as an appropriate placement level defining the bottom ledge of the stone window cill. This strategy creates an internal cill height of 870mm within the restored Ruskin Room.



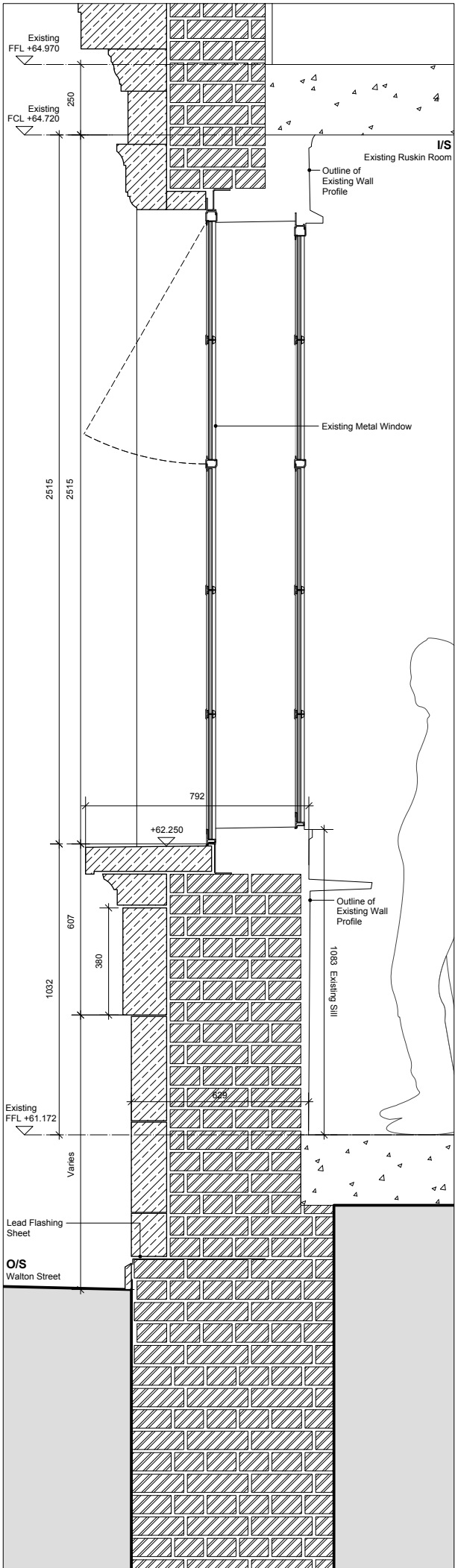
Existing Walton Street Elevation



Proposed Walton Street Elevation



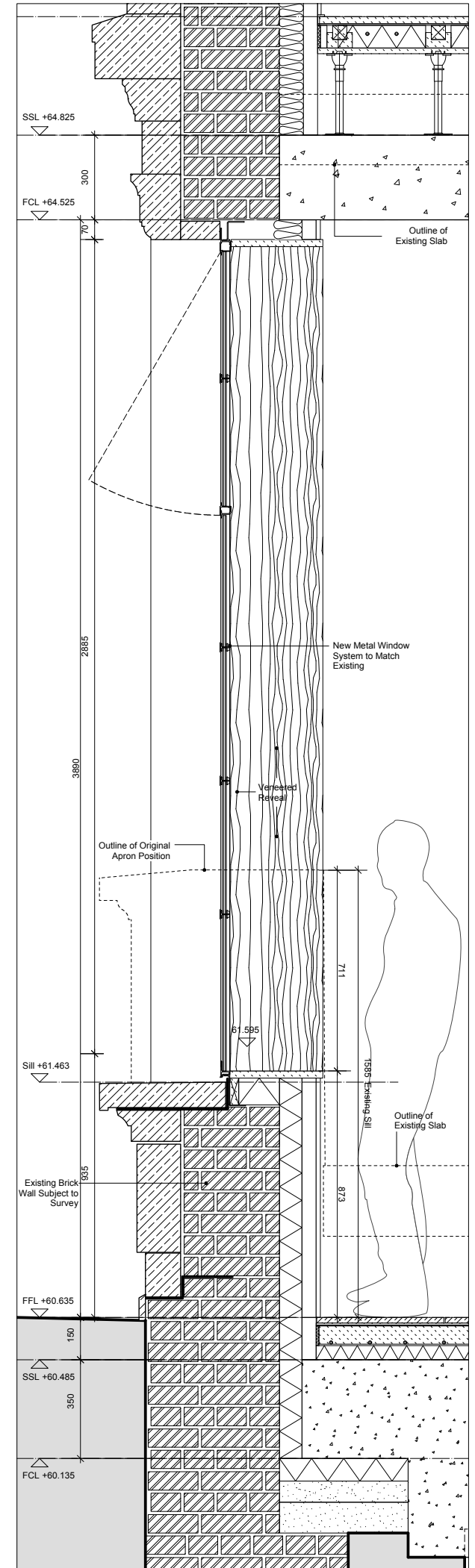
1 Existing Elevation Ruskin East Facade Ground Floor Window



2 Existing Section Ruskin East Facade Ground Floor Window



3 Proposed Elevation Ruskin East Facade Ground Floor Window



4 Proposed Section Ruskin East Facade Ground Floor Window

2.0 Ruskin Building Windows

Worcester Place Ground Floor Windows - Determination of Arch and Sill Height

The Queen Anne/Baroque arched windows along Worcester Place have a different relationship to the street to the Walton Street windows, in that they currently consist of two large glazed panels separated by a flat dressed stone cill supported by a tripartite keystone, below which is an arched window opening to basement rooms, some of these basement windows are blocked up. The basement rooms adjacent to exterior walls will be infilled as part of the structural works required to create the new accessible ground floor level.



The Queen Anne/Baroque arched windows along Worcester Place

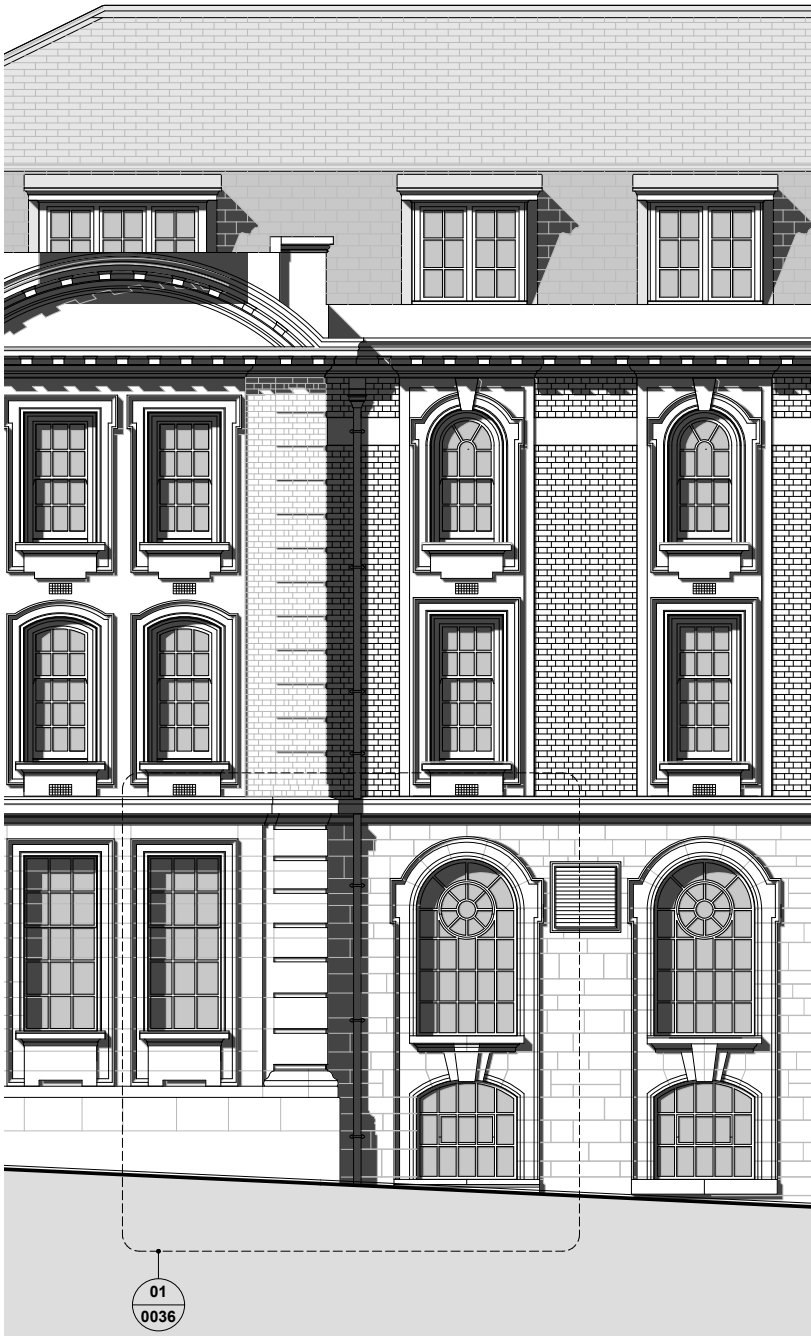


Alison Brooks Architects' original planning submission drawings illustrated a condition where these windows were lowered to reflect the internal finished floor level, in the manner of French doors with an opening fanlight.

Dialogue with English Heritage and OCC Conservation officers have since led to a conclusion that the lowered cill level of the four Worcester Place windows need not align with the Walton Street windows, and correspondingly do not necessarily need to reach the floor, but should be positioned according to the new composition of the lower arched aperture.

The infilling with dressed stone masonry to the lower arched aperture was considered a reasonable proposition within the compositional parameters of the English Baroque style to which the Ruskin's facades adhere. Within this overall approach, maintaining the form and expression of the arch and its keystone is paramount, along with the clear expression of the substantial stone base. The stone base completes each arched window panel at street level, rather than the mid-window panel cill. The new proposals within this document therefore have been adjusted to clearly illustrate a minimum vertical throat or blank window jamb of 150mm between the stone base and the spring of the arch. This vertical distance allows the keystone to express its function clearly and maintains a consistent base to the window panels as the pavement drops away due to the site slope.

This compositional strategy for the arched Worcester Place windows generates an internal cill height of 415mm above finished floor level, appropriate for window seats, and provides the Worcester Place facade with more graceful vertical proportions to the 'public rooms' of the building when viewed within the overall facade composition.



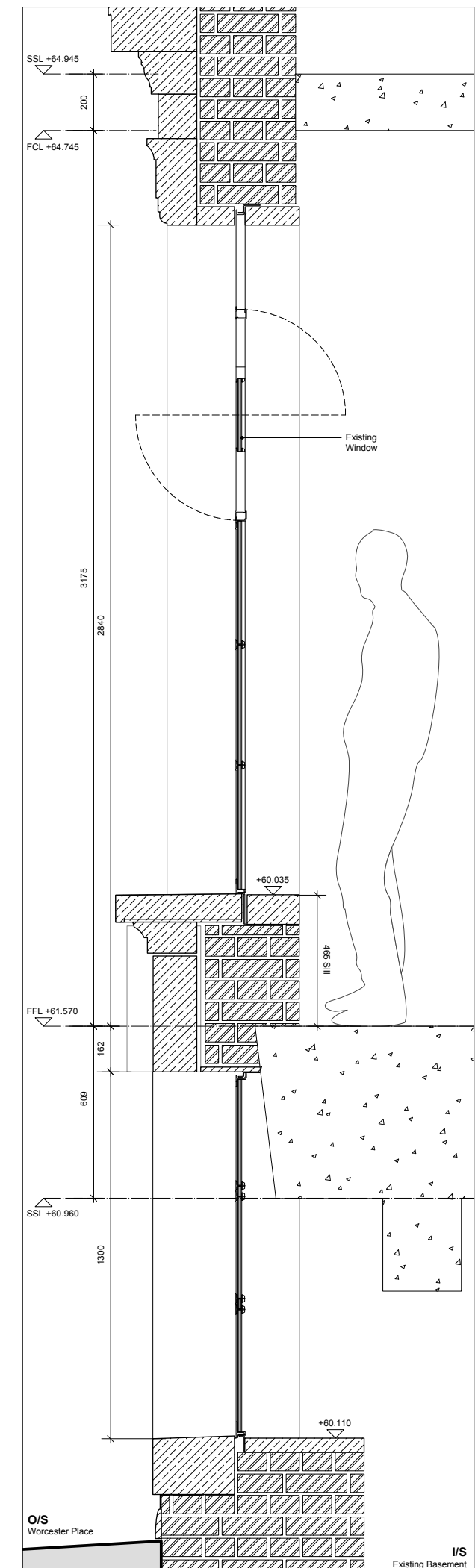
Existing Worcester Place Elevation



Proposed Worcester Place Elevation



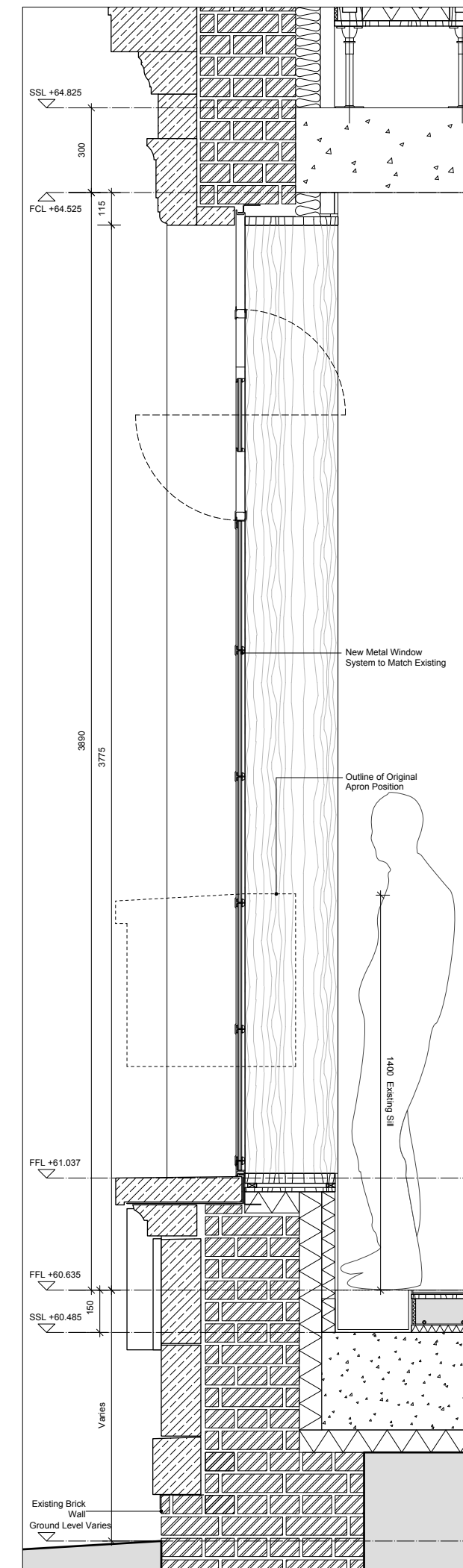
1 Existing Elevation Ruskin North Facade Ground Floor Window



2 Existing Section Ruskin North Facade Ground Floor Window



1 Proposed Elevation Ruskin North Facade Ground Floor Window



2 Proposed Section Ruskin North Facade Ground Floor Window

3.0

Verified Views

3.0 Verified Views

3.0 New Verified Views & Methodology

The following three views are fully verifiable versions of those submitted previously. The methodology for their production is also included for reference. In all cases, the verified views demonstrate that the building will have a more restrained profile in the streetscape when compared to the non-verified views, demonstrating that the non-verified views had in fact exaggerated certain proportions, rather than underestimating them.



View down Worcester Place - Existing



Previous Visualization of Walton Street



View down Worcester Place - Proposed

3.0 Verified Views



Walton Street view - Existing



Previous Visualization Walton Street view



Walton Street view - Proposed

3.0 Verified Views



View up Worcester Place - Existing



Previous Visualization of Worcester Place view



View up Worcester Place - Proposed

AVR METHODOLOGY

AVR London were commissioned in September 2013 to produce a number of verified images of the proposal known as Exeter College Oxford. The positions were identified from photographs supplied by the architects.

2D plans, Ordnance Survey Mapping, and a 3D model were provided by Alison Brooks Architects, these were used by AVR London to verify the proposal from the selected viewing positions.

Surveying

Control stations were established at each camera position and easily and clearly identifiable static points within the view were identified by the chartered land surveyor on site and marked as an overlay on the photograph from that position.

The survey control stations are resected from the OS base mapping and wherever possible, linked together to form a survey network. This means that survey information is accurate to tolerances quoted by GPS survey methods in plan and commensurate with this in level.

Horizontal and vertical angle observations from the control stations allow the previously identified points within the view to be surveyed using line of sight surveying and the accurate coordination of these points determined using an intersection program. These points are then related back to the Ordnance Survey grid and provided in a spreadsheet format.

The required horizon line within the image is established using the horizontal collimation of the theodolite (set to 1.60m above the ground) to identify 3 or 4 features that fall along the horizon line.

Surveying equipment used:

Wild/Leica TC1000 electronic theodolite which has 3" angle measuring accuracy and 3mm + 2ppm distance measuring accuracy.

Wild/Leica NAK2 automatic level which a standard deviation of +/- 0.7mm/km

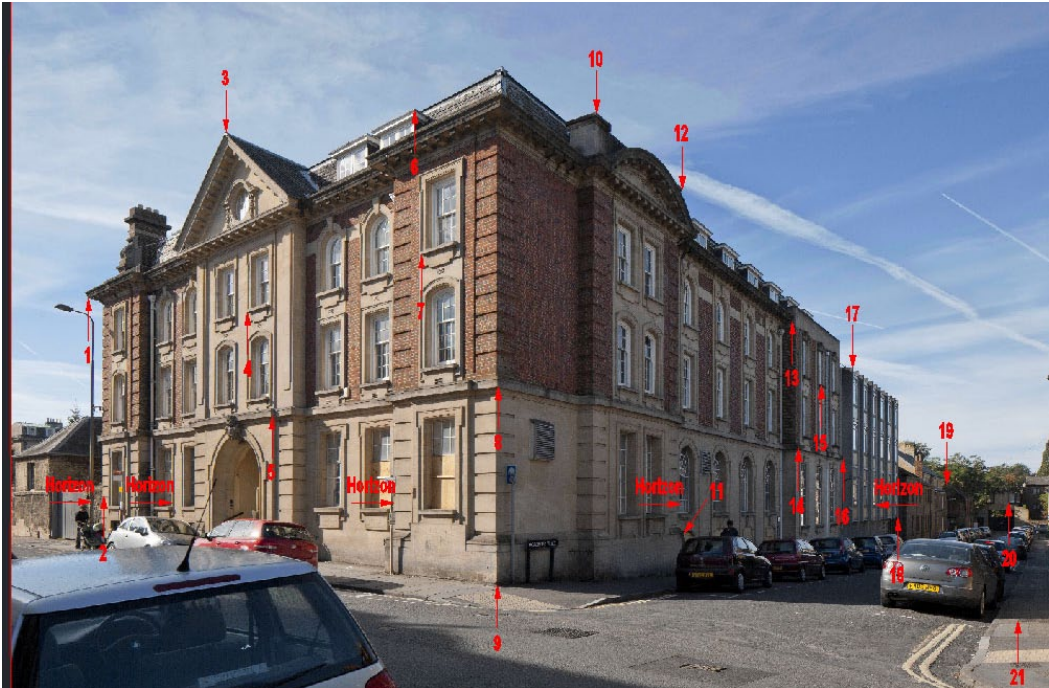
Photography

Each scene was photographed using a plumb line over a survey pin to accurately position the view location. The centre of the camera lens was positioned at a height of 1.60 metres above the ground to simulate average viewing height. Each view was taken with a lens that gave approximately a 68 degree field of view, either in landscape or portrait format, a standard which has emerged for verified architectural photography. The nature of digital photography means that a record of the time and date of each photograph is embedded within the file; this metadata allows accurate lighting timings to be recreated within the computer model.

In professional architectural photography, having the camera horizontal is desirable in order to prevent any 3-point perspective being introduced to the image and ensure the verticals within the photographed scene remain parallel. Within architectural photography this is standard practice and more realistically reflects the viewing experience. The camera used by the photographer has the ability to shift the digital capture chip with respect to the centre of the camera lens, allowing for the horizon in the image to be above, below or centrally within the image whilst maintaining the parallel nature of verticals previously mentioned.

Using the surveyed horizon points as a guide, each photograph is checked and rotated, if necessary, in proprietary digital image manipulation software to ensure that the horizon line on the photograph is level and coincident with the information

View 2 - Walton Street opposite Worcester Place			
Point	Easting	Northing	Level
1	450943.06	206636.59	71.18
2	450942.57	206637.01	62.62
3	450942.31	206648.35	74.44
4	450941.75	206648.79	68.58
5	450941.63	206651.50	65.02
6	450940.07	206655.42	73.38
7	450941.26	206657.23	68.57
8	450941.03	206659.73	65.02
9	450941.04	206659.76	60.46
10	450937.41	206659.77	72.76
11	450931.75	206659.10	61.38
12	450931.80	206659.05	72.78
13	450918.74	206657.51	71.91
14	450918.89	206657.70	65.01
15	450914.82	206657.26	68.57
16	450909.61	206656.58	64.99
17	450905.37	206655.70	71.11
18	450887.88	206653.62	61.26
19	450824.66	206643.47	65.70
20	450807.66	206649.14	62.75
21	450937.57	206669.10	60.34



received from the surveyor.

Accurate Visual Representation Production Process

The 3D computer model was supplied aligned on the Ordnance Survey coordinate grid system and approved by the architects.

Within the 3D software a virtual camera was set up using the coordinates provided by the surveyor along with the previously identified points within the scene. The virtual camera was verified by matching the contextual surveyed points with matching points within the overlaid photograph. As all the surveyed points, virtual camera and 3D model all relate to the same 3-Dimensional coordinate system then there is only one position, viewing direction and field of view where all these points coincide with the actual photograph from site. The virtual camera is now verified against the site photograph.

For the fully rendered views a lighting simulation (using accurate latitude, longitude and time) was established within the proprietary 3D modeling software matching that of the actual site photograph. Along with the virtual sunlight, virtual materials were applied to the 3D model to match those advised by the architects. The proprietary 3D modeling software then uses the verified virtual camera, 3D digital model, lighting and material setup to produce a computer generated render of the proposed building.

The proposal was masked where it would be obscured behind built form or street furniture.

Using the surveyed information and verification process described above, the scale and position of a proposal with a scene can be objectively calculated. However, using proprietary software currently available the exact response of proposed materials to their environment is subjective so the exact portrayal of a proposal is a collaboration between illustrator and architect. The final computer generated image of the proposed building is achieved by combining the computer generated render and the site photography within proprietary digital compositing software.

Specifics of Exeter College Project

The 3D Model was used in its entirety within the verified images for consistency, the accuracy of this model was therefore determined by the original model as supplied by ABA.

4.0

Materials

4.0 Materials

Rimex Sample Panels - Evolution

The principal concerns raised over the Rimex stainless steel cladding material relate to colour and the reflectivity levels of the shingles. The Project Team, has taken further actions to reduce the glow through manufacturing processes such as sanding and bead blasting. The results of these tests are manifested in a set of large scale mock up panels on display at Ruskin College. The four panels range from highly reflective to nonreflective. The feedback gathered by the Team during public consultation and OCC meetings seems to be in favour of the “medium reflective” mock-up panel as the material has a subtle range of tones as seen from different angles of view, compared to the nonreflective cladding. The concerns of direct light reflections into Worcester Place residents windows have been analysed further and no significant reflectivity was found possible as the Rimex cladding is predominantly facing north.

The samples illustrated right, the supporting precedent images and the new verified views illustrate the effect that the Design Team is seeking to achieve. A condition will be attached to the planning permission allowing further work with the manufacturer and officers to continue, in order to arrive at the effect illustrated in this section.

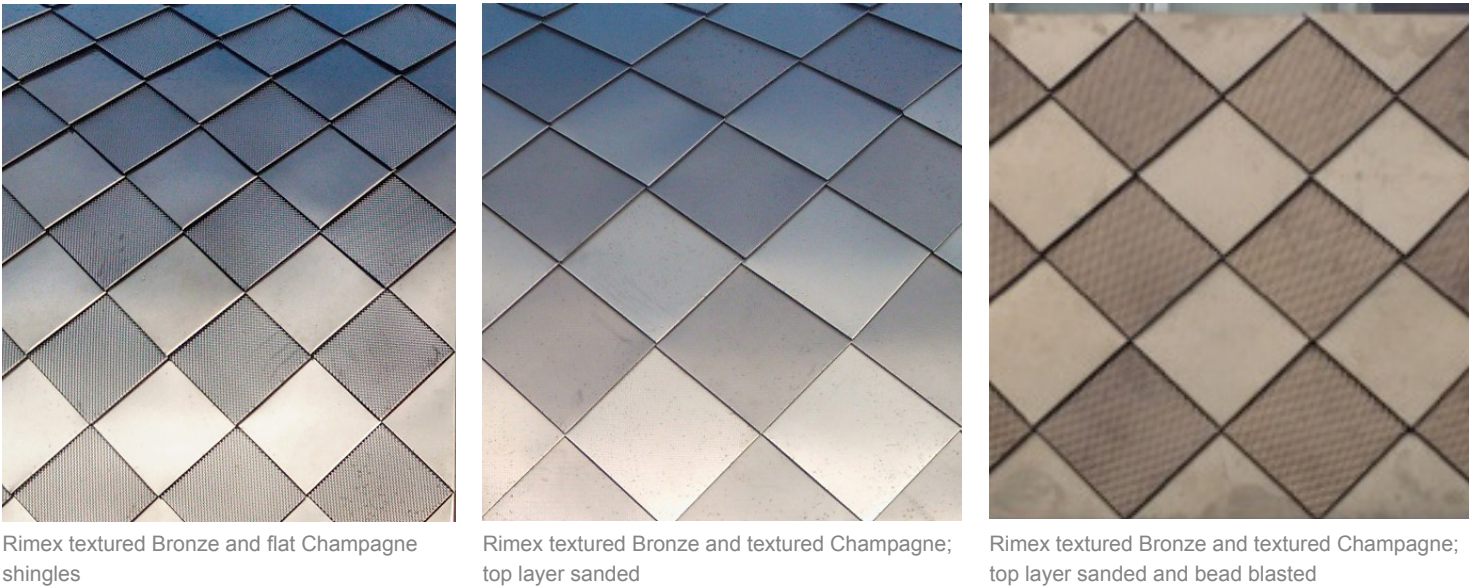
Rimex Factory Visit, Edmonton



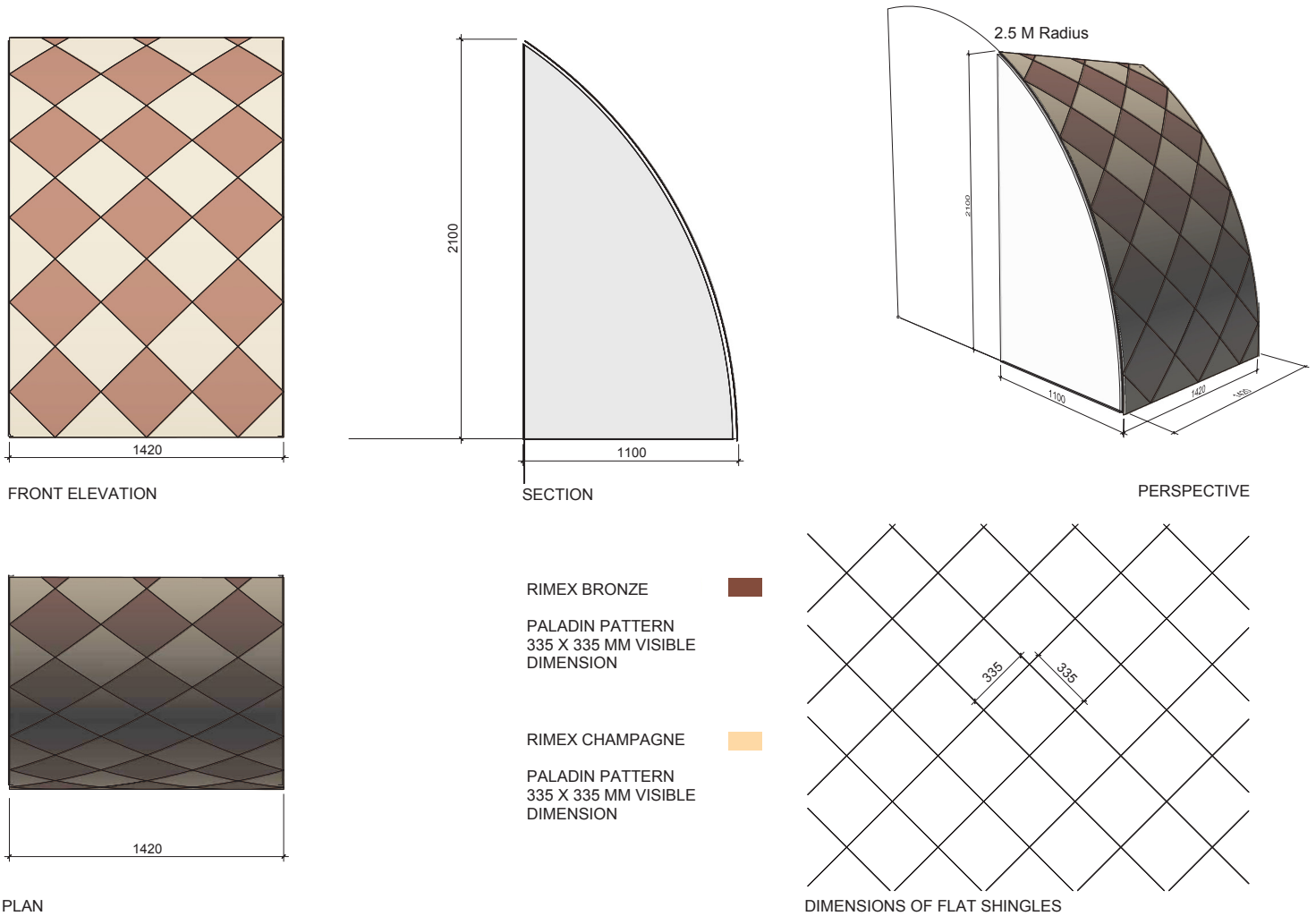
Unprocessed stainless steel roll Flattening and patination



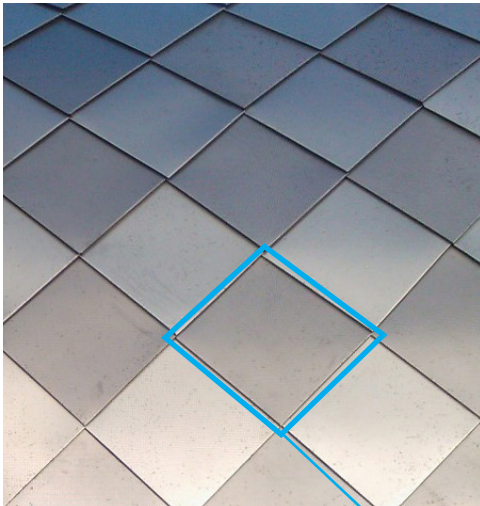
Oxidization Assembled sample panel



Rimex textured Bronze and flat Champagne shingles Rimex textured Bronze and textured Champagne; top layer sanded Rimex textured Bronze and textured Champagne; top layer sanded and bead blasted



Brand Loyalty Building -
Rimex Textured Bronze Cladding



The bronze Rimex cladding proposed for the Ruskin building has been used on the Brand Loyalty Building in the Netherlands. The images below demonstrate the effect of different lighting conditions on the material.



Visualization of Rimex textured Bronze and textured Champagne. Walton Street View

Rimex textured Bronze in direct sunlight



Rimex textured Bronze on a bright day



Rimex textured Bronze on an overcast day



5.0

Fellows' Terrace

5.0 Fellows' Terrace

Fellows' Roof Terrace

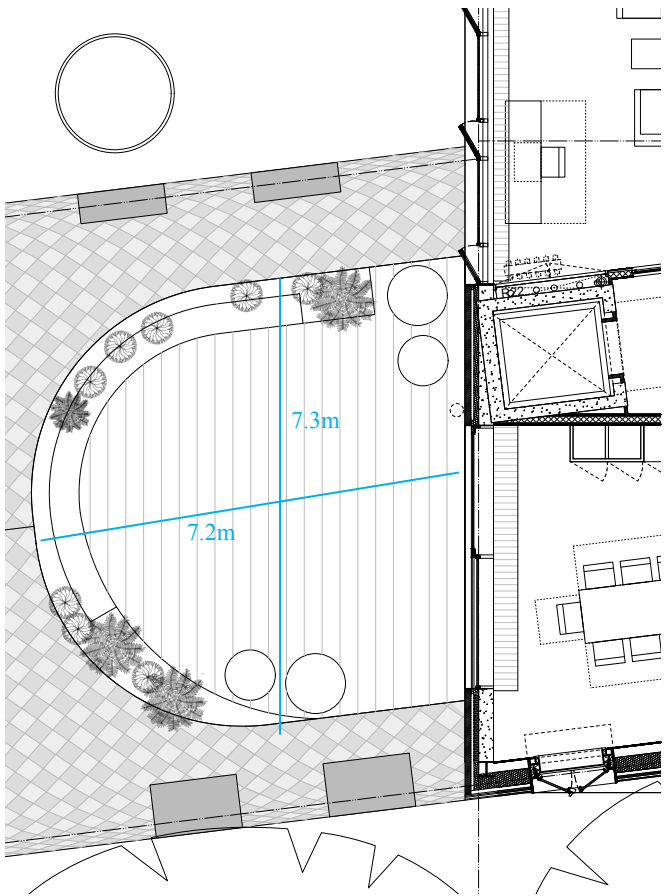
The Fellows' Roof Terrace is a private amenity space for the exclusive use of the Fellows, Academic staff of Exeter College and their guests. Therefore access will be strictly controlled.

The design of the terrace includes a glass balustrade set 2m away from the building facade. The terrace is 26.3m away from the closest private residential window of properties opposite the site on Worcester Place. Adjacent to the glass balustrade an evergreen border planting will provide further privacy screening, preventing overlooking from taking place.

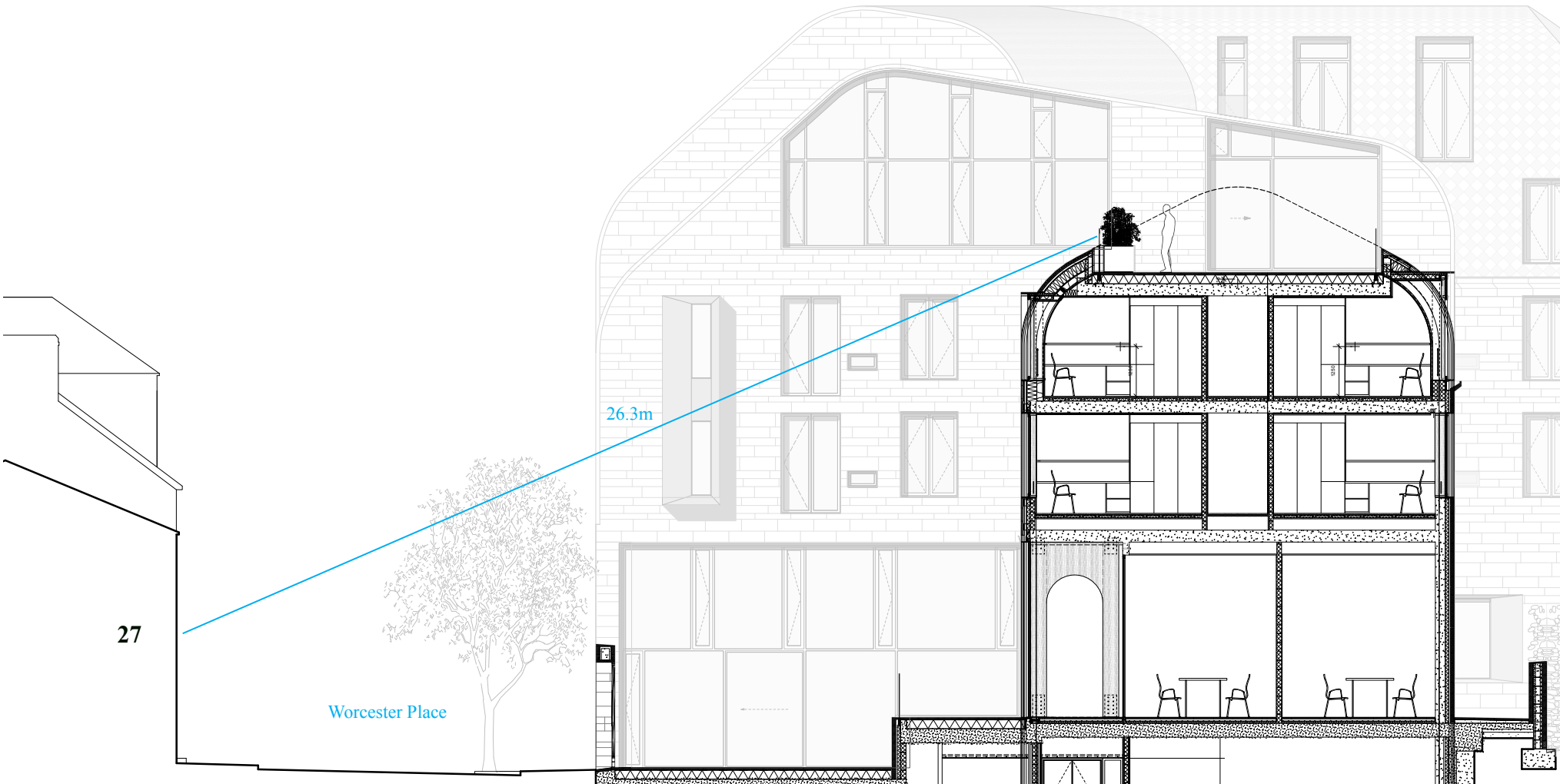
A condition seeking the restriction of the playing of amplified music on the terrace will be applied to the grant of planning permission as a further precaution.



3d view of the Fellows' Terrace



3rd Floor Fellows' Terrace Plan



Section

6.0

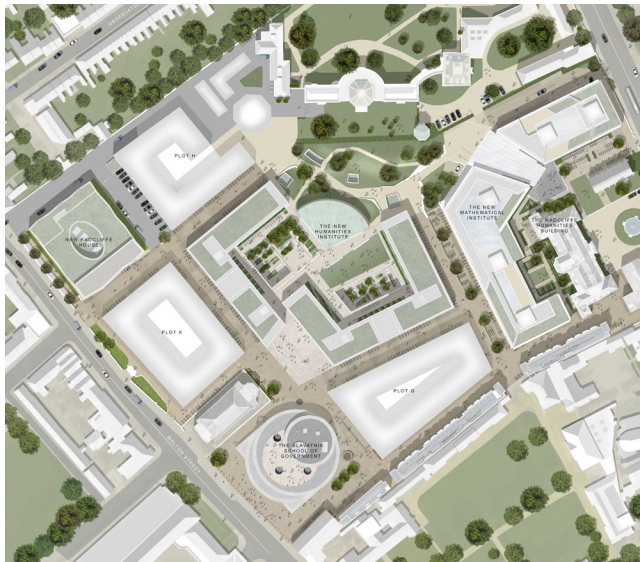
Meridian Line

6.0 Meridian Line

The Radcliffe Observatory, the Meridian

As previously established by applications for the Blavatnik School of Government and the Humanities Building on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter site, the meridian line used by the Radcliffe Observatory lies to the east of the Ruskin site. The Humanities Building incorporated a view of the meridian, which the proposals sit outside, as illustrated on the amended view opposite. In any case, the meridian was a view of the skyline, rather than of the townscape.

St John's College were known to apply covenants protecting the meridian line within the deeds of their properties in this part of Oxford. As former owner of the Ruskin site, St John's did not apply similar restrictions to that site, reaffirming that the meridian did not cross the site.



The Radcliffe Observatory Masterplan

Blocked View from Radcliffe Observatory



Appendix i.

Legal Opinion

IN THE MATTER OF
EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD

-AND-

PROPOSED NEW QUADRANGLE AT THE FORMER RUSKIN COLLEGE SITE,
WALTON STREET

OPINION

Introduction

1. We are instructed to advise Exeter College in relation to legal issues concerning its applications to Oxford City Council (“the Council”) for planning permission and listed building consent for redevelopment of the Former Ruskin College site to provide a new quadrangle including 90 student study rooms, 3 residential rooms for fellows and staff, teaching facilities, a library archive, social space and associated works.
2. The application was considered by the Council’s West Area Planning Committee (“the Committee”) at a meeting on 10 September 2013. In advance of that meeting, the case officer prepared a report (“the Officer’s Report”) which recommended that planning permission be granted. At the meeting, however, the Committee decided to defer its determination of the application in order to consider, and if necessary address, the various concerns expressed by Worcester College through its counsel, Peter Goatley, about the lawfulness of granting permission on the basis of the reasoning in the Officer’s Report. Mr Goatley’s arguments have since been put into writing in a letter from the Provost of Worcester College dated 12 September 2013.
3. We are asked to advise on the merits of Mr Goatley’s arguments and deal with them in turn below. At the outset, we note that complaints of this nature regarding the content of Officer’s Reports must be viewed with a degree of scepticism, having regard to the observations of Judge LJ in *R v. Selby DC v. Oxton Farms Ltd* [1997] E.G. 60:

“The report by a planning officer to his committee is not and is not intended to provide a learned disquisition of relevant legal principles or to repeat each and every detail of the relevant facts to members of the committee who are responsible for the decision and who are entitled to use their local knowledge to reach it. The report is therefore not susceptible to textual analysis appropriate to the construction of a statute or the directions provided by a judge when summing a case up to the jury.

From time to time there will no doubt be cases when judicial review is granted on the basis of what is or is not contained in the planning officer's report. This reflects no more than the court's conclusion in the particular circumstances of the case before it. In my judgment an

application for judicial review based on criticisms on the planning officer's report will not normally begin to merit consideration unless the overall effect of the report significantly misleads the committee about material matters which thereafter are left uncorrected at the meeting of the planning committee before the relevant decision is taken.”

(1) Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”)

4. The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, implementing the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2011/92/EU, require EIA to be undertaken in respect of all planning applications for development referred to in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and in respect of those applications for development referred to in Schedule 2 which the local planning authority considers are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
5. Mr Goatley has questioned why the Council’s Screening Opinion in the present case excluded the need for EIA on the basis of the site’s size. The answer is simple. The only potentially applicable category in the Schedules to the 2011 Regulations is that of an “urban development project” under paragraph 10b of Schedule 2. The terms of paragraph 10b make clear, however, that such development is only within the scope of Schedule 2 where the site is over 0.5 hectares in size¹. In the present case, the size of the site is only 0.18ha. It is therefore not Schedule 2 development and does not engage the Regulations. That in itself is sufficient to exclude the need for EIA without further consideration of whether the development is likely to have any significant environmental effects.

(2)-(5) The development’s impact on heritage assets

6. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“the 1990 Act”) provides:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”
7. Section 72(1) imposes a similar duty in relation to conservation areas:

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”
8. In *East Northamptonshire v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] 2 P. & C.R. 5, Lang J. held at para. 39 (emphasis added):

¹ Unless the development is to be carried out on land which falls in one of the designations referred to in the definition of “sensitive area” in Regulation 2(1) of the 2011 Regulations [see also the definition of “Schedule 2 development” in Regulation 2(1)], which the site in the present case does not.

"In my judgment, in order to give effect to the statutory duty under s.66(1), a decision-maker should accord considerable importance and weight to the "desirability of preserving ... the setting" of listed buildings when weighing this factor in the balance with other 'material considerations' which have not been given this special statutory status."

9. The same logic applies to the duty under s.72(1) to have "*special regard*" to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.
10. Paragraphs 133-134 of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") draws a distinction between development which would cause "*substantial harm*" to heritage assets and development which would cause "*less than substantial harm*", setting a less onerous threshold in the latter case for the harm to be justified.
11. In the present case, Mr Goatley's points (2)-(5) contend:
 - a. that there is no evidence of the Officer's Report according the necessary "*considerable importance and weight*" to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the relevant listed buildings, i.e. Ruskin College and Worcester College, as required by s. 66 of the 1990 Act;
 - b. that "*substantial harm*" would be caused to both listed buildings and to Worcester College's Grade 2* registered park and garden; and
 - c. the Officer's Report fails to have regard to the test set out in para. 133 of the NPPF for "*substantial harm*" to be justified.

12. We consider that, whilst on a fair reading of the Officer's Report it is reasonably clear that the case officer gave the requisite weight to the statutory objective under s.66 of the 1990 Act and concluded that any harm caused to the heritage assets would be "*less than substantial*" and would be outweighed by the benefits of the proposed development. If the Committee were to share that view and grant permission accordingly, that would be a planning judgment with which the High Court would be strongly disinclined to interfere. See e.g. *Tesco Stores Ltd. v. Secretary of State for the Environment* [1995] 1 W.L.R. 759, where Lord Hoffmann held at p.780 that "*a fundamental principle of British planning law [is] that the Courts are concerned only with the legality of the decision-making process and not with the merits of the decision*" and went on to observe:

"If there is one principle of planning law more firmly settled than any other, it is that matters of planning judgment are within the exclusive province of the local planning authority or the Secretary of State."

(6) Paragraph 14 of the NPPF

13. Mr Goatley’s point (6) takes issue with the reference at para. 14 of the Officer’s Report to the presumption in favour of sustainable development referred to in para. 14 of the NPPF.

14. The relevant parts of para. 14 of the NPPF state:

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

...

For **decision-taking** this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”

15. The last line in the passage quoted above is accompanied by a footnote 9, which states that the “*specific policies*” which may indicate that development should be restricted may include “*those policies relating to...heritage assets*”. This is the basis on which Mr Goatley criticises the reference in para. 14 of the Officer’s Report to the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

16. In our opinion, there is no merit in this criticism. Para. 14 of the Officer’s Report refers in general terms to the “*presumption in favour of sustainable development*” but immediately goes on in the same sentence to refer to the provision in para. 17 of the NPPF that planning should “*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations*”. Read fairly and as a whole, this sentence is entirely consistent with para. 14 of the NPPF.

(7) No reference in the Officer’s Report to the need to refer the listed building consent application to the Secretary of State

17. Section 13 of the 1990 Act provides:

“(1) If a local planning authority (other than a London borough council) to whom application is made for listed building consent, or a London borough council to whom such an application is made by the Commission, intend to grant listed building consent they shall first notify the Secretary of State of the application, giving particulars of the works for which the consent is required.

(2) The Secretary of State may within the period of 28 days beginning with the date of such a notification—

(a) direct the reference of the application to him under section 12; or

(b) give notice to the authority that he requires further time in which to consider whether to require such a reference.

(3) The local planning authority shall not grant listed building consent until—

(a) the period mentioned in subsection (2) has expired without the Secretary of State directing the reference of the application to him or giving them notice under paragraph (b) of that subsection; or

(b) the Secretary of State has notified them that he does not intend to require the reference of the application.”

18. The Council is obliged to comply with s.13 before granting the listed building consent application. There is, however, no requirement for the Officer’s Report itself to refer to the s.13 duty. There is therefore no good basis for criticising the Officer’s Report in this regard.

(8) Failure of the Officer's Report to mention the objection of the Ancient Monuments Society

19. There is no absolute legal duty on the Officer's Report to make express reference to each and every consultation response. The relevant legal duty is on the Committee, as decision-maker, to have regard to all material considerations that have been put forward. That is a matter which turns on the substance of what was considered rather than on the form of the Officer's Report (see also the observations of Judge LJ in *Oxton Farms*, above). It is clear from reading the content of the Officer's Report as a whole that the substance of the various material considerations put forward by objectors was considered even if some of them were not mentioned by name. Moreover, we are told that at the previous Committee Meeting, the presenting case officer specifically mentioned the Ancient Monuments Society's objection to Members. There is therefore no arguable failure to take into account material considerations.

Conclusion

20. In conclusion, none of Mr Goatley's points reveal any real obstacle to the Council proceeding to grant planning permission and listed building consent.
21. We have nothing further to add as currently instructed, but would be happy to provide any further advice or answer any questions on the above if so required.


DAVID HOLGATE Q.C.


CHARLES BANNER

Landmark Chambers
180 Fleet Street
London EC4A 2HG

29 October 2013

Appendix ii

*Heritage Assessment
and Justification*



specialist independent advisers in the historic built environment

conservation & listed buildings | heritage planning matters | PPS5 advice and assessments | expert witness
listed buildings | conservation management and advice | archaeology | historic interiors | audits | research

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT & JUSTIFICATION

In respect of

RUSKIN COLLEGE, WALTON STREET, OXFORD

On behalf of

Exeter College

AHC REF: ND/9206

October 2013

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2.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES.....	5
3.0 CONCLUSION.....	18

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report, which has been prepared and written by Dr Nicholas Doggett, MIfA, IHBC Managing Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Exeter College, is to consider the current application proposals at the former Ruskin College on Walton Street, Oxford and their impact in heritage terms.
- 1.2 This impact includes the effect of the proposals on the character, fabric and setting of those parts of the former Ruskin College which were added to the statutory list as a Grade II listed building in April this year, together with the impact on the grounds of the adjoining Worcester College (a Grade II* registered Park/Garden) and on the wider character and appearance of the Oxford Central (University & City) Centre Conservation Area in which the site is situated.
- 1.3 Much of this ground has already been covered in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Richard Griffiths Architects in March 2013 (which itself built on their Statement of Significance dated December 2012) and their Updated Heritage Impact Assessment (included as Appendix 2 to the Supplementary Planning Document prepared by Turnberry Planning Ltd and Alison Brooks Architects Ltd in July 2013).
- 1.4 It is important to emphasize that the reports prepared by Richard Griffiths Architects remain part of the material submitted in support of the application proposals and that this report is simply intended to supplement rather than supersede their contents and conclusions.
- 1.5 Indeed, one of the main purposes of this report is to examine the various objections made to the applications proposals, focusing in particular on the comments made by Worcester College and those National Amenity Societies which have commented on the scheme.
- 1.6 The report also obviously considers the comments made by the Council's Conservation Team and English Heritage, as set out in the Council's report for West Area Planning Committee on 10 September 2013 and English Heritage's earlier letter to the Council dated 16 May 2013.
- 1.7 In this connection, it is important to note that the application proposals have been further refined since the meeting of the West Area Planning Committee, particularly with regard to the fenestration on the retained Walton Street and Worcester Place frontages.
- 1.8 This is a significant amendment as the issue was identified both by the Council and English Heritage as a matter that needed to be addressed and is therefore considered, together with the 'verified views' of the scheme, as viewed from both Walton Street and the grounds of Worcester College, in some detail in the New Planning Addendum Statement prepared by Turnberry Planning Ltd and Alison Brooks Architects Ltd, to which this report will be attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.9 Certainly, it is my view that, following these amendments and the additional supporting information supplied (including on the proposed roofing materials), there is every reason to conclude that any 'harm' caused to the heritage assets affected must be regarded as '*less than substantial*'.
- 1.10 In such a scenario, and as paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear, it is perfectly proper for such 'harm' to '*be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use*'.
- 1.11 In my view any 'harm' caused by this proposal is clearly '*less than substantial*', and certainly outweighed by the '*public benefits*' flowing from it, a number of which, such as the improvements to the main entrance on Walton Street and the associated enhancement of the public realm, are directly site (and heritage) related.
- 1.12 Taking together with the other '*public benefits*' set out in Section 1 of the New Planning Addendum Statement, among which is the persuasive argument that creatively adapting the former Ruskin College reduces the pressure for change at Exeter's historic Turl Street site, there is every reason to support this proposal and to conclude that, in maintaining a continuation of its historic higher educational use, the transition of the former Ruskin College to form part of Exeter College does indeed '*secure its optimum viable use*'.

2.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES

2.1 As stated in the Introduction, the main issues in heritage terms (and on which the Council's Conservation Team and English Heritage have, quite rightly in my view, spent much time and effort liaising with Exeter College's project team to resolve satisfactorily) are the impacts on Ruskin College itself, the grounds of Worcester College and the wider conservation area.

2.2 Thus, while there is clearly a significant degree of inter-play between the three issues, it is appropriate to consider each in turn before briefly drawing together the various stands as a whole in the Conclusion.

Ruskin College

2.3 The impact on the former Ruskin College can in turn be considered under two headings, the effects of the proposals on the **interior** and the **exterior** of the building, the starting point for which must be the recent statutory listing and English Heritage's accompanying list description.

2.4 This list description is a useful document, making it quite clear where Ruskin College's '*special interest*' as a designated heritage asset is considered to lie. Three principal reasons are given for the listing (i) '*Historic interest: a pivotal institution in the history of working-class adult education in the UK, and one that shaped the consciousness of generations of trades union and Labour leaders*'; (ii) '*Architectural interest: a capable and restrained – albeit incompletely realised- design in the late-C17 "Wrenaissance" manner*' and (iii) '*Group Value: with nearby listed buildings including the Worcester College boundary wall and Nos.1-2 and 4-15 Walton Street*'.

2.5 All three reasons for listing have informed the application proposals but before looking at these, it is also worth noting here that the statutory listing (including the map accompanying it) makes it absolutely clear that '*The extensions of 1936 by Brook Kitchin, of 1964-7 by Peter Bosanquet and Partners, and of 1982 by Peter Bosanquet and John Perryman are not of special interest* (my emphasis)'.

2.6 This means that these three extensions (including their interiors) effectively fall outside the intention and extent of the listing and while it is perfectly proper to consider the impact of their demolition on what is retained of Ruskin College, the grounds of Worcester College and the wider conservation area, there is no reason to consider that their removal would be in any way harmful to the building's '*special interest*' or the reasons why it was listed in the first place.

2.7 Much the same logic applies to a consideration of the interiors of the 1912-13 building. These get understandably short treatment in the list description, the relevant part of which starts with the statement that they '*are largely utilitarian and have been much altered*', an assessment with which it is hard to disagree.

2.8 There is no denying that the proposals do take a radical approach to the interior of the 1913 building but the reasoning behind this is fully set out in the July 2013 Supplementary Planning Document and is, in my view, entirely consistent with the relatively low level of significance that can be attached to the interior as it currently exists in its already much altered state.

2.9 Importantly, much of this rationale appears to have been accepted by English Heritage relatively early on in the application process even, and this is of course critical, after the building had been added to the statutory list in April this year.

2.10 Thus David Brock's letter to the Council of 16 May acknowledges that if more of the 1913 interiors were to be retained '*there would still (need to be) significant alteration to achieve a fair degree of flexibility of use on the site, and the steel frame would be particularly unforgiving of small adjustments, necessitating much more wide-ranging changes than in a mass-walled structure. A major generator of this degree of change would be the need to make the corridor wider, with knock-on effects for the rooms. At the end of this operation, it is true that relatively little might survive of the sense of how Ruskin was inhabited and used*'.

2.11 Taking this into account, together with the fact that, as he points out elsewhere in his letter, '*the listing does not attach the historic interest to a particular aspect of the building*' and the advice contained at paragraphs 132 and 134 of the NPPF, Mr Brock

was therefore able to conclude that *'the loss of the interior need not be considered substantial harm'* as defined in the NPPF.

- 2.12 Much the same position is taken by the Council's officers to this aspect of the proposals (see especially paragraph 39 of the report for West Area Planning Committee), where it is further argued that such harm that is caused by the removal of the interior is mitigated *'by ensuring that the spatial organisation of the new interior respects the existing plan form- the split between administration and lecture spaces and the location of staircases and circulation spaces (the proposed cloister is proposed in the place where Joseph and Smithem had intended one to be) for example. Positions of floor levels also ensure that the internal layout has an appropriate relationship to the architecture of the facades (unlike some examples of facade retention where the interior organisation is divorced from the external organisation of doors and windows)'*.
- 2.13 This last point is, in my opinion, particularly pertinent and links directly to the revised proposals for the treatment of the fenestration pattern on the retained Walton Street and Worcester Place elevations. Throughout the design process this has always been properly related to the internal room arrangement, which as noted above reflects the principal survivals from the historic arrangement of rooms adopted in the original building.
- 2.14 The precise form of the window arrangement on the lower (stone-faced and partly rusticated) storey of the building has always been a particular concern for English Heritage and the Council's Conservation Officer, the implication of the concluding paragraphs of David Brock's letter of 16 May being that if it were not possible to achieve an agreed solution on this matter he might be minded to regard the overall level of *'harm'* to the building as *'substantial'* rather than *'less than substantial'*.
- 2.15 Although this line of reasoning was not fully followed through in the officers' report to West Area Planning Committee and the proposed window arrangement was in fact amended before the committee report was written, I agree that this is an important matter and the issue of how the proposed window treatment might be further improved was therefore fully discussed with both Mr Brock and the Council's Conservation Officer at a site meeting held on 17 October.

- 2.16 As a result of this discussion Alison Brooks Architects have formulated a revised set of fenestration proposals which is intended to be more sympathetic to the neo-Baroque or 'Wrenaissance' character of the building as a whole. The rationale behind this is fully explained in Section 2 of the New Planning Addendum Statement and it is therefore sufficient for me to say here that I concur with the approach taken.
- 2.17 The agreed revisions to the fenestration take full account of the significant improvements to the main entrance on Walton Street, which in providing fully DDA-compliant access also takes the opportunity to remove the unattractive steps inserted in 1967, the ugly stair lift and the unattractive recessed modern doors.
- 2.18 These works return the form of the entrance to something much closer to the original 1913 arrangement (see the contemporary photograph at p.19 of Richard Griffiths Architects' Statement of Significance) and even the more vociferous objectors to the scheme as a whole have obliquely acknowledged the improvement this will bring: e.g. *'The doorway currently gives a good sense of arrival, and removal of the steps will enhance that by returning it to its 1913 aspect'* (letter from the OAHS to the Council dated 13 May 2013).
- 2.19 Certainly, it is quite clear that the improvements to the main entrance on Walton Street and the associated enhancement of the public realm continuing around the building onto Worcester Place are both directly conservation related *'public benefits'* that should be attached considerable weight in the balancing exercise referred to at paragraph 134 of the NPPF.
- 2.20 The final matter to consider in this section of the report is of course the proposed new roof, especially as it relates to the retained elements of the listed building. Here the starting point must be the contribution made by the existing roof structure and its cladding to Ruskin's *'special interest'* as a Grade II listed building.
- 2.21 This in my view is limited, owing both to its 'standard' form and relative lack of visibility behind the building's bold corniced parapet, and the fact that, as the Council's officers have pointed out in their report to committee (paragraph 41), *'As a building of the early C20th (and one that doesn't employ any innovative materials or technologies) the roof as 'historic fabric' holds very limited interest. This suggests that*

assessment of this aspect of the proposal should focus on the architectural and visual impact’.

- 2.22 The officers’ assessment of the impact of the proposed roof and its visual benefits as opposed to that of the existing roof, which they perceptively note *‘appears to have been designed as a utility measure to squeeze additional accommodation into the building volume, rather than being a deliberate, or for that matter, prominent element in the overall architectural composition’*, then follows at paragraphs 42 and 43 of the committee report.
- 2.23 In these the officers recognize *inter alia* that, as referenced in the Planning, Design & Access Statement, *‘The height of the roof is based on the rules of proportion in classical architecture’* and, critically, that *‘As the roof will be experienced mainly from street level, and as a form that recedes with height it will not appear as illustrated in a true elevation’*.
- 2.24 This is an important point, and for a much truer impression of the actual impact of the proposed roof on both the retained building and the street scene the reader is referred to Section 5.3 of the Planning, Design & Access Statement where the rationale behind the ‘roof concept’ is fully explained and illustrated and from which it is possible to gain a much more accurate feel for its graceful and elegant form.
- 2.25 As stated in the officers’ committee report, the proposed metal roof cladding *‘has led to a lot of disquiet through the public and statutory consultation responses’*, but this is not a concern I share and in this connection I believe that the parallels the scheme architects draw with well-known Victorian buildings elsewhere in Oxford (Scott’s work at Exeter, Butterfield’s at Balliol and Keble and Deane & Woodward’s at the University Museum for instance) are both pertinent and compelling.
- 2.26 All these buildings (especially Keble) drew much opprobrium at the time they were built, but they are now of course all part of the established and cherished character of Oxford. Significantly, all are bold and striking buildings, a characteristic they also share with the distinctive tower of St Barnabas’s Church, itself no shrinking violet, less than a mile away from Ruskin College in the heart of Jericho.

- 2.27 It is therefore encouraging that the Council’s officers have been bold enough to accept the ‘principle’ of the proposed roofing materials, albeit they are understandably anxious to have as much information as possible on the precise appearance and reflectivity of the metal tiles, in light of which additional detailed material is provided in Section 4 of the New Planning Addendum Statement.

- 2.28 The applicants also of course accept that this is among several ‘heritage’ matters which will need to be covered by a carefully worded condition if the applications are approved.

Worcester College

- 2.29 Although Worcester College states that it is *‘supportive of the aspiration of Exeter College to provide additional accommodation for its students and the principal (sic) of the reuse of the former Ruskin College site’* (letter from the Provost, Professor Jonathan Bate, to the Chairman of the Council’s West Area Planning Committee, dated 12 September 2013) in actuality it has raised a series of heritage-based objections to the proposals, even going to the trouble of employing its own Planning & Heritage Consultants, Grover Lewis Associates, to make these objections on its behalf.
- 2.30 This section of the report therefore focuses on these objections, including the unsubstantiated assertion that the proposals amount to *‘substantial harm’* to the setting of Worcester College and its grounds, which are included at Grade II* on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens.
- 2.31 The thrust of Grover Lewis Associates’ objection in terms of the proposals’ impact on the grounds of Worcester College relates to the chosen roofing material and their claim that in comparison with Worcester’s own 2006 Ruskin Lane Buildings *‘The proposed building, with its high curving roof, covered with assertive metal sheeting, and containing very large dormer windows, would clearly have much greater impact on the setting of the historic gardens and buildings of Worcester College. The height differential is nearly six meters’* (Grover Lewis letter to the Council dated 23 August 2013).

- 2.32 Not only is the reference to the difference in height incorrect (it is in fact 5.38m) but at eaves level the difference is 4.1m and, more importantly still, the ridge of the proposed building is set back some 5.4m behind the facade, further diminishing its visual impact when seen from the grounds of Worcester College.
- 2.33 There are several other compelling reasons why Grover Lewis Associates' proposition of '*substantial harm*' is hard to accept.
- 2.34 First, this assertion fails to take account of the fact that, as is the case with the existing building, the higher and longer part of the proposed building (the section closest to Walton Street) is virtually completely hidden from view by the dense belt of Holm oaks lying on the Worcester College side of the boundary, a point nicely illustrated in the 'verified view' included in Section 3 of the New Planning Addendum Statement.
- 2.35 Furthermore, in the existing longer distance view northwards from Worcester's main college buildings towards the site boundary with Ruskin, it is not only Worcester's own 2006 Ruskin Lane Buildings which are clearly visible but also the undistinguished rear elevations of the 1982 extensions of Ruskin College above and beyond the stone boundary wall to Ruskin Lane.
- 2.36 Likewise, when moving closer to the boundary wall with Ruskin Lane it is principally the rear elevation of the 1964-7 additions that becomes apparent in the more obliquely angled views available from this point over both the Ruskin Lane boundary wall and the boundary wall between the two sites.
- 2.37 As noted in the recent list entry for the former Ruskin College neither the 1964-7 nor the 1982 extensions is considered by English Heritage to be of '*special interest*' and, in my opinion, it would not be going too far to say that they actually detract from it.
- 2.38 This is an important point, especially when one considers that the view of these buildings from Worcester College's grounds is of their rear elevations rather than their perhaps rather more carefully composed front elevations on to Worcester Place.
- 2.39 The relatively poor quality of the existing views towards Ruskin College from the grounds of Worcester College is not of course justification for saying that 'anything goes' in this location or that there is not scope for improvement but before looking at the ways in which the application proposals meet this objective, it is first worth considering the nature of these particular views in the context of the grounds of Worcester College as a whole.
- 2.40 The first point to make in this regard is of course that the views northwards to Ruskin College are not of major significance in historic terms and do not appear to have been consciously planned as, for instance, was the case with the prospect looking westwards from the principal elevation of the Provost's Lodgings, built by Henry Keene in 1773-6.
- 2.41 This building is noted in the English Heritage Garden Register entry as being designed to look like a '*Palladian country house*' and it is quite clear that the main rooms in the Lodgings were deliberately placed on the west elevation in order to enjoy the views of the Provost's Garden, the later addition of the lake beyond in the early 19th century further enhancing the prospect in this direction.
- 2.42 As shown in Richard Griffiths Architects' Heritage Impact Assessment, there are also limited views to the north available from the Provost's garden but it is important to note that these are filtered through what is now '*a continuous belt of trees surrounding the perimeter walk (unfortunately including along the lakeside) broken in only one position to the north. It is only in this position that (as with the existing buildings at Ruskin College) views of the new buildings will be obtained, glimpsed as an incident on the perimeter walk and from the bridge linking the Provost's garden to the south garden. The rest of the south garden is separated from the new buildings by two lines of trees, and they will therefore not be seen. The new buildings will be glimpsed in places along the perimeter walk around the lake behind trees in winter, but obscured by foliage in summer*'.
- 2.43 In this connection it is also worth observing that although there are obviously views to the north available from the windows to the upper-floor rooms in the north elevation of the Provost's Lodgings, these rooms and indeed the elevation itself are of secondary importance in architectural terms, a point further emphasized by the fact that they

- also look down over a courtyard of service buildings roofed in concrete tiles in the immediate foreground.
- 2.44 This two-storey courtyard range was formed in the 1950s by the addition of a north wing (the Besse Building) to earlier, probably 18th-century wings, projecting at right-angles from the north range of the main quad, that to the west originally the Provost's kitchen on the ground floor (converted into the 'Memorial Room' in the late 1940s) with the wing to the east originally forming stables.
- 2.45 There have been several further alterations to this courtyard range since the conversion/extension works in the late 1940s/1950s, the most recent being those carried out as the result of consents granted in 2006, which also included the creation of new vehicular access arrangements and the construction of a garage for the Provost just to the west of the courtyard buildings.
- 2.46 The relative lack of significance that can be attached to the views northwards from the Provost's Lodgings also applies to the views northwards from the north (rear) elevation of the north range to the main quad at Worcester (The Terrace) in which the glimpses available from some of its upper-floor windows towards the Radcliffe Observatory appear to be fortuitous rather than consciously planned.
- 2.47 Furthermore, where these views are at their most extensive – from the dormered windows on the attic floor- they can clearly be of no historic significance in relation to the Observatory as this floor (with its partly copper Mansard roof) was only added to The Terrace in 1926.
- 2.48 The area immediately to the north of The Terrace always seems to have been part of the college's 'working' area rather than a part of the grounds that was deliberately laid out primarily for visual or aesthetic pleasure, much of the western part of the area being historically occupied by an orchard.
- 2.49 This orchard area is now bisected by a tarmac-surfaced footpath leading from the old college buildings through the archway in the Besse Building across to the 2006 Ruskin Lane Buildings and the other modern Worcester College buildings beyond them.
- 2.50 Much of this 'working' character however remains today with some of the area north of the main college buildings and the Fellows' garden being given over to car parking, with a maintenance yard and other service buildings in the north-east corner all of which do nothing to contribute positively to the overall experience or enjoyment of the more attractive and historically important elements of the college's grounds.
- 2.51 Unsurprisingly, this area of the grounds gets little attention in the English Heritage Register Entry description, first written in 1997 and amended in 2000.
- 2.52 The history and character of Worcester College's grounds as a whole is nicely summarized in the officers' report to the West Area Planning Committee (paragraphs 45-48, although the statement at paragraph 45 that the Garden is registered at Grade II is incorrect), before they go on to analyze the impact of the Ruskin College proposals at paragraphs 49 and 50, where it is noted that '*The proposal will change the view, but officers conclude that the existing view does not hold such significance that it should not be changed*'.
- 2.53 I agree with this assessment. Change is inevitable (indeed it is change that has made Worcester College's gardens and grounds what they are today) and neither it nor the visibility of a proposed building are in themselves necessarily harmful.
- 2.54 What is actually critical, and this is evident in all current government policy and accompanying English Heritage guidance on the historic environment, including 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (October 2011), is the impact on '*significance*', the process being first to define what constitutes the '*setting*' of the heritage asset(s) involved, then to identify what is '*significant*' about that setting and finally to quantify the impact of proposals for change on that '*significance*'.
- 2.55 Unfortunately, there is nothing in the comments of Grover Lewis Associates on behalf of Worcester College, or the concerns raised by the Georgian Group and Ancient Monuments Society (e-mailed comments to the Council of 10 June and 11 June respectively) to suggest that the objectors have in fact gone through this process.

- 2.56 Rather, despite the criticisms made of the documentation submitted in support of the proposals by Richard Griffiths Architects and others, their approach seems to be a remarkably unsophisticated one; namely that a sizeable (and largely new) building is proposed alongside a Grade II* registered Garden containing several Grade I listed buildings in a conservation area; *ergo* there must be ‘*harm*’ and that ‘*harm*’ has to be ‘*substantial*’.
- 2.57 This will simply not do. There is nothing in legislation or guidance to suggest that because major change to a heritage asset is proposed that any ‘*harm*’ flowing from that change will necessarily be ‘*substantial*’ or, likewise, that because the assets affected are highly graded the threshold becomes higher and the impact of even minor change to the assets affected must equate to ‘*substantial harm*’.
- 2.58 Indeed if this were the case, there would never be change to or in the vicinity of any listed building, let alone one listed at Grade I or Grade II*, a proposition which is of course refuted by the amount of extensive and continuing change undertaken in Worcester College’s own grounds during the last 30 years or so.
- 2.59 Certainly, it seems to me that the only way in which the ‘*harm*’ caused to the grounds of Worcester College (if in fact there is any harm at all) could conceivably be regarded as ‘*substantial*’ would be if it were to adversely affect the setting of either the Gardens or the listed buildings it contains to such a degree that the high grade of protection afforded these assets would be called into question.
- 2.60 This will clearly not be the case as a result of Exeter College’s proposals at the former Ruskin College site and is presumably the reason why English Heritage made no comment on the impact of the proposals on Worcester College and its grounds in David Brock’s letter to the Council dated 16 May 2013.

The Conservation Area

- 2.61 The former Ruskin College is actually situated in the Central Oxford Conservation Area (for which unfortunately no detailed Conservation Area Character Appraisal is yet

available) but is also located quite close to the Jericho Conservation Area, for which the Council has prepared a detailed Character Appraisal (published in October 2010).

- 2.62 Several of the objectors to the application proposals refer to this document (including the Victorian Society and Grover Lewis Associates on behalf of Worcester College) but the first point to note in this regard is that the document actually makes no mention at all of the former Ruskin College.
- 2.63 This is because, while it is perfectly proper (as Grover Lewis Associates do) to note that Ruskin is one of a series of institutional buildings along Walton Street (the Oxford University Press buildings further up Walton Street are of course another) and forms part of a transitional area between the city centre and the suburbs beyond, the clearest views of the building are not from Jericho at all.
- 2.64 Instead, the clearest views of Ruskin are from the stretch of Walton Street extending to the junction with Little Clarendon Street and Walton Crescent and also from the south along the shorter section of Walton Street between Ruskin and the main entrance to Worcester College, all of which lies outside the Jericho Conservation Area.
- 2.65 There is no denying that the application proposals will have an impact on the views of Ruskin College from these sections of Walton Street, but in this connection not only do I agree with the officers’ opinion (paragraph 51 of the committee report) that the later extensions to be demolished ‘*do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area*’, I also consider, for the reasons set out at paragraphs 2.20 to 2.28 above, that the impact of the proposed new roof in relation to Ruskin’s retained east and north facades will not be harmful to these views.
- 2.66 In assessing the impact of the proposals on Worcester Place, the Council’s officers note (paragraph 53 of the committee report) that ‘*A part of the immediate context is characterised by domestic housing, but this does not mean that any new building on this site must emulate that domestic characteristic*’.

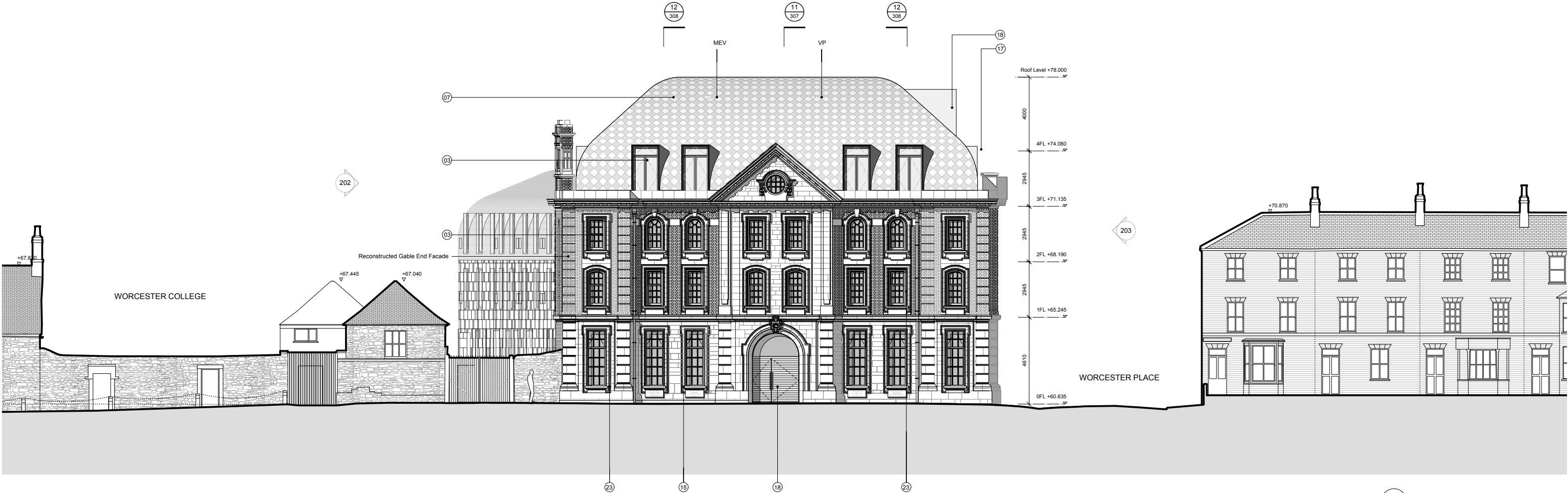
- 2.67 Again I agree with this assessment, an additional point to make in this regard being that both the original 1913 facade to be retained and the 1936 and 1964-7 extensions to be removed are themselves hardly of domestic character or scale.
- 2.68 The only element of the existing Ruskin buildings that could in fact be seen as having this characteristic are the 1982 extensions at the far west end of the site, although it is true to say that their rather feeble form and bland appearance hardly stand as recommendations for repeating this approach in the new proposals.
- 2.69 Finally, it should be noted that English Heritage's letter to the Council dated 16 May 2013 makes no reference to the impact of the proposals on either the Central Oxford or the Jericho Conservation Areas.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 For all the detailed reasons set out in this report, it is my considered professional opinion that the application proposals at the former Ruskin College are compatible with its recent designation as a Grade II listed building.
- 3.2 Critically, the three reasons given in the English Heritage list entry description for its addition to the statutory list are all respected, while any '*harm*' caused to its '*significance*' is, despite the extent of the intervention proposed, clearly '*less than substantial*' and outweighed by the many public benefits (some of them directly site-related) which are set out in this report and the New Planning Addendum Statement.
- 3.3 Much the same situation applies to the impact on Worcester College and its grounds and the Central Oxford and Jericho Conservation Areas, where again any '*harm*' caused is '*less than substantial*' and outweighed by the public benefits involved.
- 3.4 As such, it is my view that the application proposals fully comply with the relevant policies of the City Council's Core Strategy and adopted Local Plan, the advice contained in the NPPF and, most importantly of all, meet the statutory requirements set by Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix iii.

Amended Drawings



1 WALTON STREET ELEVATION



2 WALTON STREET ELEVATION 1:200

0125

RevisionDateNotes

103/10/13Issued for information.

231/10/13Updated Elevations.

72

Notes

1. Bath Stone

2. Brick

3. Composite Double Glazed Windows with 200mm Reveals

4. Frameless Fixed Glazing

5. PPC Aluminium Cappings

6. PPC Aluminium Gutter Detail

7. Rimex Stainless Steel Roof Tiles

8. PPC Stainless Steel Ventilation Grill

9. PPC Aluminium Panel

10. Stainless Steel Window System with Door

11. Aluminium Framed Glazing

12. Aluminium Framed Glazed Door

13. Metal Gate

14. Recessed Solar Thermal Array Panels

15. Existing Retained Facade

16. Oak Gate with inset Door

17. Anodized Aluminium Cladding

18. Double Glazed Dormer

19. Glass Balustrade

20. Frameless Glazing between Timber Fins

21. Bronze Anodized Casement Windows

Key Plan

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.

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.

3. This drawing to be read in conjunction with all relevant specifications, engineers and specialists consultants information and any discrepancies reported prior to installation.

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ProjectTitleClientScaleDateDrawing

: EXETER COLLEGE WALTON STREET QUAD

: PROPOSED WALTON STREET ELEVATION

: EXETER COLLEGE

: A3 - 1:200 : A1 - 1:100

: 31.10.13

: 2344-A0070



1 WORCESTER PLACE ELEVATION



2 WORCESTER PLACE ELEVATION 1:200

Revision			Date		Notes		Notes	Key Plan	<div>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. 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. 3. This drawing to be read in conjunction with all relevant specifications, engineers and specialists consultants information and any discrepancies reported prior to installation.</div>	<div>ABA Alison Brooks Architects Ltd Studio 610, Highgate Studios, 53/79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TL T 0207 267 9177 F 0207 267 9172 E info@alisonbrooksarchitects.com</div>	Project Title Client Scale Date Drawing	: EXETER COLLEGE WALTON STREET QUAD : PROPOSED WORCESTER PLACE ELEVATION EXETER COLLEGE A3 - 1:200 : A1 - 1:100 31.10.13 2344_A0072						
A	03/10/13	Issue for information.																
B	31/10/13	Updated Elevations.																
							1. Bath Stone	7. Rimex Stainless Steel Roof Tiles	15. Existing Retained Facade									
							2. Brick	8. PPC Stainless Steel Grill	16. Oak Gate with inset Door									
							3. Composite Double Glazed Windows with 200mm Reveals	9. PPC Aluminium Panel	17. Anodized Aluminium Cladding, reveal									
							4. Frameless Fixed Glazing	10. Stainless Steel Window System with Door	18. Double Glazed Dormer									
							5. PPC Aluminium Cappings	11. Aluminium Framed Glazing	19. Glass Balustrade									
							6. PPC Aluminium Gutter Detail	12. Aluminium Framed Glazed Door	20. Frameless Glazing between Timber Fins									
								13. Metal Gate	21. Cycle Storage									
								14. Recessed Solar Thermal Array Panels	22. Bronze Anodized Casement Windows									