

Planning Application : 13/01075/LBD Former Ruskin College site. Walton Street

I am writing on behalf of the St John Street Area Residents' Association to express our concerns about the proposals for the design, increased height and materials of the roof in this application.

The current roof of the former Ruskin College building is substantially higher than the roofs of houses in Walton Street. As a result, this building's roof is clearly visible from the backs of the houses in Beaumont Buildings and from many, if not all of those in St John Street (Beaumont Buildings and St John Street are in the City Centre conservation area). I would guess that the roof is also visible from a wider area such as Beaumont Street as well as from a good deal of Walton Street and Jericho. The present slate pitched roof with white painted dormer windows is similar to that of the surrounding houses and therefore is not very obtrusive in spite of its height. The proposed roof would stick out much more than that on the building at present for several important reasons:-

1. Its increased height compared with that at present.
2. The proposed shape of both the roof and the dormer windows, some of which would be high in the roof.
3. The proposed materials of stainless steel for the roof and aluminium cladding round the large dormer windows both of which are quite out of character with those used on the surrounding buildings or, indeed, in central Oxford.

The result of all these factors is that the proposed building will obtrude on views from the conservation area in an unacceptable way and one which seems quite unnecessary. A slightly larger roof of a similar shape and materials to the present could allow more accommodation in an acceptable way. I can find no evidence in the material submitted with this application that the issue of the view of the roof from a distance and from the upper floors of buildings in all the surrounding area has been addressed by the applicants, who have only simulated the view of the proposed roof from ground level and close by . This gives very narrow views and misleadingly suggests that little of the roof would be visible.

Margaret Booth, 43 St John Street, Oxford, OX1 2LH, 20 June 2013

On behalf of the St John Street Area Residents' Association