

PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE

26th June 2012

Application Number: 1. 12/00459/FUL
2. 12/00460/LBC

Decision Due by: 19th April 2012

Proposal:

1. Extension to existing library to provide book storage, reading rooms, staff accommodation, seminar rooms, landscaping to quadrangle and provision of level access and bicycle storage facilities.
2. External and internal alterations and extension to library involving removal of inserted floor and staircase, insertion of new staircase, lift to provide book storage, reading rooms, staff accommodation and seminar space

Site Address: Magdalen College, [Appendix 1]

Ward: Holywell Ward

Agent: Wright And Wright Architects **Applicant:**

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

1. At its meeting on 30th May 2012 the West Area Planning Committee resolved to refuse the application for planning permission for the following reasons.

(a) The proposal would form an inappropriate visual relationship with the existing Grade II* listed New Library building and the surrounding development that lies within the Central City and University Conservation Area. The proposals are therefore considered to be contrary to policies HE3, HE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

(b) The construction of the plinth/terrace would cause unacceptable harm by its visual impact on the setting and special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II* listed New Library building that is not outweighed by the public benefit of development. The proposals are therefore considered to be contrary to policies HE3, HE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

and listed building consent application for the following reasons

(a) The proposal would form an inappropriate visual relationship with the existing Grade II* listed New Library building and the surrounding development that lies within the Central City and University Conservation Area. The proposals for listed building consent are therefore contrary to

the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

(b) The construction of the plinth/terrace would cause unacceptable harm by its visual impact on the setting and special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II* listed New Library building that is not outweighed by the public benefit of development. The proposals for listed building consent are therefore contrary to the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

2. This decision has been called in to Planning Review Committee by Cllrs Cook, Tanner, Fry, Sanders, Turner, Seamons, Pressel, Rowley, McManners, Coulter, Price, Kennedy, Khan and Clarkson, because the reasons for refusal are not considered strong ones with a risk of losing on appeal.

3. Since the WAPC meeting the college has prepared an information pack rehearsing the college's need, design principles and proposed benefits of the scheme. This has been circulated to all committee members and English Heritage.

During discussion members of WAPC raised concerns about

- the design of the lanterns on the Longwall range
- the impact of the basement extension on the relationship of the existing library entrance with the quad and
- the design approach to this basement extension.

4. Resolving this impact, by removing the basement extension and adding it to the new Longwall range is not a desirable alternative having a greater impact on the setting of the library within the quad and greater impact in the wider setting when viewed from the High Street and Longwall Street (see Appendix A to this report). In the additional information the College also explains that the landscaping involved to provide an inclusive access at basement level would raise structural issues (exposing part of the foundation and basement walls).

5. In response to the committee's concerns the College is exploring changes to the landscaping to provide a visual connection between the existing door to the library and the new quad form – this is likely to be some stepped arrangement. If the Committee is minded to support these proposals it is recommended that a condition be attached to any permission to reserve the details of this element.

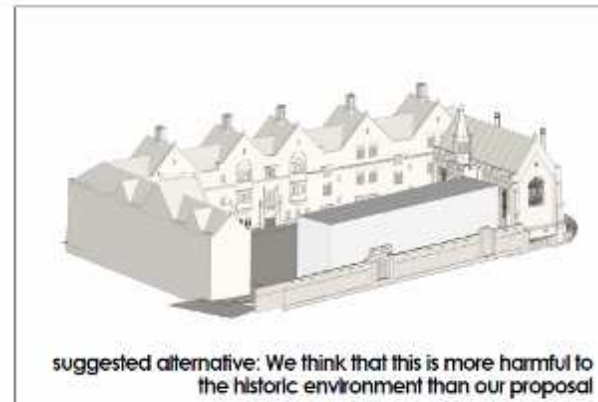
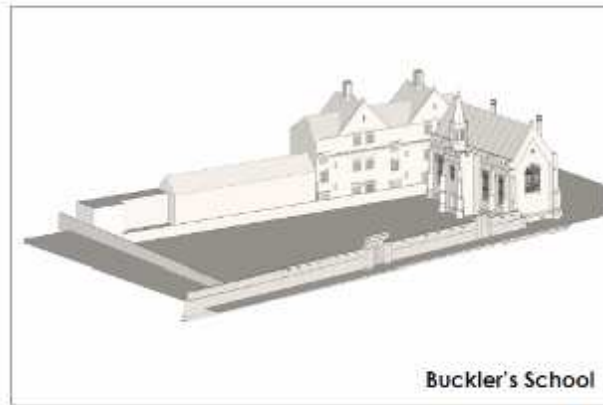
6. The additional information supplied seeks to articulate more clearly how these proposals meet the college's identified needs and in particular the requirement for the seminar spaces designed to support new collaborative learning amongst students.

7. English Heritage has commented on this additional information and concludes that there is harm that has been identified and that the local planning authority needs to satisfy itself that the benefits of the proposal outweigh this harm.

8. The benefits (see Appendix B) include reinstatement of the railings to the High Street frontage, improving the internal spatial qualities of the library, providing access for all, improving the building's energy efficiency.

Officers' conclusions remain as in the report to WAPC, that on balance the harm this proposal may involve is minimised and compensated by the public and heritage benefits.

5.0 THE BALANCE OF PROS AND CONS
COMPARATIVE SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS



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6.0 BENEFITS

If you see the changes proposed as harmful, you should consider whether this would be outweighed by the benefits to:

THE CITY - The appearance from the High Street will be enhanced.

THE DISABLED - Will have access to all areas of Magdalen College.

THE STUDENTS - Will have a far better environment, much greater reader capacity, the ability to use wifi outside.

THE UNIVERSITY - Better facilities will be available to all members who wish to visit Magdalen Library.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY - The social and communal values identified by English Heritage will be retained and enhanced by keeping the library at the heart of the college.

THE ENVIRONMENT - The carbon footprint of Magdalen's library will be greatly reduced. Improved thermal and acoustic performance and sustainable reuse. Passive ventilation.

HERITAGE - The 'harm' done by Scott will be undone.

THE BUILDING - Will be repaired and conserved.

THE COLLEGE - Will have better facilities to attract students, increased flexibility and reduced running costs.

STAFF - Will have greatly improved working conditions.

WILDLIFE - Will have better feeding and habitat opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have received invaluable support from a number of consultants. William Filmer-Sankey of Alan Baxter prepared the Justification. He is a highly respected architectural historian who was Director of the Victorian Society. His structural engineering colleagues advised on adaptations to the historic structure. Their other projects include works at St. Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London and Oxford Castle. Max Fordham advised on environmental aspects and have been instrumental in helping to develop a very low carbon solution. Dominic Cole who is Chair of the Garden History advised on landscaping. Beryl Menzies, President of Building Control Officers has advised on fire safety. We have also been fortunate to have been advised by Ben Ford and Julian Munby of Oxford Archaeology. Gardiner & Theobald Oxford have costed the proposals.

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