

Appendix 2: Summary of Public Consultation

4-5 Queen Street and 114-119 St Aldate's (14/02256/FUL)

The following comments have been received from Statutory Organisations and Third Parties in relation to the application.

Statutory Organisations

- English Heritage

English Heritage had extensive pre-application discussions on the design of the proposed new building at 4-5 Queen Street and 114-119 St Aldates. We are content that the design, scale and appearance of the proposed new building at 4-5 Queen Street and additional storey on 114-119 St Aldates would not harm the significance of the Central (University and City) Conservation Area. However, the site has high potential for archaeological remains of national importance and further field evaluations are required prior to determining the application to establish the significance of any buried archaeology.

This application consists of a proposal to construct an entirely new building on the site of 4-5 Queen Street which wraps around the rear of 115 St Aldates and add a new attic storey to 114-119 St Aldates in order to provide student accommodation. This raises two conservation issues: firstly, the potential impact on views of the distinctive Oxford roofscape of towers and spires which is a defining characteristic of the city (and therefore a key aspect of the significance of the conservation area). Secondly, Queen Street is one of the major historic streets within the city where, although most buildings are relatively modern, it still retains the route of the medieval street and has an interesting streetscape characterised by some relatively narrow frontages inherited from medieval burgage plots. Any new building needs to sit comfortably within this context and contribute positively to the appearance of the street.

The height of the proposed building would exceed the maximum height for new buildings of 79.3m above Ordnance Datum set out in Policy HE.9 of the Oxford Local Plan. However, in our view the height of the proposed building would not be harmful to the distinctive Oxford skyline and thus the significance of the conservation area as no buildings of architectural note would be obscured by the proposed building in views from nearby Carfax Tower. The design of the roof is clever and comprises a series of mono pitched roofs covered in a copper coloured metal that together would create a visually interesting roofscape of a very high quality and would thus be a significant improvement on the quality of the roofscape currently visible from the Tower. Long views towards the City (shown in views 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15) would also not be harmed by the proposed building as the varied and high quality roofscape would sit comfortably amongst surrounding buildings of similar scale and massing. That said, English Heritage would not view the scale of the proposed building as a precedent for new buildings along Queen Street, as a distinctive characteristic of this street is the descending scale in building heights from 115 St Aldates to the more modest buildings of three to four storeys further down the street. We also consider that the current proposals represent the maximum height that could be accommodated on the site.

Anything higher would begin to obscure buildings of note in views from Carfax Tower and would likely dominate and rise above the distinctive and rich tapestry of buildings that underpin the spires and towers which together form the attractive and highly significant Oxford skyline.

We are also content with the proposed Queen Street elevation, a well ordered and rational frontage which would work well alongside the varied but ordered frontages surrounding it. The additional relief on the elevation provided by the proposed deep window openings and projecting bands would create a visually interesting elevation that reflects the more intricate modelling of buildings in the surrounding area. We are also content with the proposed attic storey on 114-119 St Aldates as the way in which the attic is recessed means that it would only be visible in glimpsed views from St Aldates and Cornmarket.

Our only concern remains the buried archaeology. The site is located in a critical area for the understanding of the origins of the town of Oxford lying as it does at the very centre of the oldest part of the town. As yet it is unclear whether there are intact archaeological deposits under the current building. If these do survive they could be of national significance. This potential should be assessed through field evaluation before any decision is taken on this application in accordance with paragraphs 128 and 129 of the NPPF.

English Heritage is content with the design, scale and appearance of the proposed building but remains concerned about the potential impact on buried archaeology which could be of national importance. We therefore recommend that further field evaluation is required prior to determination of the application. We would welcome the opportunity of advising further. Please consult us again if any additional information or amendments are submitted. If, notwithstanding our advice, you propose to approve the scheme in its present form, please advise us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity.

- Environment Agency Thames Region: No objection

- Oxford Civic Society

The Society is concerned about the following points.

- The location of the refuse storage area is through the cycle storage area, at the furthest point from Queen St on the ground level and a long way from the street. This arrangement is inconvenient, risks litter being dropped and it seems inevitable that bicycles will be damaged on occasions.
- The only amenity area for resident students is located in the basement; this is not satisfactory for students who may have no other nearby such facility (as in other college buildings). Consideration should be given to alternative or additional provision elsewhere in the development, e.g. common rooms on upper floors
- There appear to be no area for management of the accommodation, except for a small office in the basement. It is unclear what arrangements are proposed for management of the student accommodation, but particularly in this location, we would consider that onsite supervision is necessary

- Oxford Preservation Trust

The Trust have been pleased to be involved in the pre-application discussions in this very sensitive position at the heart of Oxford

We have been concerned at the heights of this development in this location next to Carfax Tower throughout and would have preferred that any building in this location was no higher than the existing. However, we recognise the attempts that have been made to create a varied roofscape which will not dominate in the view and that the top storey has been set back behind the Queen Street façade building line in an attempt to soften its impact from street level. We do still make the point that it will be prominent in the views

This is a big building in a narrow street and we have had a number of discussions over the façade onto Queen Street. We regret the loss of the reference to narrow plots which date from Saxon times when this formed part of the Jewish Quarter, and which remain the character of the adjoining buildings in Queen Street. What is proposed pays more reference to Carfax than to Queen Street and we are concerned that it will not sit easily here.

- Oxfordshire County Council

- General comment: The county council supports the development in principle. However, the following issues need to be considered in determining this proposal.

The servicing of the development could cause a negative impact on the operation of St Aldate's and Queen Street, particularly during the daytime when there are large numbers of buses arriving and departing from the St Aldate's street. A servicing plan needs to be submitted and agreed by the county council for the development which prevents routine deliveries and servicing from disrupting the operation of buses on St Aldate's or pedestrian amenity on Queen Street. The plan would also need to address how student's belongings can be dropped off and picked up at either end of university terms without impacting negatively on the operation of the streets.

St Aldate's is the location of significant numbers of bus services to south and east Oxford, as well as to locations outside the city. Many other bus services pass through St Aldate's without stopping, on route to/from other stops in the High Street, Speedwell Street and beyond. It is always difficult to provide bus stops and the routing of buses in Oxford city centre. Therefore, the county council would request that any temporary relocation of bus stops as a result of this development be avoided. Around 50% of people currently access the city centre by bus, so it is important to maintain the flow of buses and their passengers.

If permitted, the proposal will impact upon various infrastructure and services provided by the county council. To address these, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) revenue would be necessary. The transport schemes that CIL could be put towards are: Improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists in City centre, including Queen Street, St Giles, Magdalen Street, George Street and Broad Street; Improved City centre cycling environment; Cycle

parking, cycle hire or cycle hubs; Public realm improvements within City centre; Reconfiguration of city centre bus and passenger waiting facilities

- Highways Authority: St Aldates is a narrow street which conveys very large numbers of buses and coaches (up to 200 per hour) and their passengers linking the City Centre with a wide swathe of East and South Oxford and beyond. The full width of the carriageway at the northern end of St Aldates is required for the passage of buses and other vehicles. St Aldates also contains 10 very busy bus stops, including stops G4 and G5 in the close vicinity of the development site. These stops serve the very busy Cowley Road corridor and the Thornhill Park and Ride site.

The footway adjacent to the development site in St Aldates is very narrow, and is used by huge numbers of pedestrians walking along the length of this key city thoroughfare and is also used to form long queues of waiting passengers for buses. It is imperative that there is no reduction in the available width of this footway.

The provision of bus stops and the routeing of buses in Oxford is a hugely controversial subject, and the temporary relocation of any bus stops should be avoided, not only because of the extreme difficulties in finding alternative locations, but also because of the likelihood of many complaints, adverse media comment etc. Around 50% of people currently access the city centre by bus, so the importance of maintaining the flow of buses and their passengers cannot be overstated.

The Local Highways Authority have raised no objections subject to the following conditions

- A Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be included which ensures that all construction traffic is routed via Queen Street outside core trading hours and that St Aldates will not be used.
 - A management regime for the student accommodation that prevents cars being brought into Oxford.
- Drainage Authority: The drainage flow from the existing hard areas drain to the existing sewers, these flows could be reduced by the use of grey water recycling.
 - Property: It is calculated that this proposed development would generate a population of 133 additional residents. If permitted, the proposal will impact upon various County Council related infrastructure and services. To address these, CIL revenue would be necessary. The County's non-transport infrastructure priorities arising from development in this area are (not in particular order):
 - Improved capacity and accessibility of Westgate library
 - Improved capacity and accessibility of early intervention centres
 - Older people day centre and learning disabilities day centre in West Oxford
 - Extensions to existing primary schools
 - Extensions to existing secondary schools

- Extensions to special needs accommodation
 - Extensions to existing 6th form schools
 - Improved capacity and accessibility of existing children's centres
- Thames Water Utilities Limited
Thames Water have submitted two sets of comments on the 9th September 2014 and 29th October 2014

Water Comments

Thames Water recommend the following informative be attached to this planning permission. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

Thames Water recommend the following informative be attached to any planning permission: There is a Thames Water main crossing the development site which may/will need to be diverted at the Developer's cost, or necessitate amendments to the proposed development design so that the aforementioned main can be retained. Unrestricted access must be available at all times for maintenance and repair. Please contact Thames Water Developer Services, Contact Centre on Telephone No: 0845 850 2777 for further information.

Waste Comments

In their comments dated 9th September 2014, Thames Water stated

With the information provided Thames Water has been unable to determine the waste water infrastructure needs of this application. Should the Local Planning Authority look to approve the application ahead of further information being provided, we request that the following 'Grampian Style' condition be applied –

"Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed".

Reason - The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community'

Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation is inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Control Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the Planning Application approval

A Drainage Statement had been supplied at the time of the application, and following a review of the document, Thames Water made the following comments on the 29th October 2014.

Section 3.3 of the drainage statement for the proposed development (Drainage Statement, 114-119 ST ALDATES AND 4-5 QUEEN STREET, OXFORD, dated: June 2014) indicates that the developer plans to discharge surface water via the existing 300mm diameter combined (foul and surface water) connection to the 225mm diameter public FOUL sewer in Queen Street.

This proposal contradicts current plans to address flooding in Oxford by separating surface water connections from the foul network. Both St Aldates and Queen Street are serviced by separate foul and surface water sewers that the development could connect to following demonstration that the hierarchy of surface water disposal methods (1st Soakaways; 2nd Watercourses; 3rd Sewer) have been examined and proven to be impracticable, In accordance with part H of the Building Regulations Act 2002.

Section 3.3 of the development's Drainage Statement concludes that the existing combined (foul and surface water) 300mm diameter connection to the public system has a maximum flow capacity of 57 litres/second. The receiving 225mm diameter foul sewer has a maximum flow capacity of 43.45 litres/second. Please Note that the foul sewer system is not intended to convey surface water, and has been sized to accommodate foul flows only. This is why there is a separate surface water system servicing the City. Miss-connection of surface water to the foul system can rapidly consume capacity in foul sewer during wet weather and result in sewer flooding. This is why it is of prime importance that new developments actively seek to separate foul and surface water flows and control the rate of discharge to the public system by incorporating SuDS into their design.

As previously requested, the developer is required to submit a separate foul and surface water drainage strategy. Detailing; calculated peak foul and surface water discharge rates at each existing connection to the public sewer system, calculated peak foul and surface water discharge rates at each proposed connection (post development) to the public sewer system (Please Note: Foul and surface water must not be combined), SuDS incorporated into the development's drainage with attenuation capacity requirement and associated calculations and proof that the surface water disposal methods hierarchy has been investigated. It is recognised that some of this information has been provided in separate documents, but for continuity, the developer is requested to include this information in the drainage strategy. If, following review of the requested drainage strategy, initial investigations conclude that the existing foul or surface water sewer network is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development, it will be necessary for the developer to fund an Impact Study to ascertain, with a greater degree of certainty, whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing waste foul and/or surface water infrastructure, and, if required, recommend network upgrades.

Third Parties

17 London Place: Whilst the proposal meets the policy of student accommodation on a main road, I feel the site is more suitable for commercial, and it would be a pity to lose central commercial / employment space. The accommodation seems to be in 2 parts - part for Christ Church and part for private letting. Whilst the Christ Church

part has local support from the college, the private section has no amenity space (roof garden perhaps) and poor light and outlook to the rear. The access for bins is poor having to collect through a cycle store and down a narrow alley. Service access generally is poor. Also there does not seem to be any level 3 (disabled) provisions. I think a more detailed design should be considered by the Design Review Committee.

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