



**ADDENDUM TO
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK BASED ASSESSMENT**

**114-119 ST ALDATES & 4-5
QUEEN STREET
OXFORD**

**Local Planning Authority:
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**Site centred at:
451320, 206130**

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114 – 119 St Aldates & 4 – 5 Queen Street, Oxford

Addendum to Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

1. Introduction

This addendum has been produced following post application consultation with the City Archaeologist David Radford. In this he has requested that:

- Additional information be considered in respect of the baseline (Medieval topographic maps of Oxford produced by HE Salter, and Dodd, A. (2003) *Oxford Before the University*). Greater consideration should also be given to the origin and potential for tunnels/cellars connecting the west and east sides of St Aldates.
- A review of existing and proposed levels be undertaken and that this be compared with predicted levels of archaeological survival to arrive at a more detailed understanding of potential impact.

2. Baseline

The Medieval topography of the site is covered within the existing desk-based assessment in section 4.8. In this, although Salter is not directly referenced, studies based on his work, and used to reconstruct the 12th to 14th century land holdings are used. This identifies historic properties at No's 4 and 5 Queen Street and 114 to 119 St Aldates. Properties on the south-west corner of Carfax (including the site the Old Guildhall and Swindlestock Tavern are outside of the application site and will be unaffected by the proposed development.

In *Oxford Before the University*, Munby provides a commentary on the development of properties around Carfax (p 224-245). In this he demonstrates that, while the boundaries of the tenements have often been stable from the 13th century, the current arrangements result from, inter alia, the Carfax Improvement Scheme of 1986, resulting in a more open design, with wider roads in the approach to Carfax, and with frontages set back from the original narrow Medieval street lines.

Munby mentions cellars beneath Swindlestock Tavern and Knap Hall on the eastern side of St Aldates (now beneath the current Town Hall), and his plan shows these extending beneath St Aldates itself (his Figure 5.17). Parts of these cellars may survive and may have given rise to the tradition that they represent tunnels beneath and between pre-existing properties in the Medieval Jewry, although this origin is considered unlikely (Munby pers comm). The projected position of the cellars lies outside the application site and so they should be unaffected by the proposed development.

Excavation within Queen Street are noted within the original DBA, but more detail is supplied within *Oxford Before the University*. The excavations, within the application site, at No.4 Queen Street are reported on in detail (p 245-247), as are those to the west at 7 to 8 (p 247-254). The following is a summary of the main finding where they have particular relevance to the application site.

At 4 Queen Street a small test-pit was excavated within the in-filled basement of an earlier building (now replaced by the property occupied by the retailer Swarovski). The test-pit was

located in the north-eastern corner of the basement and was excavated to a depth of 2.6m beneath the existing basement level.

The top of the basement at the time was recorded at 62.90m, with the basement slab shown at up to 150mm thick. Archaeological remains survived, therefore, from 62.75m. Undisturbed natural deposits were recorded at around 61.70m giving a depth of archaeological remains of 1.05m, although individual pits/well were dug below this level to at least the full depth of the test-pit.

The earliest evidence was for a series of undated surfaces, possibly a yard or street. These were cut by pits and a well, with backfill including pottery of late Saxon (early to mid 11th century) date. These were overlain by deposits including a stone wall and floor surfaces associated with pottery of 11th to 13th century date. Pottery indicates the wall was demolished in the 17th century. The evidence indicates a well-preserved complex sequence of urban land-use relating to the late Saxon/Medieval street frontage.

At 7 to 8 Queen Street a similar sequence of deposits was identified, the earliest being associated with pottery of late Saxon date (although a Roman sherd, possibly residual, was found at the surface of the natural gravel). Deposits including remains of building, internal surfaces and possible street surfaces were recorded dating into the 12th century. Here archaeological deposits survived from around 62.6m, were in general around 1m in depth, with pits cut to greater depth of up to 1.4m below that.

These two excavations show that archaeological remains can survive beneath existing basements fronting on to Queen Street (and also, by implication St Aldates). Later basements will have truncated these remains, but extensive areas of horizontal stratigraphy including remains of structures and surfaces might survive along Queen Street to depths of 61.6m, with deeper pits surviving beneath this.

3. Estimated Existing and Proposed Impacts

Plans submitted with the application demonstrate that across much of the site existing basements are to be retained and proposed works are to be undertaken within the existing basement depths.

The proposed development fronting St Aldates will retain the existing structures and basements. There will be no significant additional impact in these areas, although there may be limited groundworks for new services. The following, therefore focuses on development fronting No's 4/5 Queen Street.

Existing topography

The historic ground surface has changed over time but existing ground levels show a north to south slope with levels on the pavement in front of No 4 Queen Street at 64.90, and levels in a yard outside to the south of the application area at 64.48. This is a drop of 400mm.

Estimated existing impacts

- 4 Queen St –top of existing slab at 64.6m, -base of previous (filled-in) basement at 62.90m (based on excavated evidence)

- 5 Queen Street – top of existing basement slab at 61.96m
- 114/119 St Aldates (rear) –top of existing basement at 61.97m

Current slab depths are unknown but if we assume that all slabs are of similar depth to that excavated at 4 Queen Street (150mm) the depths of existing impacts are as follows:

- 4 Queen Street -62.90m
- 5 Queen Street- 61.81m
- 114/119 St Aldates (rear) -61.82m

Estimated archaeological survival

Using the evidence from the Queen Street excavations, and taking account of the north-south slope, complex stratified archaeological remains would survive to the following depths:

- 4 Queen Street -61.85m (up to 1.05m below base of existing slab, plus any deeper pits)
- 5 Queen Street -61.85m (so likely to have been removed by existing slab, except for deeper pits)
- 114/119 St Aldates (rear) -61.65m to 61.45m (between 170mm and 370mm below base of existing slab, plus any deeper pits).

The best survival will be within the shallow basemented area of 4 Queen Street where around 1m of complex stratigraphy might survive, with deeper pits cut below this. Within 5 Queen Street, complex remains are likely to have been removed by the existing basement, although deeper pits may survive. To the south, at the rear of 114/119 St Aldates, assuming a similar depth of remains as excavated in the north, the natural slope means that existing basements might seal between 170mm and 370mm of surviving complex stratigraphy, with deeper pits beneath this.

The above calculations assume (a) uniform slab depth across the site (it could be deeper in places and existing strip foundations and drainage will have caused significant impact), (b) a similar depth of survival of archaeological remains as indicated by the Queen Street excavations (this could vary, and might be shallower and less complex to the rear of properties fronting the main streets), and (c) a uniform drop off in slope as indicated by modern ground surfaces (this could be shallower or deeper in places and does not take account of any historic terracing that might have occurred in relation to past development. The resulting cumulative uncertainty introduced by these variables should warn against taking any of the estimated figures as definitive.

Estimated proposed impacts

The proposed development fronting Queen Street will remove the existing buildings, and those parts of the rear of 114-119 St Aldates within the proposed footprint. Perimeter piling will be inserted around the northern, western, and southern limits of the new building. In the southern part of the new building basements will be formed at the same as existing levels. In the northern part of the building new basements, beneath existing levels are currently planned. Beneath the new basement, across the southern and northern parts of the building, existing foundations will be removed and new concrete pad foundations inserted.

On the basis of plans submitted the engineering formation level for the top of new basement slabs will be at 61.90m across the whole site. Assuming a slab depth of 300mm, predicted impact will be down to 61.60m (not including any required working depths). Allowing for the natural slope on the site this will have a varying impact on archaeological remains, where they survive, as follows:

- 4 Queen Street – the depth of disturbance will be 1.3m below existing and this might remove all complex stratified remains and the upper part of any deeper pits
- 5 Queen Street – all complex remains have (probably) already been removed, although the 201mm disturbance beneath existing base of slab might remove the upper part of any surviving deeper pits
- 114/119 St Aldates (rear) –allowing for the natural slope across the site, there may be better survival of remains in the south than in the north. In the north the 220mm of disturbance might remove the remaining part of any complex remains (already largely removed by earlier development) and the upper part of any deeper pits. In the south the 220mm of disturbance might remove only the upper part of any surviving complex remains, leaving the lower part, and any deeper features intact.

The following table summarises the data presented in the above sections.

	Depth of existing impacts (base of slabs)	Base of archaeological survival	Depth of survival below existing slab	Depth of predicted impact (base of new slab)	Potential depth of disturbance
4 Queen Street	62.90m	61.85m	1.05m plus deeper pits	61.60m	1.3m (all complex remains removed plus the upper part of deeper pits)
5 Queen Street	61.81m	61.85m	Only deeper pits	61.60m	210mm –the upper part of deeper pits
Rear St Aldates north	61.82m	61.65m	170mm plus deeper pits	61.60m	220mm – the remaining lower part of any complex remains and the upper part of deeper pits
Rear St Aldates south	61.82m	61.45m	370mm plus deeper pits	61.60m	220mm – the upper part of any complex remains.

The above data focusses on the impact of planned basement levels. Where perimeter piling is proposed archaeological remains will be wholly removed in these area. In addition, where strip footings/ground beams are proposed these would also impact on buried remains beneath the depth of the slab.

4. Mitigation

Design

The consultation with David Radford indicated that the most significant archaeological remains at risk are likely to lie in areas fronting Queen Street. These areas are likely to preserve Saxon and Medieval street frontages. Areas to the south to the rear of St Aldates, will likely be less complex but still significant backyard areas.

On the basis of the analysis in this addenda, under the existing proposals, the greatest level of impact is likely to occur on the most significant and best preserved area of archaeology. This impact would be significantly mitigated by a change to the design which involve a reduction in the planned basement area, removing it from the frontage area beneath 4 Queen Street while retaining it (if feasible) beneath 5 Queen Street, and to the rear of the St Aldates properties.

Archaeological Investigation

Where impact remains, in less significant areas of the site, this can be partly mitigated through archaeological investigation. This would need to include some pre-construction test-pitting to confirm the estimates and assumptions made in this addenda. Further investigation would then focus on excavating and recording any remains that would be removed during construction, and the preservation of any remains beneath the engineering formation levels. These works could be secured by a condition attached to consent.

5. Summary and conclusions

This addendum to the archaeological desk-based assessment has been produced following consultation with the Oxford City Archaeologist.

The Salter map evidence has been consulted, but adds little to the interpretation of the site already provided in the original desk-based assessment.

It is possible that cellars were constructed under St Aldates, linking properties to either side, and these may survive. However, the origin of these structures is likely to be a storage for goods and there is no evidence to suggest they might form part of a network of tunnels linked to the Oxford Jewry. The cellars lie outside the application area and so will not be impacted by the development.

The evidence of excavated evidence elsewhere on Queen Street provides useful data to understand the significance and level of preservation of archaeological remains across the application site.

An analysis of existing impacts, archaeological survival, and proposed development impact identifies a range of potential impact on archaeological remains across the site. The significant impacts would occur within the northern part of the site under the present 4 Queen Street, with less significant impact to the south.

Some mitigation of development impact would be possible through alteration of the basement design to remove it in the area of 4 Queen Street. Further mitigation would be possible through the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains beneath engineering formation levels, elsewhere on

the site. Where this was not possible further appropriate archaeological investigation, controlled by a condition, could be undertaken prior to and during the early stages of demolition/construction .

6. References

The following Reef Estates plans were consulted and are attached.

A.01 Existing basement plan with drainage, 09/07/14 (1:100)

A.02 Proposed basement plan with existing overlay 09/07/14 (1:100)

A.03 Indicative cross sections 09/07/14 (1:100)

A.04 Indicative cross sections 09/07/14 (1:100)



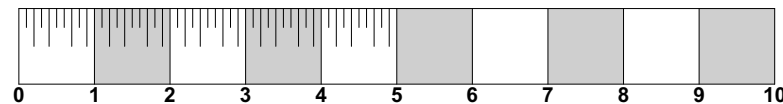
EXISTING BASEMENT DEMOLISHED
(INCLUDING SUB STRUCTURE) HATCHED

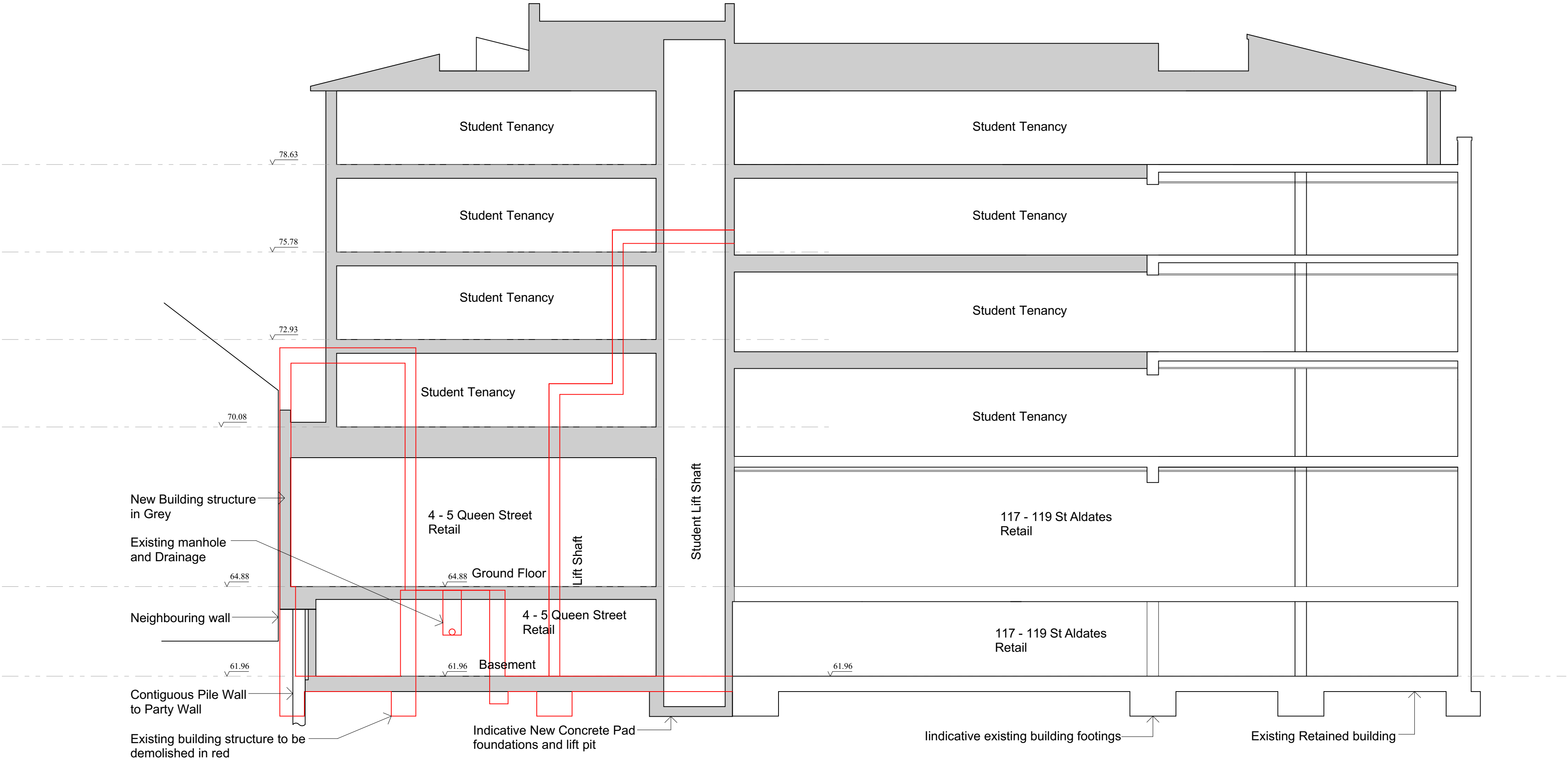
EXISTING BUILDING WITH NO
BASEMENT TO BE DEMOLISHED

RETAINED BUILDING
(INCLUDING SUB STRUCTURE)
HATCHED GREEN

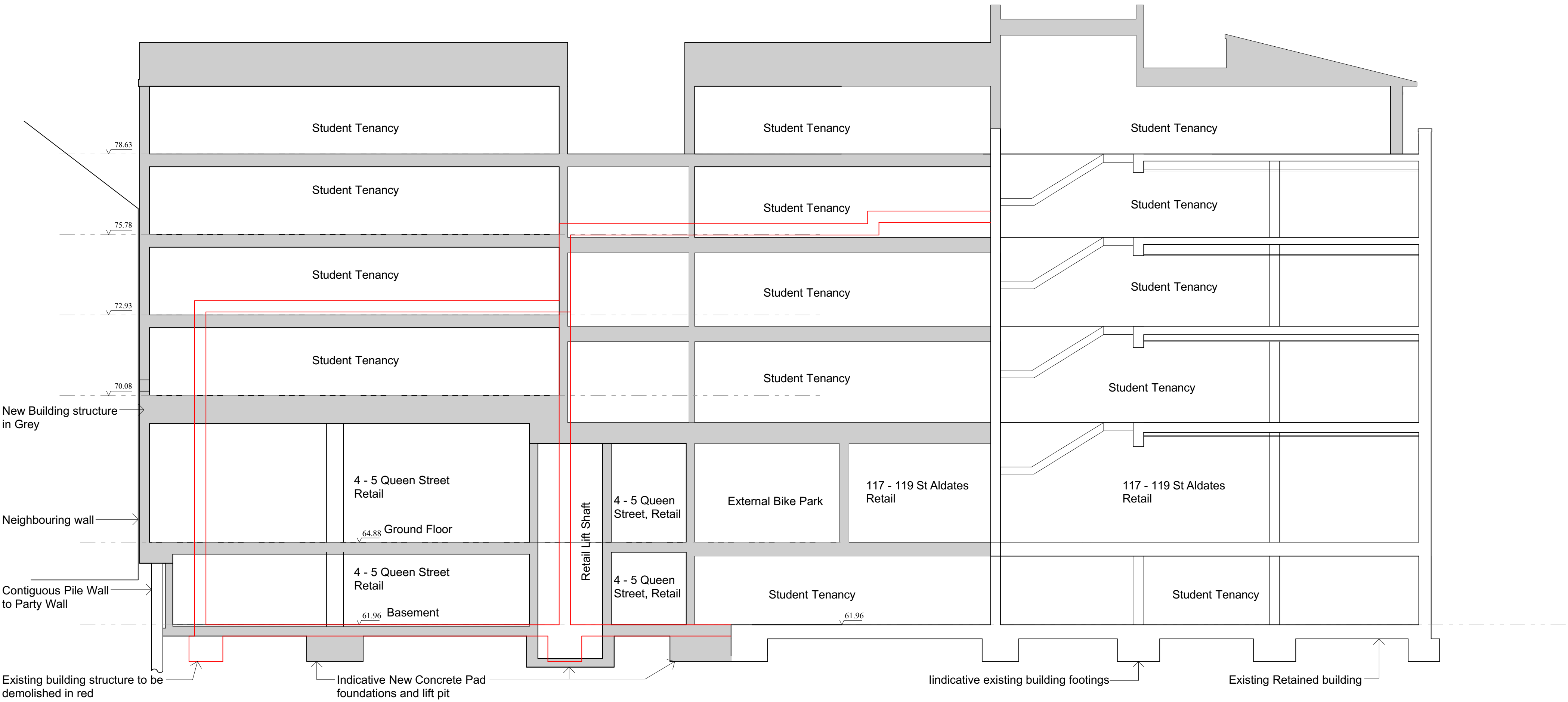
ST ALDATES

Rev	Description	Date
All dimensions to be checked on site and all discrepancies reported to the contract administrator before and works proceed		
Designer		
urban reef		
Tel: 020 7079 2748		
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Developer		
reef ESTATES		
14 Little Portland Street London W1W 8BN Tel: 020 7637 0601 Fax: 020 7580 1874		
Job Title		
114 - 119 St Aldate's & 4 - 5 Queen Street		
Oxford OX1 1EJ		
Drawing Name		
PROPOSED BASEMENT PLAN WITH EXISTING		
OVERLAY Planning		Date first Issued 09.07.14
Drawing Scale		
1:100 @A1		
Layout ID	Revision	
A.02		

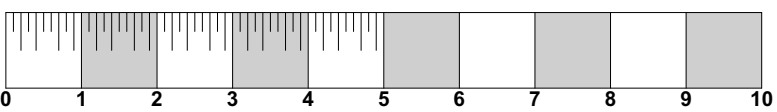






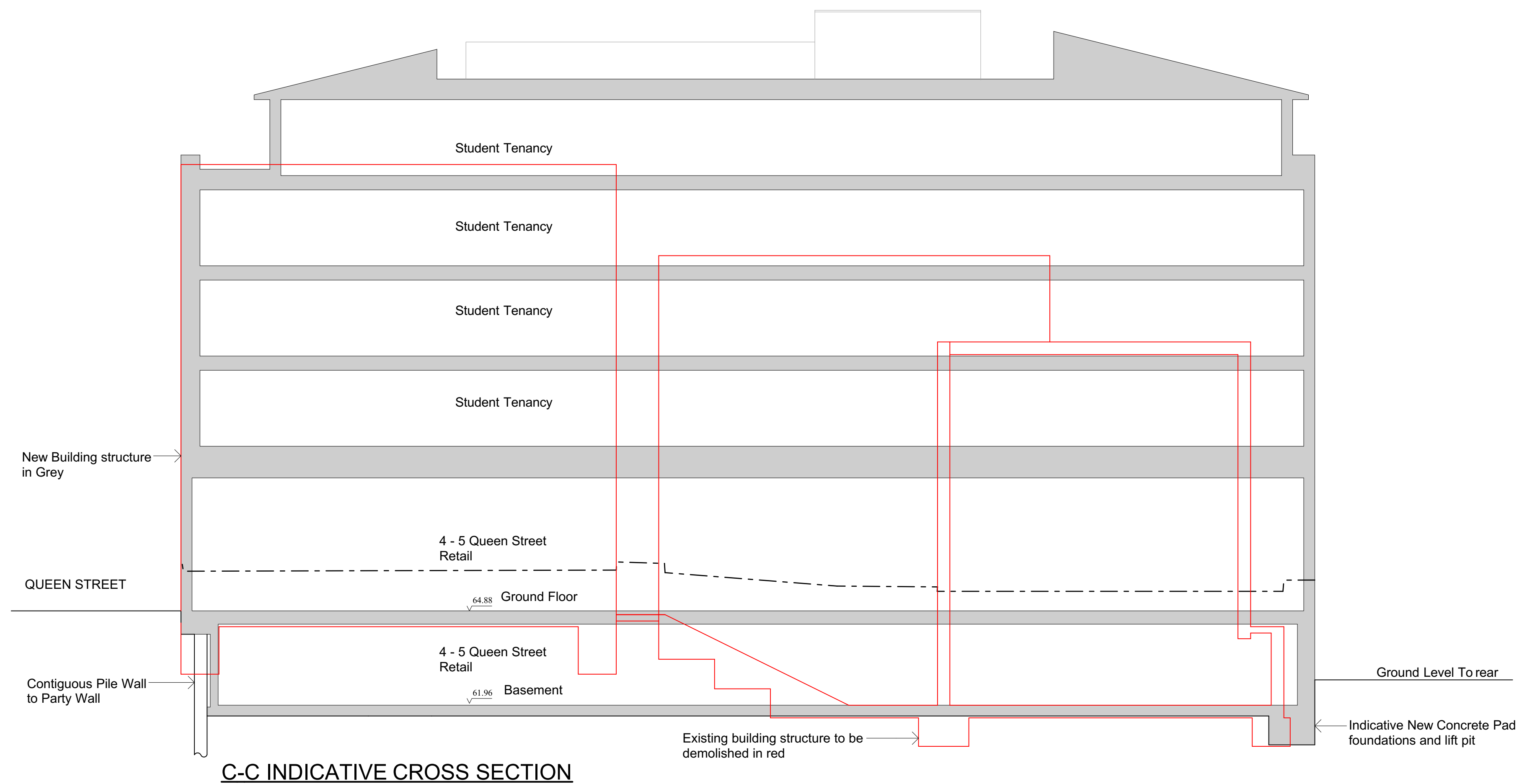
A-A INDICATIVE CROSS SECTION





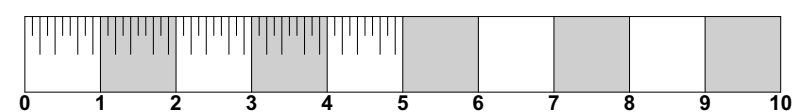
B-B INDICATIVE CROSS SECTION



Rev	Description	Date
All dimensions to be checked on site and all discrepancies reported to the contract administrator before and works proceed		
Designer		
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Developer		
 14 Little Portland Street London W1W 8BN Tel: 020 7637 0601 Fax: 020 7580 1874		
Job Title		
114 - 119 St Aldate's & 4 - 5 Queen Street Oxford OX1 1EJ		
Drawing Name		
INDICATIVE CROSS SECTIONS		
Drawing Status	Date first Issued	
Planning	09.07.14	
Drawing Scale		
1:100 @A1		
Layout ID	Revision	
A.03		



Rev	Description	Date
All dimensions to be checked on site and all discrepancies reported to the contract administrator before and works proceed		
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Developer		
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Job Title		
114 - 119 St Aldate's & 4 - 5 Queen Street Oxford OX1 1EJ		
Drawing Name		
INDICATIVE CROSS SECTION		
Drawing Status	Date first Issued	
Planning	09.07.14	
Drawing Scale		
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Layout ID	Revision	
A.04		



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