

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning - Oxford City Planning Committee on Tuesday 23 January 2024

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Committee members present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chair)	Councillor Hollingsworth (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Malik	Councillor Mundy
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Upton	

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Gill Butter, Principal Heritage Officer
Jane Cotton, Planning Lawyer
Robert Fowler, Development Management Team Leader (West)
Mike Kemp, Principal Planning Officer
Joanna Lishman, Senior Planner
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer
Andrew Murdoch, Development Management Service Manager

Apologies:

No apologies were received.

59. Declarations of interest

General

Councillor Upton declared that as a member and trustee of the Oxford Preservation Trust she had taken no part in that organisation's discussions regarding any of the applications before the Committee. Councillor Upton said that she was approaching the applications with an open mind, would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision on them.

23/02342/FUL

Councillor Hollingsworth declared that he was the owner of the property which was the subject of the application and stated that he would leave the meeting room whilst the application was considered and would not participate in determining it.

60. 22/00409/FUL: Green Templeton College, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HG

The Committee considered an application (22/00409/FUL) for the demolition of squash courts, gardener's shed, existing porter's lodge and existing accommodation building; construction of three accommodation buildings to house 51 student study bedrooms, associated communal spaces and landscape on the existing tennis courts site; construction of a new Porter's Lodge and associated office facilities to replace the existing Porter's Lodge and Clock Tower; construction of a new single storey informal study space to replace the existing glass house; construction of a new dining hall and associated facilities replacing the existing Doll building and change of use of residential gardens and retention of building used as a college gym at Green Templeton College, Woodstock Road, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The application related to development on three parcels of land on the Green Templeton College site which lay to the north of the Radcliffe Observatory quarter: the Tennis Court site (surrounded by a Grade II listed boundary wall), the Dining Hall site and the Gym. With the exception of the Gym, the site lay within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area; the Gym building lay within the Walton Manor Conservation Area. The site was also considered to fall within the wider setting of the Central and Jericho Conservation Areas.
- The proposal for the Tennis Court site included an arrangement of three buildings, centred around an internal garden, containing 53 student rooms in a mix of ensuite and studio rooms. The existing Porter's Lodge and Gatehouse building would be removed and replaced with a new Porter's Lodge building consisting of reception, office and meeting spaces. A new café space would attach to Building A on the western side of the site, replacing the Observatory Garden. A new building was proposed on the site of the Richard Doll building, consisting of dining spaces (relocated from the Observatory building), and kitchen space. The proposal included the retention of the single storey Gym building, located to the north of the Dining Hall.
- The site was considered appropriate for student accommodation as it was on an existing college campus site. It was considered that the siting of the student housing would comply with Policy H8 of the Oxford Local Plan.
- The proposal included the loss of the existing tennis and squash courts. Officers considered that alternative appropriate provision existed within the area and would be available to students, such that the loss of these facilities would not be harmful in terms of sports provision for students. The Gym, which was a highly valued facility, would be retained. Sport England had raised no objection to the proposals, which were therefore considered to comply with Policy G5 of the Oxford Local Plan.
- No additional car parking was proposed: cycle parking was included and would be secured by condition.

- The proposals involved a new opening within the Grade II listed boundary wall, providing a gated entrance giving access into the garden area.
- Whilst the Richard Doll building appeared aesthetically well-designed, there were functionality issues associated with the building and it was also thermally and acoustically inefficient. Renovation had therefore been ruled out. It was noted that neither the Local Plan nor the NPPF included a requirement to consider embodied carbon when considering proposals for the demolition and re-building of existing buildings. The proposed new buildings to replace the Richard Doll building and on the Tennis Court site would be of a high standard in terms of their energy performance and would exceed the requirements set out in Policy RE1 of the Oxford Local Plan. Officers did not therefore object in sustainability terms to the replacement either of the Richard Doll building or the Gatehouse building.
- The proposals would achieve an on-site biodiversity net gain of 16.3% (a correction to the 17% shown in the report), significantly exceeding the 5% statutory requirement for biodiversity net gain. This would be secured by a planning condition.
- Officers considered that there would be a low level of less than substantial harm to both the setting and significance of the Grade I listed Radcliffe Observatory as a result of the partial loss of the views along sections of Woodstock Road as set out in the report. There would be a low level of less than substantial harm as a result of the new openings in the Grade II listed boundary wall, and a low level of less than substantial harm to the Walton Manor Conservation Area arising from the siting of the Gym building. Officers considered that there would be no harm to the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.
- The public benefits offered by the proposal were set out in the report and included the provision of the additional student accommodation; provision of new buildings of a high architectural quality; and significant benefits arising from the re-siting of the kitchen and dining facilities from the Grade I listed Radcliffe Observatory building. In the context of paragraph 202 of the NPPF it was considered that the public benefits of the development would outweigh the identified level of less than substantial harm to heritage assets. Officers considered that the proposals complied with the provisions of the Oxford Local Plan and the NPPF and they were therefore recommended for approval.

Councillor Andrew Gant spoke against the proposal.

Dr Tim Clayden, Bursar, Green Templeton College (the applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the application which were responded to by officers and the architects. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- The suitability of the existing Richard Doll building for conversion to provide student accommodation or dining facilities had been investigated. However, for various reasons the building had been determined to be unsuitable for conversion; these reasons were detailed in the report. The buildings which would replace the Richard Doll building would be of a much higher standard in terms of energy efficiency and

sustainability, and its loss would therefore result in greater benefit over the long term.

- The scaling of the tower (which was higher than the adjacent student residential aspect) was intended to provide an architectural hierarchy, defining the entrance to the College and giving it a greater presence on Woodstock Road. A committee member commented that the proposal may contribute towards creating a new character for this part of Woodstock Road.
- A committee member highlighted the importance of the Grade II listed wall and agreed with the officer's assessment that the small entrance and window constituted a low level of less than substantial harm to the heritage asset.
- A Construction Traffic Management Plan was conditioned, which would require construction traffic and delivery vehicles to avoid peak traffic hours.
- The proposal offered benefits in terms of providing modern, more sustainable student accommodation and improved facilities which were of good design. These benefits were considered to outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm arising from the proposal which had been outlined by officers.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officers' recommendation to approve the planning application for the reasons set out in the report, and subject to the conditions set out in the report and a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission subject to:
 - the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or Unilateral Undertaking and other enabling powers to secure the planning obligations set out in the recommended heads of terms which are set out in the report; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary;
 - finalise the recommended legal agreement or Unilateral Undertaking under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers as set out in the report, including refining, adding to, amending and/or deleting the obligations detailed in the heads of terms set out in the report (including to dovetail with and where appropriate, reinforce the final conditions and informatives to be attached to the planning permission) as the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary; and
 - on receipt of the completed section 106 legal agreement or Unilateral

Undertaking issue the planning permission.

61. 22/00410/LBC: Green Templeton College, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6HG

(Note: this application was considered together with application 22/00409/FUL above).

The Committee considered an application (22/00410/LBC) for Listed Building Consent for alterations to grade II listed boundary wall fronting onto Woodstock Road and to curtilage listed walls to former walled garden associated with the construction of new buildings adjacent to and abutting these structures at Green Templeton College, Woodstock Road, Oxford.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote, the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for listed building consent for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required listed building conditions set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 11 of the report and grant listed building consent; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.

62. 23/01483/FUL: 13-15 Oxenford House, Magdalen Street, Oxford OX1 3AE

The Committee considered an application (23/01483/FUL) for change of use of the first to fourth floors and part basement and ground floor to provide 55no. ensuite student accommodation rooms (Sui Generis); erection of a roof extension to the front elevation above fourth floor and a two storey roof extension to rear elevation above third floor; alterations to basement to create plant area and bin storage; formation of new entrance lobby to Friars Entry with reception, break out area and cycle storage and alterations to fenestration at 13-15 Oxenford House, Magdalen Street, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation, provided the following updates and also highlighted the following:

- Since the committee report was published, the Highways Authority had removed its objection relating to the provision of cycle storage following the submission of amended plans. The cycle storage had been removed from the basement and relocated to the ground floor.
- The latest advice from Highways was that the travel monitoring fee to be secured via a s106 agreement was not now necessary. The mechanism for securing four cycle stands on highway land within Friar's Entry had also been confirmed as being acceptable to be conditioned. A s106 requirement for the contribution towards affordable housing provision remained.

- Condition 13 required correction to refer to 56 cycle spaces (not 55).
- The principle of the proposed development was considered acceptable on the basis that it was an existing city centre site, and the proposal would make best and most efficient use of the land in order to provide sought after student accommodation in a sustainable location.
- The application comprised speculative development: however, it was known that both universities relied on additional market rental accommodation to provide housing for students. The proposal would provide 55 rooms towards meeting this provision, each with ensuite accommodation and shared kitchen.
- Oxenford House contributed positively to the character and appearance of the central conservation area as one of the few remaining mid-20th century buildings in the city centre. The most substantial and visually prominent element of the proposal was the additions to the roof, which would increase the overall height and prominence of the upper floors of the building. However, the roof extension would remain lower than the adjacent Debenhams building and the Randolph Hotel, limiting its impact on the city's roofscape. The extension to the front would be stepped back from the north elevation of the building to maintain views of the roof parapet from street level.
- Officers considered that the proposed materials would respond well to the façade's existing palette, and that the proposal would not alter the composition of the historical skyline as the scale of the proposed development was not of such magnitude as to compete with existing landmarks.
- The development was of a sustainable design and construction and involved retrofitting the building to a high energy sustainability standard.
- On balance it was considered that the development would, by way of replacement of the original glass panels with insulated aluminium panels, erode the distinctive mid-20th century character of the building and lessen its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area as a good surviving example of brutalist architecture in the city centre. However, the proportions, arrangement of the primary façade and the fluted concrete would remain unchanged; the latter being the building's most distinctive feature. Therefore it was considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the central conservation area at the low level. To counter this, an assessment of public benefits had been made and was detailed in the report. There was not considered to be any harm in relation to the setting of the other heritage assets as set out in the report.
- Officers considered that the benefits of the scheme included increased energy efficiency; the contribution to student housing stock; and the improvement to the public realm in Friar's Entry. Collectively, these benefits were considered to outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm which would be caused to the conservation area. The proposal was also considered to preserve the significance of the nearby listed buildings in the setting in which the site was located.

- Officers had concluded that subject to conditions (including soundproofing and retaining the internal layout as approved) the proposed use as student accommodation would not harmfully impact on the existing uses with regard to loss of privacy, noise or odour.
- As the development was in the city centre location, no car parking was proposed. It was proposed that, as some car trips may be generated during the start and end of the academic term, students should be given strict timetables during these periods to load or unload belongings on either Magdalen Street or Beaumont Street. Beyond these timescales, private vehicles would need to use local car parks. This would be subject to a condition requiring a detailed student management plan.
- It was acknowledged that with re-use of the building, and due to the lack of wider surrounding curtilage, there were some practical constraints which meant that the bin store was integrated within the building at basement level. The building was proposed as a managed facility with permanent on-site staff: the refuse and recycling strategy would be for building management operatives to remove the bins from the basement store to the designated collection point at days and times agreed with the refuse collection services as per the current arrangement. It was considered that the development was acceptable in this regard and would not have any adverse highways impacts.
- Subject to conditions, the proposed development was considered to meet policy requirements in relation to all other issues assessed as part of the application, including biodiversity, land quality, air quality, archaeology and drainage. The application was therefore recommended for approval, subject to the conditions in the report and a s106 agreement to secure the financial contribution to off-site affordable housing set out in the report.

Arron Twamley (agent) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the application which were responded to by officers and the agent. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- A construction management plan had been conditioned, which included details of the routing of construction traffic and delivery vehicles and means of access. Officers cited examples of developments within similarly busy and central locations in the city centre which had been successfully managed.
- In response to concerns raised by committee members about the arrangements for bin storage and refuse collection, officers cited examples of student accommodation in the city centre where similar arrangements for collection of refuse from a designated area at a separate location were in place and successfully managed. The highways authority was satisfied that the bin storage in the basement was acceptable given the constraints of the site. However, committee members considered that servicing arrangements required a specific condition, given that the building was currently in office use which generated a different nature and volume of waste than a residential use.

- The development would make an efficient use of the building, and the change to its appearance would be minor.

The officer recommendation with the amended condition 13 and with the amended s106 provisions was proposed and seconded. An amendment to the motion to impose a specific condition relating to servicing arrangements was then proposed and seconded and put to the vote and approved.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report, subject to the required planning conditions; an amendment to condition 13 to require 56 cycle parking spaces; the addition of a servicing condition; and subject to an affordable housing contribution to be secured by a s106 agreement.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report, an amendment to condition 13 to require 56 cycle parking spaces and the addition of a servicing condition and grant planning permission subject to:
 - the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers to secure the planning obligations for the financial contribution to off-site affordable housing as set out in the report; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary; and
 - finalise the recommended legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers including refining, adding to, amending and/or deleting the financial obligation set out in the report (including to dovetail with and where appropriate, reinforce the final conditions and informatives to be attached to the planning permission) as the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary; and
 - complete the section 106 legal agreement referred to above and issue the planning permission.

63. 23/01482/FUL: 13-15 Oxenford House, Magdalen Street, Oxford OX1 3AE

The Committee considered an application (23/01482/FUL) for change of use of the first to fourth floors and part basement and ground floor to office use (Class E); erection of a roof extension to the front elevation above fourth floor and a two storey roof extension to rear elevation above third floor; internal and external alterations to allow level access and provide lift services to all floors; provision of bin and cycle storage and alterations to fenestration at 13-15 Oxenford House, Magdalen Street, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The advice from the Highways Authority was that the travel monitoring fee was no longer necessary. The Highways Authority was also satisfied that the four cycle stands on highways land could be secured by a condition. Therefore, there was no requirement for a s106 obligation.
- The assessment of the proposed scheme had considered the loss of the existing uses as set out in the report. The principle of the development was considered acceptable as it was an existing city centre site, making best and most efficient use of the land to provide office use in a sustainable location.
- The proposal was speculative; however, it was acknowledged that the development would provide operational employment of in the region of 184 full-time employment positions based on the floor space and one staff member per 10-13 sqm and the equivalent of 15 full-time employment positions during the construction phase.
- The scheme was considered to cause less than substantial harm to the conservation area at the lower level. However, the assessment of public benefits as required by the NPPF considered that the benefits of the scheme included increased energy efficiency; the contribution to the demand for sustainably located office space; and improvements to the public realm in Friar's Entry which would collectively outweigh the identified low level of less than substantial harm which would be caused to the conservation area. The development would preserve the significance of the nearby listed buildings and the setting in which the site was located and cause no harm.
- The building was proposed as a managed facility, with permanent on-site staff. The refuse and recycling strategy was for building management operatives to move the bins from the ground floor level to the designated collection point.
- Subject to the relevant conditions, the proposed development would meet policy requirements in relation to all other issues assessed as part of the application including biodiversity, land quality, air quality, archaeology and drainage. Officers were therefore recommending approval of the application as set out in the report, subject to conditions.

Arron Twamley (agent) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the application which were responded to by officers. Committee members again considered that the servicing arrangements required a specific condition.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report, subject to the conditions set out in the report and the addition of a servicing condition.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission;
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to:

- finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.

64. 23/02342/FUL: 34 Canal Street, Oxford OX2 6BQ

Councillor Hollingsworth left the meeting room for this item and did not return.

The Committee considered an application (23/02342/FUL) for removal of 1no. rooflight to rear elevation; alterations to fenestration and insertion of 3no. ventilation grilles to front elevation at 34 Canal Street, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- Planning permission was sought for replacement windows and a door, removal of a rooflight and insertion of ventilation grilles.
- Three timber sash windows on the front elevation (one at ground floor and two at first floor) were proposed to be replaced with double glazed timber sliding sash windows of a design which was similar to the existing. The windows were an important feature of the Conservation Area: officers showed a plan which detailed the design of the replacement windows and confirmed that the new sash windows would sit inset from the 19th century brickwork, as existing.
- Officers clarified that the property was situated within an area covered by an Article 4 Direction, which meant that planning permission was required for the works which would otherwise be allowed under permitted development.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the conditions set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.

65. Minutes

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 as a true and accurate record.

66. Forthcoming applications

The Committee noted the list of forthcoming applications.

67. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.36 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 20 February 2024

*When decisions take effect:
Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired
Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal
decision notice is issued
All other committees: immediately.
Details are in the Council's Constitution.*