

West Area Planning Committee

8th May 2013

Application Number: 13/00119/FUL

Decision Due by: 25th April 2013

Proposal: Erection of a 6 storey Class D1 building as University School of Government, including double basement comprising 9,800sqm of floorspace, together with associated hard and soft landscaping (additional information)

Site Address: Plot L, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, **Appendix 1.**

Ward: North Ward

Agent: Montagu Evans

Applicant: University Of Oxford

Recommendation: Committee is recommended to support the proposals in principle but defer the application to draw up an accompanying legal agreement, and to delegate to officers the issuing of the notice of permission on its completion.

Reasons for Approval

1. The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.
2. The planning application seeks the construction of a postgraduate institute for the University to the south - west corner of the former Radcliffe Infirmary site, now known as the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ). It would front on to Walton Street opposite the Oxford University Press and represents the latest development proposal on the former infirmary site as supported by allocation SP47 of the recently adopted Sites and Housing Plan and previously by allocation DS66 of the Oxford Local Plan. The freestanding building would be of an uncompromising contemporary design and would provide teaching and research accommodation accessible by a variety of modes of transport. No further car parking is proposed beyond that already permitted for the ROQ as a whole with the development being located adjacent to the east - west pedestrian and cycle route proposed to run along the southern side of the ROQ site between Woodstock Road and Walton Street.

3. Many of the comments on the development relate to the contemporary design and appearance of the building and its relationship to nearby listed buildings and conservation areas, which has tended to divide opinion accordingly. The concerns of those opposing the development are acknowledged, especially from the Freud Café to the north, though noting also that no adverse comments have been received from the Oxford University Press or Somerville College. The proposals are brought forward within the framework of a Masterplan for the ROQ site and have evolved from concept stage to detailed designs over a period of time. Overall the development's contemporary architectural style and relationships to existing buildings is considered to be appropriate to its context, with details such as the use of materials, landscaping etc dealt with as conditions if the development is permitted. Subject to detailing there are no objections received from statutory bodies.

Conditions

1. Development begun within time limit.
2. In accordance with submitted plans.
3. Samples of materials including hard landscaping.
4. Withdraw "Permitted Development" rights.
5. Landscaping – details.
6. Landscaping – carry out after completion.
7. Landscaping – tree pits and growth medium.
8. Landscaping – maintenance.
9. Landscape management plan.
10. No car parking on site.
11. Further details of cycle parking.
12. Security – CCTV etc.
13. Details of boundary treatment & public realm ground works.
14. Travel Plan.
15. Construction Travel Plan.
16. Construction Environmental Management Plan.
17. Waste management Plan.
18. Contamination – remediation.
19. Mechanical plant – noise attenuation and mitigation.
20. Details of external lighting.
21. Food extraction equipment.
22. Drainage – in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment.
23. Drainage – surface water drainage scheme.
24. Drainage – groundwater drainage scheme.
25. Drainage – groundwater level monitoring.
26. Details of public realm.
27. Compliance with Natural Resource Impact Analysis.
28. Archaeology – scheme of mitigation.
29. No occupation until student numbers not in provided accommodation fall below 3,000.
30. Public art.
31. Wildlife habitats

Main Planning Policies

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

- CP1 - Development Proposals
- CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP9 - Creating Successful New Places
- CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- CP11 - Landscape Design
- CP13 - Accessibility
- CP14 - Public Art
- CP17 - Recycled Materials
- CP18 - Natural Resource Impact Analysis
- CP22 - Contaminated Land
- TR1 - Transport Assessment
- TR2 - Travel Plans
- TR3 - Car Parking Standards
- TR4 - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- TR11 - City Centre Car Parking
- TR12 - Private Non-Residential Parking
- TR14 - Servicing Arrangements
- NE12 - Groundwater Flow
- NE13 - Water Quality
- NE14 - Water and Sewerage Infrastructure
- NE23 - Habitat Creation in New Developments
- HE2 - Archaeology
- HE3 - Listed Buildings and Their Setting
- HE7 - Conservation Areas
- HE9 - High Building Areas
- HE10 - View Cones of Oxford

Core Strategy

- CS2 - Previously developed and greenfield land
- CS9 - Energy and natural resources
- CS10 - Waste and recycling
- CS13 - Supporting access to new development
- CS14 - Supporting city-wide movement
- CS17 - Infrastructure and developer contributions
- CS18 - Urban design, town character, historic environment
- CS19 - Community safety
- CS29 - The universities

Sites and Housing Plan

- MP1 - Model Policy
- SP47 - Radcliffe Observatory Quarter

Other Material Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Public Consultation

Statutory Bodies

- English Heritage: Adjacent buildings establish scale which needs to be considered; University Press accords sense of depth to its site; essential design solution sound; Freud Café and University Press do not form a prescriptive setting - they do not set a style or form for application site; bulk of building seen with or from heritage assets and as affects conservation areas is not excessive due to setting back of upper parts; important that parts which address Walton Street do not exceed height of Freuds; building with own form and confidence is fair response to relationship with University Press; effect on skyline would be slight but any obscuring of towers needs justification as creation of precedent needs to be avoided; on balance allowable to give building small vertical emphasis; no significant view would be harmed; double skin of glazing seems a good solution, promising liveliness and depth; bold addition to Oxford's buildings; would not be harmful to heritage assets in immediate vicinity; effect on skyline acceptable. The full text of the letter is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- County Council: Highway Authority: Walton St is traffic - calmed and governed by 20 MPH speed limit; area surrounding covered by Controlled Parking Zone; some increase in cycle flows; proposed cycle parking spaces adequate; passenger demand for bus services can be met from existing services; opportunity to increase Park and Ride usage; Many of Travel Plan measures in place with existing University Travel Plan but may need to be updated; Construction management plan submitted is acceptable; site should not drain building or surface water onto adjacent highway; increase in cycling is not considered to give rise to capacity issues.
- County Council Infrastructure and Growth: Consultation not required.
- Environment Agency: No objection subject to condition relating to contamination.
- Thames Water: Waste water drainage – prior approval required for connection to public sewer; water infrastructure – no objection.
- Natural England: No objection; not likely to affect Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC); not likely to be adverse effect on Port Meadow site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); local planning authority should consider other possible impacts on biodiversity.
- City: Environmental Development: No adverse comments on Construction Management Plan; proposed design target levels for noise are acceptable; remediation of any contamination would be required.

Third Parties

- Freud Café: A holding response was received on behalf of the Freud Café immediately north of the application site, attaching comments made in 2007 and 2008 in respect of the Masterplan for the former Infirmary site then under

consideration. That response makes reference to a number of procedural points and is concerned in particular that a building on the current application site may overwhelm the listed building, and adversely affect the stained glass windows to the southern side of the former church which enjoy "Rights of Light". The full text of the response can be viewed on the Council's website. Subsequently a very detailed response to the current planning application has been received which refers to the same points and to other matters also raised by third parties below. The letter is set out under seven main headings and alleges that the development:

- breaches various policies of the Oxford Local Plan;
- disregards the setting of heritage assets;
- breaches rights to light;
- threatens the Freud Cafe due to possible subsidence;
- would be inconsistent with previous actions of the Council to grant permission;
- adversely impacts on the setting of the Jericho Conservation Area; and.
- represents a lost opportunity to create sociable spaces.

The letter is reproduced in full as **Appendix 3** to this report.

- Oxford Civic Society: Design original and bold and likely to attract diverse opinions; generous provision for needs of new School with exciting, stimulating and visually pleasing interior; may appear too large and overbearing from some places on Walton street, but not others; acceptability of bulk should be demonstrated by more evidence; stark appearance from rear; main concern is breaching of high buildings policy; cleaning regime (avoiding roof mounted equipment) needs to be understood; other concerns are internal illumination; cycle parking insufficient despite complying with policy; basement cycle parking impractical;; welcome openness of forecourt and permeability of ROQ site; important to establish if access from new health centre possible.
- Oxford Preservation Trust: Will change character of area and impact on views along Walton Street; different feel and appearance as a bold, unique and iconic addition to the area; do not object to loss of wall to Walton Street but loss should be acknowledged in landscaping; further research required in relation to burials; heritage value should be recognised in public art; tower feature breaches policy requirements on tall buildings; proposals will be visible from several viewing locations; harmful effect on Radcliffe Observatory and Oxford skyline; does not adequately justify breach of policy;; further work required to assess impact of materials, height and scale; visual images produced impossible to assess impact; therefore object to height, scale and bulk of proposals; planning permission should not be given until full impact is better understood; an archaeological assessment and details of public realm are also required.
- Oxfordshire Architectural & Historical Society (OAHS): Disagree that boundary wall to Walton St dates from 1832; wall should be regarded as listed structure and be retained with gateway or reduced in height; if removed line of wall should be delineated in paving; "Faculty" required for removal of burials; further research required on burials and argued case for their removal; concerned at view from

Radcliffe Observatory towards Worcester College along meridian line and north along Walton Street from Worcester College; mock ups of before and after required; would object if building compromises the view; if so would ask that height of building be reduced.

- Victorian Group of OAHS: Would fail to enhance conservation area, nor would it relate satisfactorily to neighbouring listed buildings; whatever is built on site should attempt to be neighbourly and reflect character and scale of conservation area; wasted space inside building.
- Victorian Society: Development would sit adjacent to listed 119A Walton St. (at Somerville College) which is poor state of repair; would benefit streetscape if development could fund renovation of building.
- Georgian Group: Object to proposals; concerned at loss of historic boundary wall which contributes to conservation area and should not be demolished; any building should be set behind wall; scale and height of building is a concern as is large amount of glazing; design, materials massing and precise location should be more deferential to conservation area and listed building and should harmonise with them; does not enhance character of conservation area and contradicts design guidelines due to building's scale use of non - local materials and historic street structure through demolition of boundary wall.
- Worcester College: (i): Insufficient information regarding southwards meridian from Radcliffe Observatory; not clear if upper storeys of building would block this sight line (ii): information now provided showing building is clear of historic meridian line; therefore do not object.
- Oxford Baptist Chapel, Jericho: Welcome expansion of University but not at expense of existing organisations; church has used Freud Cafe for fellowship meetings; construction work would be distracting; concerned at proximity of building to Freuds; impact on stained glass windows; would detract from character of Jericho.
- Campaign to Protect Port Meadow from Oxford University: Contrary to high buildings policy; further computer generated images of views and surrounding required and reconsulted on; safeguards to halt development if not in accordance with permission.
- London Place Neighbourhood Watch: Concerned that development may be seen in some views from South Parks; height of development should be reduced to Carfax height; lower building would also be more in scale with surrounding properties.
- Divinity Road Area Residents Association (DRARA): South Park adjoins DRARA; building may be visible from parts of South park especially in winter; inadequate information to assess impact of building; breaches high buildings policies with little justification, weakening protection offered by policy and may pose future threats to views from South Park; better use could be made of interior space and / or footprint enlarged to create a lower building which would pose less threat to

views.

Individual Comments: Main Points:

- Size and scale of building too large.
- Building too tall / breaches high buildings policy.
- Opposed to removal of stone wall to frontage.
- Too close to Freuds / relates poorly.
- Adverse impact on stained glass windows to Freuds.
- Does not reflect character of area.
- Building too large and dominant.
- Materials inappropriate.
- Adverse impact in views from port Meadow.
- Light pollution.
- Elegant and exciting addition to ROQ site.
- World class architecture / striking example of modern architecture.
- Fits well with Neo Classical buildings nearby.
- Relates poorly to adjoining building.
- Does not enhance habitat of area.
- Should be located in heart of ROQ site.
- Opposed to open plan arrangement.
- Might be acceptable in more contemporary location.
- Adversely affects Radcliffe Observatory.
- Contrary to conservation area principles.
- Reflection from glass façade.
- Wall to Walton Street is an eyesore.
- Improvements to ROQ site should not be prejudiced.
- Huge improvement on other buildings on ROQ site.
- Building so different that it does not compete with neighbours.
- Form of building gives it restraint so that it does not dominate.
- Will make Freuds more visible not less.
- Tree to frontage should be retained.
- Fear congestion and noise as will become tourist attraction.
- Disruption to consecrated burial ground.

In addition to the above, the University has also undertaken its own public engagement and consultation exercises on its proposals as they have emerged. A regular dialogue was maintained with officers of the Council and English Heritage from November 2011 to the submission of the planning application, and also with the Environment Agency, Oxford Preservation Trust, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council. Two public consultation exhibitions were also undertaken from 19th July to 1st August 2012 and from 7th to 15th November 2012, plus two presentations to the South East Regional Design Panel (SERDP) in July and November 2012. A record of these procedures is submitted with the planning application. The documentation indicates that some 50 written responses were completed at the exhibitions with the majority of comments relating to the design of the building which tended to polarise views for and against. Other matters raised related to materials, maintenance, accessibility and public realm.

The presentations to SERDP were made as the proposals were evolving, though on each occasion the concept remained consistent, with the design to the November presentation in particular closely matching the planning application as now submitted. In summary the Panel commended the development indicating, in particular, that despite its radical form it would respect its surroundings and would represent a modest impact to the Oxford skyline which could be accommodated providing the quality of the architecture was sufficiently high. Copies of the SERDP's findings are attached as **Appendices 4** and **5**.

Officers Assessment:

Background to Proposals.

1. The planning application represents the latest in a series of development proposals relating to the former Radcliffe Infirmary following the University's acquisition of the site in 2003 and possession since 2007. Permission has already been granted for a number of developments including student accommodation for Somerville College to the southern boundary of the site and for New Radcliffe House to the north - west which are both now completed and occupied. Permission has also been granted for the refurbishment of the retained listed infirmary buildings to the Woodstock Road frontage, and for new buildings housing Humanities and Mathematics, the latter for occupation in Autumn 2013. These proposals have been brought forward in the context of a Masterplan produced for the site by the University which is referred to later in this report.
2. Attached as **Appendix 6** to this report is a plan which indicates the plots to which these various proposals relate and as **Appendix 7** a schedule of the planning applications involved.
3. The current proposals would occupy 0.19 hectare (0.46 acre) of the 4 hectare (10 acre) former infirmary site, and would be located to its south - east corner on land previously occupied by the Radcliffe Infirmary's Eye Hospital on what the University describe as Plot L. Immediately to the north is the Grade II listed Freud Café (formerly St. Paul's Church) and to the south part of Somerville College, formerly a school building and also listed Grade II. Opposite is the Grade II* Oxford University Press. Although not within a conservation area itself, the development site abuts the Central (University and City) Conservation Area to the south and the recently established Jericho Conservation Area to the west. Located along its southern side would be one of the two proposed east - west public pedestrian and cycle routes secured linking Woodstock Road and Walton Street.
4. The proposal seeks to establish a postgraduate institute for the University for the Blavatnik School of Government currently housed in temporary accommodation at Merton Street. The development would consist of a freestanding building on 6 levels above ground and two below, housing some 9,800 sq m of accommodation for approximately 180 postgraduate students plus 118 academic staff, researchers and administrators. It is also intended to accommodate a further 36 visiting staff. There would be no residential

accommodation within the building.

5. The School admitted its first student intake of 30 students in September 2012, but seeks to accommodate the following at the ROQ site: up to 9 research centres; a doctoral programme of up to 20 students at any one time; a one - year Masters of Public Policy programme for 120 students; a practitioner education programme offering short courses to experienced senior staff working in public policy from the public, private and not - for - profit sectors; a programme of visiting academic and practitioner fellows; and the School's faculty and administrative staff.
6. The assessment of the planning application is considered under the following headings in the text that follows:
 - planning policy;
 - historical context;
 - built forms;
 - management of heritage assets;
 - long and short distance views;
 - archaeology;
 - access; and
 - sustainability

Planning Policy

7. Successive planning policy documents from the 1980s onwards have recognised the importance of supporting the University as a world leading educational, academic and research institution and in one form or another have allocated the greater part of the former Radcliffe Infirmary site for the further growth and expansion of its facilities. In addition to the large number of general and non site specific policies which are relevant to this latest case, the current allocation in the recently adopted Sites and Housing Plan replaces the Local Plan allocation under policy DS66 by indicating at policy SP47:

“Planning permission will be granted for academic, institutional and student accommodation at the Radcliffe Infirmary Quarter site. Development must include a relocated Jericho Health Centre. Planning permission will not be granted for any other uses.

Careful design must ensure that development proposals contribute towards the character of the conservation area and preserve and enhance nearby and on - site listed buildings and their setting.

The development will be expected to demonstrate how the development mitigates against traffic impacts and maximises access by alternative means of transport. Pedestrian and cycle links through and to the site, including to the University Science Area, should be enhanced.

Development should be designed to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the Port Meadow SSSI.”
8. In this context the University had purchased the Infirmary site from the NHS in 2003. Following a short period when a leaseback arrangement was in place whilst the Children's Hospital and West Wing were constructed at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington, the University finally took possession in the

early part of 2007. In the meantime work on a Masterplan for the infirmary site was under way and subsequently brought before the November 2008 cycle of committees for consideration. The intention of the Masterplan was to form a framework within which major redevelopment proposals would be brought forward at the former infirmary site over a period of years. It was not a planning application however but represented a context within which individual proposals could be drawn up with some flexibility in response to changing circumstances. The University chose this approach due to the uncertainties of how the site would be developed in detail, and the complexities involved in submitting a single outline planning application.

9. The Masterplan did not propose a single or preferred layout, but sought instead to establish certain principles. In reporting to committees Officers concluded that the following key objectives should be adopted in terms of the built form and layout of the whole site:
 - *optimising floorspace requirements should be informed by detailed design considerations and assessments of impact;*
 - *the extent and location of any 5 storey development should be informed by an assessment of impact on views and context;*
 - *taller buildings generally to front primary routes;*
 - *development to Walton Street frontage to generally be no more than 3 storeys;*
 - *a hierarchy of streets and spaces to be created across the redeveloped site with east - west routes at the head of the hierarchy;*
 - *the primary east - west routes to constitute “public spaces” at all times;*
 - *the principal entrances to buildings to front publicly accessible spaces, especially the east - west cross routes;*
 - *active frontages to be provided to all publicly accessible spaces;*
 - *the redeveloped site to be linked by a series of high quality formal and informal landscaped spaces; and*
 - *provision for periodic review and revision of Masterplan.*

10. As the development relates to educational and teaching accommodation for the University then committee is also reminded of Core Strategy policy CS25 which requires that new floorspace should be matched by new residential accommodation and should not be occupied until such time as no more than 3,000 students live outside purpose built student accommodation. Recent times have seen inroads into the numbers of students “living out” with consequent numbers resident in purpose built accommodation rising as successive permissions have been granted to the central University and constituent colleges for new student study rooms. In the event of planning permission being granted, a restrictive condition would be imposed accordingly that occupation should not take place unless the figure of 3000 is met.

11. Lastly, prior to the submission of the planning application, the applicant submitted a request for a “Screening Opinion” under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment was required to accompany the planning application. This is a formal determination and having examined the case against the advice

contained within Circular 1/99: “*Environmental Impact Assessment*” and other sources, the Council as local planning authority determined that no such assessment was required in this case.

Historical Context

12. In terms of the ROQ site as a whole, St Giles developed outside the city walls from around 1279. Further north land remained open fields with scattered hamlets and farmsteads until expansion of Oxford during the 18th century. The Radcliffe Trust commissioned the building of a new hospital on agricultural land given by Thomas Rowney, MP for Oxford. Works commenced in 1758 and the Radcliffe Infirmary opened on 18th October 1770. The Radcliffe Trust used money left over from the project to found a new Observatory on land immediately to the north of the hospital. Work began in 1772. The original architect Henry Keene died in 1776 and James Wyatt took over finishing the project in 1795. The Observatory was used until the 1920's when the telescope was moved to South Africa – for better light conditions, and the Infirmary took over the Observatory expanding into its grounds erecting new wards and facilities including a Maternity ward, X-Ray department and Children's ward. After the John Radcliffe Hospital opened in the 1970s major development on site ceased. The hospital finally closed at this site in 2007.
13. The Radcliffe Infirmary fronting the Woodstock Road side of the current ROQ site was the first hospital to be set up in Oxford as an early and unusual example of a philanthropic charitable institution known as a 'voluntary' hospital. The use of the term “Infirmary” distinguishes it from earlier forms of pauper hospitals or almshouses. However, it was not the first of its kind in the country. The first was in Winchester in 1738 and by 1800 there were a total of 38 in the country. In terms of the additions of wards and other facilities on the site, they follow the pattern of other sites and do not represent any cutting edge technological or medical advances, apart from the original outpatients building, which was an early example of its type erected in 1857, but subsequently replaced with a new outpatients wing in 1910-13.
14. Most of the other buildings on the site including the former Eye Hospital on the Blavatnik site have been demolished, with the exception of the Gibson and Harkness buildings to the northern side which remain for the time being. The demolished buildings were generally of limited significance and had been much altered. English Heritage assessed all the buildings on the site for their suitability for inclusion in the statutory register of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, including the maternity wing, which had been identified as having local interest in 2001. No buildings were added to the list however, though the existing list descriptions were revised. The University has carried out an inventory and recording of all buildings on the site, including a photographic record.
15. The retained listed buildings within the site have local and national significance as heritage assets and together form a group. The main Infirmary building (Stiff Leadbetter, 1770) has had two major alterations - raising the

roof in 1826 and the removal of the sweeping external staircase to the first floor piano nobile in 1933. Other less intrusive alterations include the addition of the sanitary towers in 1869-73. St Luke's Chapel (Arthur Blomfield, 1865) and the Outpatients wing (Edward Warren, 1911) enclose the space around the Fountain of Triton (sculptor John Bell) and contribute to the setting of each other. The Outpatients building has been heavily modified internally and extended externally. The listed wall onto Woodstock Road has recently had its iron railings reinstated.

16. The principal elevations of the listed buildings have significance with later additions and alterations to these buildings illustrating changing practices and history of use. Some changes have harmed the special historic interest of the buildings and their architectural qualities. Nevertheless as a group these buildings make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the area and all are visible from a number of viewpoints in the surrounding streets.

17. Specifically in relation to the current application site, it is also of particular interest as the site of the remains of burials from the original infirmary during the period 1770 to 1885. It is believed up to 700 burials may have taken place here, though some may have been removed during the construction of the Eye Hospital in 1937 or indeed subsequent buildings during the period 1939 to 1957. Approximately half of the burials may be affected by the current planning application, the other half having been impacted by a planning permission already granted for a perimeter service trench to serve the ROQ site.

18. The Main Infirmary Block is listed Grade II* and the outpatients, fountain, boundary walls to Woodstock Road and the Chapel are listed Grade II, whilst nearby are other listed buildings, including the:-

- Observatory (Grade I)
- Observer's House (Grade I)
- Somerville College Library (Grade II)
- Oxford University Press (Grade II*)
- former St Paul's Church (Freuds) (Grade II)
- former St Paul's School (Somerville) (Grade II)
- 13-36 Woodstock Road (Grade II)

19. Although outside the ROQ site the Observatory at Green College to the north is especially significant as the principal and dominant Grade 1 listed building in the locality and a nationally important building. It represented only the second permanent facility to be built in Britain after the Royal Observatory in Greenwich in 1675. It is orientated on an east - west alignment to allow astronomical observation to make use of the south meridian to measure the time and position of the stars. Henry Keene, the architect, was surveyor to Westminster Abbey, and on his death succeeded by James Wyatt. The Tower is based on the Tower of Winds in Athens (a water clock) with sculptures of the 8 winds by John Bacon RA. There are also decorative panels, including the signs of the zodiac in Coade Stone. It has high architectural quality, is prominent in some views and its historic use, which

dictated its orientation and height. Originally its setting was one that was secluded, in its own extensive grounds. That setting has been lost over time however, and the hospital buildings (before demolition) had a negative impact on its modern setting and views of and from it.

20. Beyond the ROQ site itself development took place during the late C18th and early C19th onwards and consists of development fronting Woodstock Road and Walton Street with tight knit side streets criss - crossing east - west, especially within the Jericho area now recently designated as a conservation area. Woodstock Road has variety in the age, scale and use of buildings; Walton Street is more consistent in scale and age. To the north are residential streets, to the south educational and religious buildings. Overall the area is characterised as a residential suburb, interspersed with college buildings and including what used to be three key employment 'hubs' - Eagle Iron works, Oxford University Press and Radcliffe Infirmary sites. In the area certain key historic and modern buildings stand out, by virtue of their quality, individuality of design and purpose.

Built Forms

21. The development proposes a freestanding building set within a rectangular plot to the south - west corner of the ROQ site. The stone boundary wall which currently exists to the street frontage is removed to create an open plan arrangement with the space created around the building flowing into the public footway at Walton Street; into the east - west pedestrian and cycle route to the south; and into the envisaged "library square" and other ROQ thoroughfares to the rear. The building itself is essentially circular in form with four main levels above ground plus two further but smaller levels to the rear (eastern) side of the building set within a "drum" feature measuring approximately 24.5m in diameter. The circular form of each level of the building is offset one from another however with recessed entrances front and rear at ground floor level and the building generally responding to the Walton street "building line" and the Freud Café at this point. At first floor level the circular form adopts a straight edge to its frontage acknowledging and strengthening the building's relationship to the street to which it would form part.
22. The building would possess an unusual double skin to its facades with an outer glazed skin made up of 3m x 0.6m glazing panels separated by 30mm gaps or seams which allow ventilation. The inner skin is then made up either of further glazing with natural ventilation or pre cast limestone aggregate with the same colour and hue as natural stone. Between the two skins would be a "catwalk" to allow for cleaning and maintenance which also improves the building's performance in terms of noise intrusion, solar gain and fresh air intake. It also allows for internal cleaning and maintenance between the two skins whilst periodic external cleaning would be by "cherry picker" rather than any roof mounted equipment.
23. In terms of building heights, the building is stepped back so that its tallest point of 22.5m is only achieved by the circular drum at upper levels, and the partially recessed third floor with terrace set at 14.6m. The building's furthest

point forward is achieved at second floor level with an “eaves” height of 11.0m which matches the portico of the Freud café and the top of columns to the University Press to the west side of the street. In doing so, the intention is for Freuds to retain its presence in the street and continue to project further forward overall. At the nearest point of its circular form the Blavatnik School would be 9.0m from the southern facade of the Freud Café.

24. Internally different levels of the building would perform different functions, but united by a central and generally circular atrium which rises up through the building. The ground floor level is entered either from the Walton Street direction or via library square to the rear and would contain reception, cafeteria and informal social spaces whilst teaching would be concentrated at first floor and first basement level. At first basement level the teaching would be undertaken in larger spaces including a 220 seat lecture theatre. Also located at this level would be staff cycle parking and changing facilities. In contrast the teaching at first floor level is contained within smaller rooms and spaces. The second and third floors are described as academic floorspace made up of a mix of cellular offices and open plan workspaces and meeting spaces. Administration functions would also be located here. The smaller top two levels at fourth and fifth floor within the “drum” would consist of library and study spaces, with access also to a roof terrace at fourth floor level and a boardroom at fifth floor level. The second basement level would contain plant rooms and services only.
25. The building is set within a rectangular public space measuring approximately 62m by 62m, providing generous amounts of public realm encircling it and intended to flow into the highway at Walton Street and routes to be created within the ROQ site – along the southern east - west route, and northwards via “library square” towards the northern east - west route. Permissive public rights to cross the land would be secured to spaces encircling the building, secured by S.106 agreement. The detailing of public realm around the building forms part of the comprehensive strategy for the whole of the ROQ site as agreed in relation to earlier permissions. To that extent materials, street furniture, lighting and planting would all be derived from the existing palette of materials to enable a unified landscape to emerge in due course. The principle elements would be clay pavers laid in a radial pattern, cropped granite setts for cycle parking areas, bespoke circular concrete seating with timber tops, freestanding timber seating and feature tree planting. Timber would be sourced from FSC approved sources. To the street frontage a line of bollards is proposed to prevent unauthorised vehicular access, referred to later in this report. External lighting is provided by column mounted luminaires along the east - west route which adjoins the building; recessed downlighters under the overhanging first floor canopy to illuminate the ground below; uplighters to the trees to give upward light; and low level uplighting if a feature wall is constructed to the common boundary to Freuds.
26. In relation to the tree planting, two trees currently exist towards the Walton Street frontage. These are two limes in poor condition and with a limited life expectancy. The removal and replacement of these trees is not therefore opposed in principle. In replacement one *Tilia Euchlora* (Caucasian lime) is

proposed to the frontage at the north - west corner where it would replace one of the existing limes. To the north and rear of the site is proposed one Liriodendron Tulipifera. (Tulip tree). Neither of these is opposed. However the group of 3 Quercus Palustris (Pin oak) proposed to the south of the new building adjacent to the southern east - west route is not considered appropriate as Pin oaks may not be suitable for planting in a paved, landscaped area, especially in made ground. It is suggested that an alternative choice of species is brought forward. Moreover an opportunity may exist for a further specimen tree at some point to the Walton Street frontage. It is suggested therefore that a condition be imposed on any permission granted requiring amendment to the tree planting proposed.

Management of Heritage Assets

27. The elements of the historic environment that are worthy of consideration in planning matters are referred to as “heritage assets”. The difference between a heritage asset and other components of the environment is that a heritage asset holds meaning for society over and above its functional utility. The most recent advice from the Department for Communities and Local Government on the historic environment is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of March 2012. The NPPF replaces Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes (PPSs and PPGs) which previously constituted Government guidance. The NPPF essentially carries forward the previous planning policies in a more streamlined form however but introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development that proposals that accord with up to date locally based planning documents should be approved. In this case one of the key areas for consideration relates to the impact of the proposals on the special interest of the character and appearance of the adjoining conservation areas and listed buildings. Conservation policy seeks to preserve and enhance the value of heritage assets and with the issuing of the NPPF the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the historic environment and its heritage assets which should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

28. The NPPF at paragraph 169 requires that local planning authorities should hold up to date evidence about the historic environment and use it to identify and assess the significance of heritage assets. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its architectural, historical, artistic or architectural interest. There are two components to these criteria: the nature of the interest and the relative importance of that interest. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It lists a number of core planning principles that should underpin decision making, including it should:

- *“not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives”;*
- *“always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”;*
- *“encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is of high environmental value”;* and
- *“conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so*

that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”.

29. The Ministerial Forward to the NPPF sets out the direction of the government’s planning policy, explaining that intelligently managed change (sustainable development) should be considered a positive measure to protect and enhance our historic environment. A key message though is that the historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable resource and the conservation of heritage assets should be a high priority. Development that causes harm to a heritage asset or its setting should be avoided unless there is a public benefit to outweigh that harm:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of a heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.”

30. The NPPF continues however by encouraging local planning authorities to look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance heritage assets and their settings and states that proposals that do make a positive contribution should be treated favourably:

“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.”

31. Moreover published guidance by English Heritage (*The Setting of Heritage Assets, October 2011*), provides a methodology for understanding the setting of a heritage asset, understanding how it contributes to the heritage significance of that asset and explains how to assess the impact of development. English Heritage explains that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which it is experienced. The setting is not fixed and may change as the surrounding context changes. The significance of the heritage asset is derived not just from its physical fabric but also its setting.

32. English Heritage is forthright in stating that the careful management of change within the surroundings of heritage assets will make an important contribution to the quality of places in which we live (for present and future generations). It then goes on to explain that elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of a heritage asset, affecting our ability to appreciate the significance of the asset or an impact may be neutral. The way we experience and understand an asset may differ between different views and some views may contribute more than others. This may be because of historical associations with a particular view or viewing point or because the composition within the view was a deliberate aspect of the design and layout.

Long and Short Distance Views

33. In this context the proposed development comes to be considered in both short and long distance views and the heritage assets they represent. There are 10 protected "View Cones" around the setting of the city identified in the Local Plan providing views from the surrounding eastern and western hills, Port Meadow and public spaces within the city, for example South Park. There are also public viewing points within the city that provide views across and out of the historic core. These views provide the viewer with an experience of the picturesque setting of the city with its spires and domes punctuating the skyline. The views allow people to understand the rural setting of Oxford, its strategic location and defensive position on a river crossing. The nature of the views are different from different locations however and the interrelationship of the spires and domes to each changes in those views. Because the city core sits on a raised gravel bed it sits above the surrounding suburbs which generally are not visible in many of the views. In the views the foregrounds and backgrounds have changed over time but the pre eminence of the spires and domes has been retained. In these views the proposed development would be visible from the western hills and from Port Meadow. From South Park the Observatory and the application site are on the extreme edge of the view.
34. The application site is also visible in a number of local views in Walton Street and beyond where it is seen in the context of listed buildings and historic streets. Walton Street is a medieval route out of Oxford, developed as a suburb from the late 18th Century onwards. The residential buildings that line the street vary in scale with clusters of institutional buildings and a retail cluster of shops, restaurants and cultural facilities. The character of the streets within the vicinity of the application site changes from both south to north and east to west and the ROQ site represents the point from which these transitions occur. From the city centre the scale of buildings and the general activity within the streets has a city scale. Buildings are varied and building frontages well built up. Further north this changes to the nature of a suburb where the level of street activity is less and the scale of the buildings is less, changing from commercial and institutional to residential. From east to west the change is from garden suburb of North Oxford with its large houses, large plots and greenery to the smaller artisan terraces, narrow streets and hard edges of Jericho. The ROQ site is in the middle, historically an institution set in large grounds, (but ultimately through successive extensions and new buildings a fully developed site), separated from the surrounding streets by high stone walls. In amongst the hospital buildings that once stood on this site is St. Paul's Church, a Grade II listed building, now the Freud Café.
35. The application is supported by studies which examine the impact of the proposal on the long distance and more local views. These studies have been informed by published advice on assessing the impact of development on landscape character and the setting of heritage assets. The conclusion of the studies is that the impacts are acceptable.

36. The View Cones within which the proposed building would sit, (the western hills, Port Meadow, South Park), provide the viewer with different experiences of Oxford's historic core. Some look down on Oxford from higher ground some distance away, where the city is seen as a small cluster in a rural hinterland, whilst in others the view is more two dimensional and panoramic where the skyline of towers and spires are experienced as a thin line with extensive areas of foreground and background. The supporting information does not seek to prove that the building would not be visible in views. Rather it is accepted that it will be visible, but not harmful to the significance of the views.
37. Assessment has therefore focussed on the nature and extent of the impact, in particular its relationship to the Observatory. In this respect the detailed design and use of materials decreases the scale and bulk of the building with height. A structural form that is skeletal and clad in a transparent material also will give the building a lightweight presence whilst the curving facades help to reduce its bulk. In the long distance views and with the naked eye the building would not therefore appear as a large element and would not obscure views of key skyline features. In greatly magnified views (zoomed) it would be possible to see the building sitting alongside the Observatory. In the view from Port Meadow car park it would just be discernible and sit in front of Merton Tower. Merton Tower is itself only just discernible through binoculars and is hidden from view in the summer months when the trees are in leaf.
38. Magnified views (zoomed) of Oxford's skyline are also an important consideration as for many people (over time) the way they wish to experience and study the view would be through binoculars or a telephoto lens. The nature of the materials and the constructional details then become a critical factor. The architects have explored this consideration in detail with full size mock ups to test the visual impact. Officers have concluded that the skeletal nature of the constructional skin and the way in which it is clad represents a modern interpretation of the Gothic tracery and blind arcading of historic precedents and would sit comfortably next to historic buildings on the skyline.
39. The proposed development sits within the defined 1200m zone around Carfax and will exceed the 18.2m or 79.3m AOD (whichever is the lower) above which policy HE9 of the Oxford Local Plan explains that proposals should not be accepted except for "*minor elements of no great bulk*". Although it is fully acknowledged that the development exceeds the Carfax height restriction by 4.3m, and that it is doubtful that the 24.5m diameter drum feature could be considered as a minor element of no great bulk there is a case for exceptions and to accept this development as an addition to the historic skyline. The proposed development has to meet a variety of challenges presented by the site as well as meet the requirements of the design brief (to meet the academic and research needs of the institution). The design has evolved from a fundamental principle of creating a 'forum' within the building. Its shape is a deliberate expression of this principle and produces a building that sits within a 'public' space (rather than a building lining a street). The presence within the street and the opportunity for a new and positive experience will rely on its sense of proportion as well as the attention to detail. The architects have scrutinised both these issues in determining the appropriate height for the

building. To reduce the height would compromise not only the requirements of the brief but also the sense of proportion between each floor and the composition as a whole. The building has a carefully calculated geometry that is based on the diameters of the 'drums', the individual height of each floor and the overall height of the building.

40. Testing the impact of the building on the views the applicant has concluded that the significance of the long views and the pre-eminence of the spires will not be harmed and that in short views the street dynamic whilst very different from the existing will be a positive change. Officers have sought information from the applicants to demonstrate the nature of the impact on the public realm and long views and have scrutinised the impact on the views. It is clear that the building will be visible in some views, (the top drum being a similar diameter to the drum of the Radcliffe Camera) and it is a balanced judgement to determine if what will be seen is considered harmful or not, based on an understanding of the history and nature of the views.

lo , Officers have concluded that in this instance no harm would be caused to the historic skyline and that the development can therefore be supported in these terms.

41. At street level the building would inevitably have a more significant impact, and this is by design. The site provides opportunities to retain the walled enclosure and existing characteristic of exclusion, or to change the nature of the street with the demolition of the wall to open up the site and create a more public space flowing into the new quarter created at the ROQ in the years ahead. Walton Street by its nature is a linear space and users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists), experience changing characteristics along its length from south to north – Worcester College - residential uses - clusters of restaurants and shops - Somerville College - Oxford University Press - Freud Café and ROQ - retail and restaurant - and then residential again. These events along the street are part of its character. Removal of the existing wall and opening up the ROQ site provides an opportunity to introduce a new event, ie a more public and open space framed by the University Press, Freuds, Somerville College and the proposed building.

42. The existing wall represents an historic boundary and provides a sense of enclosure to the street, but it has been extensively altered and rebuilt over subsequent years as a part of the development of the site for hospital use. The opportunity to open up the site, provide a sense of arrival, and a different but more beneficial setting to the development should be supported. (A similar opportunity existed at the Castle Yard where a new space was successfully created by the demolition of part of the prison wall). Critical to the success of the new space however is the quality of the public realm, within the site and in the highway. For this reason conditions are proposed to ensure that a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the public realm can be planned, (in a similar fashion to the public realm works for Broad Street and the Bodleian Library). The submitted proposals include the provision of bollards along the frontage to mark the definition between public and private land and to prevent unauthorised parking or servicing. Officers are not convinced that bollards are the most appropriate solution however and there may be an

option for a more creative solution that provides a future reference to the removed wall; prevents vehicular access; and perhaps incorporates some public art.

43. Overall however officers are satisfied that the changes to Walton Street and views along it are supportable. The hospital buildings which previously occupied the site until recent times represented an untidy and disparate collection of buildings of various ages and styles, clustered together in a haphazard fashion to meet functional needs but where they failed to relate to each other or to listed buildings either side of them. Indeed they obstructed views of Freuds and Somerville. The construction of the Blavatnik building addresses these shortcomings by introducing a building with a sense of space around it, creating the potential to view and enjoy its neighbours to a greater degree. Moreover by setting the drum feature of the building approximately 30m back from the boundary to Walton Street, the focus of the eye along the street would be towards the frontage section rising to 14.6m to its third floor level, not the taller rear element.
44. On specific points in relation to the Freud Café, its changed context has been the subject of concern expressed by its owner that the development would adversely affect the listed building and in particular could have a deleterious impact on the view and appreciation (from within the building) of Victorian stained glass windows by Willement and Kempe to its southern elevation due to loss of light. Similarly concern has been expressed that the construction of the Blavatnik building could impact on the structural integrity of the southern boundary wall to Freud Cafe and the building itself.
45. On the first point, the changed circumstances in relation to the stained glass windows is acknowledged and it is accepted that there would be some loss of internal light through the windows compared to current circumstances (as a cleared site). However as the proposed building adopts an essentially circular form; is glazed in its external treatment; and is set some 9.0m back from the southern elevation of Freuds at its nearest point, then the loss of light is likely be less than from a more conventionally designed building in this location. It should also be borne in mind that there were hospital buildings previously occupying this site, though not as tall as what is now proposed they too would have had an impact. Further, the positioning of the circular Blavatnik building, and opening up the space to the public allows for much greater public enjoyment of the stained glass windows from the public realm than previously and perhaps especially at night when internal lighting would allow appreciation of the stained glass from outside. The applicants stated "Rights to Light" are a civil matter which should not influence the planning merits of the proposals.
46. On the second point, a boundary wall currently exists between the planning application site and FreudCafe to its north. A listed building application was submitted as part of the package of proposals which entailed the demolition of the wall and its replacement by a new concrete reinforced retaining wall faced with salvaged materials. The wall would vary in height from 1.2m to 2.2m along its length according to ground levels. This would allow the Blavatnik building to sit on ground levels lower than currently and line through to street

levels. However the proposal was objected to by the owner of Freud Cafe, fearing that integrity of the wall and building could be undermined and that the boundary structure was not a party wall anyway but entirely in his ownership. In the event the application was withdrawn as it had been incorrectly submitted. Whilst a reworked proposal for the boundary wall could be brought forward for the agreement of Freud Cafe, the planning application is not dependent on such a proposal as any ground and stabilising construction required by sheet piling and other works can be undertaken wholly within the applicant's own land. A condition is suggested requiring that further details be submitted for approval in the event of planning permission being granted.

Archaeology

47. The application is of particular interest in archaeological terms because it will impact on the remains of the late 18th-early 19th century Radcliffe Infirmary burial ground and the remnants of the burial ground wall. The site also has potential to preserve middle Neolithic to early Bronze Age and early Saxon remains, although it is recognised that any such remains are likely to have been impacted by previous building work, gravel quarrying and grave cutting at the site.
48. The application will involve the removal of 50% of the area of the Infirmary burial ground with the remaining 50% being impacted by the proposed service trench around the exterior of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter double basement. It is noted that the Consistory Court has produced a judgement on the treatment of the burial ground, establishing that it considers the ground to be consecrated and under its jurisdiction and setting out the view of the Diocese approving the removal of the burials subject to planning permission.
49. The infirmary burials have notable scientific interest because they represent a specific subset of the general population and because the burials were restricted to a limited time period (1770-1855). Documentary records are only available for 196 burials and indicate that many of those buried at the site were from outside of Oxford. Based on the results of the 2009 - 2010 archaeological evaluation of the burial ground by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) up to 700 burials may be anticipated. It should be noted however that the burial ground has been previously disturbed by the foundations of hospital buildings and services with a number of burials likely to have been removed during the construction of the Eye Hospital in 1937 and a subsequent building constructed between 1939 and 1957.
50. The infirmary inmates buried in the burial ground are likely to have been predominantly poor and/or without family and therefore were not claimed for parish burial. However the archaeological evaluation by MOLA in 2009-10 did identify some simple coffin fittings and a single corroded coffin plate, indicating that some of the burials were not of the lowest status and had relatives or benefactors who could fund coffin burials. There was also evidence for a collective burial pit containing several individuals possibly cross stacked. This could represent the re-burial of individuals removed from the site of St Paul's Church when it was constructed in the early 19th century or perhaps a large low status burial.

51. The submitted Heritage Statement by MOLA (2013) recognises the burials as of high significance as an archaeological assemblage. In this case the burial ground can be assessed as of at least local and regional archaeological interest. At present there is insufficient academic research on such sites at a national level to clearly establish whether the asset is of national significance in terms of archaeological interest. It is therefore not possible to confidently demonstrate that the asset is of equivalent significance to a Scheduled Ancient Monument and therefore should be treated as a designated heritage asset (NPPF Paragraph 139). It is acknowledged that considerable efforts have been made by the applicant to establish the current state of knowledge on infirmary burial grounds. Further excavation and academic synthesis of such sites (including work house and asylum burial grounds) would be necessary to further clarify this matter which is beyond the scope of what could be reasonably required of the applicant.
52. In terms of the burial ground wall the available map evidence suggests that the burial ground was approached from a central pathway through the Infirmary grounds in the late 18th century. Davis' Map of the City of Oxford (1797) appears to show the path running up to gate piers within an eastern boundary wall. Hoggar's 1850 map shows the same pathway extending through the site to Walton Street, although no gate is shown on either entrance. A drawing of the Oxford University Press (Ms Top Oxon.3.233.f.43) believed to be dated to the 1830s and predating St Paul's School which was built in 1848, shows gate piers in the western wall of the burial ground and a smaller entrance further to the south. A large section of the boundary wall south of the entrance gate is shown as incomplete or in the process of rebuilding at this time
53. In 1864 the Weekly Board and General Court of Governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary ordered repair of the entrance to the burial ground and setting up new iron gates. The 1876 1:500 OS map shows no gates either to the west or east of the cemetery. The Montague Evans Heritage and Townscape and Visual Assessment (2013) notes that the change in ground levels either side of the remaining western wall would indicate that the ground was built up and the wall rebuilt when the new Fever Ward was constructed in 1870 (5.160). The blocked up remains of the western frontage gate piers may therefore remain within the later rebuild. Should demolition be consented then appropriate recording would be warranted.
54. The NPPF states the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the planning application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Where appropriate local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. Bearing in mind the results of various desk based assessments and the archaeological evaluation a suitable condition is suggested securing the

implementation of a scheme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a mitigation strategy approved by the planning authority.

55. The archaeological investigations should include level 2 building recording (English Heritage 2006) prior to demolition of the perimeter wall and a targeted watching brief during demolition. Furthermore the archaeological excavation of the Infirmary burial ground, which will be secured by faculty, should seek to advance understanding in line with the advice set out in the NPPF. Following a post-excavation assessment of the burial assemblage, and if justified by the character and quality of the assemblage, the applicant should be responsible for approaching the Consistory Court for a reconsideration of the current faculty requirements regarding:
- the percentage of the assemblage to be retained for study over a specified time period;
 - the length of the specified time period; and
 - the application of intrusive sampling.
56. The applicant should also be responsible for securing specialist research of the burial assemblage if appropriate. This approach should be subject to the appropriate specialist advice and in line with the agreed published national English Heritage/Church of England guidance. The archaeological work should be appropriately archived and disseminated including the production of a published report, a popular hand-out and on-site presentation/commemoration (as appropriate). The archaeological recording should be undertaken by a professionally qualified archaeologist working to a brief issued by the diocesan advisor and local planning authority.

Access

57. The 2008 Masterplan for the ROQ site identified as a key objective a site which was essentially car free at surface level and with such car parking as there would be heavily restrained and provided for essential operational users only. Central to the concept was the introduction of 2 east - west routes through the ROQ linking Woodstock Road and Walton Street. These would be public routes but available for cyclists and pedestrians only with occasional maintenance and other access. The northern east - west route linking the new Jericho Health Centre at New Radcliffe House to Woodstock Road is now open to the public, though with a temporary tarmac surface as building work continues nearby. These primary routes would be linked within the ROQ site by a series of lower order thoroughfares, also car free. Overall it was envisaged that approximately 100 car parking spaces would be provided across the whole site when fully laid out, including 23 spaces to serve the relocated Jericho Health Centre. The figure of 100 car parking spaces would be perhaps a quarter of that on the site when the Radcliffe Infirmary was still in occupation. The majority of the parking spaces would be located at second basement level accessed by two car lifts within the new Mathematics building accessed off Woodstock Road which would also provide facilities for servicing. A small number of disabled parking spaces would be located at surface level at various points. Cycle parking across the whole ROQ was envisaged to total approximately 2600 spaces, taking into account that not all students, researchers and staff would be present on the ROQ site at the same time or for the whole day.

58. The Blavatnik proposals are consistent with these principles as no car parking specific to the development is proposed, but good levels of cycle parking is made. In total 184 cycle parking spaces are provided, 136 at surface level to the southern side of the square created around the building, but with 48 spaces at first basement level accessed via a cycle “slot” running along stairs to that level. Changing facilities are also provided at basement level. The provision of 184 cycle stands in total is in excess of the Local Plan standard of 1 space per 2 students and 1 space per 5 staff. The increase in cycle movements on Walton Street and Woodstock Road combined is estimated in the accompanying transport assessment at 123 in the peak hour which is not expected to raise any capacity issues. As indicated previously, there would be no vehicular access to the application site from Walton Street, other than may be required for emergency purposes.
59. In addition the opening of the northern east - west route has brought Woodstock Road bus services including Park and Ride within easy access of ROQ buildings, including Blavatnik. Again the Transport Assessment does not anticipate the development imposing capacity issues for existing services.
60. A Travel Plan also accompanies the planning application which seeks to secure and maintain low car usage by the promotion of alternative modes of transport. Although it is site specific it supports and subscribes to the University wide Travel Plan which is currently under review and updating. The Highway Authority welcomes and supports the contents of the Travel Plan as submitted, but notes that following occupation of the development a staff travel survey will be undertaken and a revised Travel Plan produced taking into account its findings. A condition is suggested accordingly in the event of planning permission being granted.

Sustainability

61. Across its estate the University requires that all major new building projects achieve an “excellent” BREEAM rating whilst seeking to maintain the operational performance of new and existing buildings throughout their lifetime, especially in terms of energy consumption and carbon emissions. These requirements are reflected in the intended performance of the Blavatnik building. In terms of actual features to the building, natural ventilation is provided wherever possible, except for areas such as basement lecture theatres where mechanical ventilation is utilised. The external glazed skin of the building allows the passage of air through its 30mm seams, with the inner skin fitted with opening windows accordingly, and blinds which automatically deploy to reduce solar gain when required.
62. Heating and cooling is provided by closed loop ground source heat pumps with the facility to link into the ROQ wide system, whilst energy requirements are assisted by the use of photovoltaics mounted at third and fifth floor roof levels. Rainwater harvesting is included with collection from roof areas to an underground storage tank. From here the water is used for WCs via booster pumps and filtration. Low flow taps and dual flush WCs would be used throughout. Internal lighting consists of base level provision with fixed

luminaires supplemented by additional lighting only where and when it is as required, automatically controlled by occupancy and daylight with manual override. The double skin façade to the building also assists in containing interior light within the building, avoiding excessive light spillage. Materials would be sourced locally wherever possible.

63. With these features in place a score of 8 out of a possible 11 is achieved on the Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA), with the minimum standard achieved or exceeded in each of the categories of energy efficiency, renewable energy, materials and water resources.

Conclusion

64. The proposed Blavatnik School of Government represents the latest proposal to come forward in the long term redevelopment of the ROQ site following the permissions granted to refurbish the retained infirmary buildings, and new development of student accommodation for Somerville College, departmental buildings for Mathematics and Humanities, and for replacement health centre and other facilities at New Radcliffe House. The building is unapologetically contemporary in its architecture but informed by an understanding of the wider context in which it would be located. Accordingly its highly distinctive design is not harmful to the Oxford skyline, nor would it harm the listed buildings or conservation areas it adjoins. The building is energy efficient; encourages travel to it by means other than the private car; and includes public realm which facilitates movement and permeability through the ROQ site and beyond.

65. Officers conclude that the planning application can be supported subject to the conditions listed and accompanying legal agreement.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers: Applications 09/00312/FUL, 09/00313/LBD, 09/00317/FUL, 09/00316/LBD, 09/02535/FUL, 09/02534/FUL, 11/00513/FUL, 13/00119/FUL.

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