

Application Number: 13/01424/FUL & 13/01425/LBD

Decision Due by: 8th August 2013

Proposal: Demolition of existing store building and extension to Nuffield building. Erection of single storey extension – 13/01424/FUL

Erection of building between Nuffield building and kitchen, to provide kitchen ancillary uses and plant room. Various demolitions including changing/store building, stores/extension to Nuffield building, fire escape, steps, platform, windows to form new openings, walls to kitchen; walls, floor, ceiling and finishes. Various alterations including infilling of window at Nuffield building. Removal and replacement of kitchen equipment and ventilation. Construction of reinforced concrete wall on college side to boundary wall at Worcester Street - 13/01425/LBC

Site Address: Worcester College, Walton Street – **Appendix 1**

Ward: Jericho And Osney Ward

Agent: Freeland Rees Roberts Architects

Applicant: The Provost & Fellows Of Worcester College

Applications called in by Councillors van Nooijen, Fry, Sinclair and Canning as the site of the proposed development is highly sensitive and the proposed interventions are substantial.

Recommendation:

13/01424/FUL

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

For the following reasons:

- 1 The proposals provide improved and modernised catering facilities for the College whilst preserving important street views and the special character and appearance of the Central Conservation Area. Tree making an important contribution to public amenity and the Conservation Area will be retained and protected and views from the within the listed Nuffield lawn will be reinforced. No material harm to the architectural or historic integrity of listed buildings or

their settings will result. Consequently the proposals are considered to accord with policies CP1, CP6, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11, HE2, HE3 and HE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 as well as policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

- 2 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.
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed, would accord with the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity.
- 4 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed, would accord with the special character, setting, and features of special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity.

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples
- 4 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 5 Arch - Implementation of programme and historic record
- 6 Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 1
- 7 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1
- 8 No felling lopping cutting
- 9 Construction method statement to avoid damage to listed boundary wall

13/01425/LBD

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

For the following reasons:

- 1 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed,

would accord with the special character, setting and features of special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity.

- 2 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.

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Commencement of works LB/CAC consent – 3 years
- 2 LB/CAC consent - approved plans

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals
CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density
CP8 - Design Developmt to Relate to its Context
CP9 - Creating Successful New Places
CP10 - Siting Developmnt to Meet Functional Needs
CP11 - Landscape Design
HE7 - Conservation Areas
HE3 - Listed Buildings and Their Setting
NE15 - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows
NE16 - Protected Trees
HE2 - Archaeology

Core Strategy

CS18_ - Urb design, town character, historic env

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework.

This application is in or affecting the Central Conservation Area. The development is affecting Grade I and II Listed Buildings and structures.

The gardens are registered grade II* within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage.

Relevant Site History:

12/01809/FUL - Erection of new lecture theatre and College kitchen. WDN 29th April 2013.

12/01810/LBD - Alterations and extensions involving demolition to hall, including new lift, stairs, 2 storey block to Pump Quad. Alterations involving demolitions to Nuffield and Buttery Building and to kitchen/bedroom block. WDN 29th April 2013.

Representations Received:

None.

Statutory and Internal Consultees:

English Heritage – No objection. The scheme is a result of significant negotiation but the smaller and simpler scheme now proposed is a ‘good result’.

Drainage Team Manager – Development to be SuDS compliant.

Local Highway Authority – Construction traffic management plan is required with deliveries to site acceptable only after 9.30am and before 4pm to avoid harm to traffic through flow.

Officers’ Assessment:

Site Description

1. The application site relates to part of the college which is located alongside its frontage with Worcester Street. The site consists of the 1840s kitchen building, the adjacent 1950s infill building and the Kitchen Quad extending southwards to include the single storey former lavatory block to the Nuffield Building.

2. Worcester College was founded in 1714 and the college lies to the west of Oxford city centre. It is bounded to the north by the nineteenth century residential area of Jericho and to the south-west by the Oxford Canal. Although now close to the city centre, the 18th century College would have been at the time on the edge of the city. In 1720 the Main Block of the college which faces Beaumont Street (and which includes the chapel, hall and library) was constructed and later in the 18th century the north range of the Main Quad was built, providing the Provost’s Lodge at its west end. The main block is listed grade I. In the 1820s the medieval buildings overlooking the Pump Quad were heightened and twenty years later the old kitchen was converted into rooms and the present kitchen built.

3. Several buildings have been erected during the 20th century, including the Nuffield Building, erected in 1939, and in the 1950s an infill building between the Nuffield Building and the 1840s kitchen.

The college gardens are to the west of the application site; the 26 acre grounds include the gardens, the lake and the sports field. The gardens are registered grade II* within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage.

On the garden side is a Western Catalpa tree which is considered to be a ‘champion tree’, of high significance, being the largest of its kind in the UK.

Description of Proposed Development

4. The applications seek consent for the demolition of the existing store building and the majority of the 1950s kitchen between the Nuffield Building and main block and the erection of a ground floor extension to the Nuffield building as well as a single storey rear extension to the existing main building to provide enlarged and improved catering facilities.

5. The listed building consent also seeks permission for a number of internal wall demolitions to improve access flows for users of the building as well as existing external steps to the boundary wall and part of the existing fire escape to the Nuffield building.

6. Officers' consider the principal determining issues in the case of these applications to be:

- Impact on significance of listed buildings/structures and their setting;
- Effect on the Central Conservation Area and street scene;
- Impact on Grade II* registered garden;
- Trees; and
- Archaeology.

Impact on Significance of Listed Buildings/Structures and their Setting

7. The current proposals are the result of several months' discussions between conservation officers and the previous and current architects. The previous proposal by Rick Mather Architects included a substantial lecture theatre adjoining the boundary wall and very close to the western catalpa tree. A wide variety of other interventions were also proposed some that officers concluded would amount to substantial harm. Officers considered that the design, massing and location of the theatre would harm the setting of the listed buildings, the conservation area and there would be risks to the tree. This application was withdrawn and the current architects were given a revised brief by the College, excluding the lecture theatre.

8. The purpose of the rebuilding of the kitchen ancillary buildings (built and altered in piecemeal fashion from 1844 to the 1950s) is to bring together functions that are housed in other areas and to place the kitchen stores along a service passage. This would improve the functionality of the catering process, flow and access as currently the staff and Environmental Health have raised concerns.

9. The kitchen dates from 1844 and abuts the Glastonbury chambers to the north (the chamber would not be affected by the works). The kitchen originally extended to the roof but a first floor was added in 1966 with student rooms above, with the ceiling sitting below the heads of the windows to the west wall. The internal appearance is mostly with modern finishes and plain openings. The proposals include removal of internal walls to widen the prep areas, altering one window in the east wall to form a doorway, blocking up a doorway in the south wall, altering two windows in the east wall for extract ductwork, a new opening in the south wall for a duct, relining the walls, new mechanical and extract ventilation, replacement of kitchen equipment and services and a new external door to Kitchen Quad (required by Environmental Health to create separate access for waste removal). The 1966 ceiling would be replaced with a new suspended ceiling that would be set back further away from the windows.

The 1966 kitchen floor would be replaced with a new structure and the level excavated by 150mm to accommodate a damp-proof structure required by Environmental Health.

10. The kitchen ancillary accommodation was built in 1844, south of the kitchen block and has been altered many times since, resulting in low heritage significance. The 1950s block is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new extended building, to include accommodation presently in the Nuffield Building and locate kitchen stores along a service passage.

11. The boiler room is partly located in the Nuffield Building and would be extended with a window to be blocked up in the north wall. The risk to heritage fabric would be from damage caused during the works, thus a protection condition has been imposed. The 1939 staff changing rooms and the north-south passage located east of the Nuffield Building are of low heritage significance and would be partly demolished to the west side as the east side abuts the historic boundary wall to the street. A passageway would be created in place of the building. The Pump Quad would have a new level path linking staircase 13 to the pantry.

Impact on Central Conservation Area

12. Policy HE7 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will only be granted where the special character and appearance of a conservation is preserved or enhanced.

13. The impact on the conservation area, the setting of the listed buildings, the registered park and garden and on the catalpa tree would be minimal, due to the ridge height of the proposed kitchen block being kept as low as possible and the roof being clad with natural slate.

14. The boundary between Worcester Street and that part of the college is formed by a rubble stone wall, the lower part being a retaining wall. The pavement of the street is some distance above the kitchen quad. The date of this wall varies as it is in three sections, but some sections were in place by 1578. A section of 1.7m is leaning into the college side and requires stabilising and this project will be included as part of the main works.

15. The kitchen quad is a service yard bounded by the Worcester Street wall to the east and is only viewable internally. It is a neglected space with a wood store, bin store, coal bunker and steps adjacent to the existing gate in the boundary wall, all of low heritage significance. The quad would be reconfigured and kept as a service yard and repaved, thus being an improvement.

Impact on Grade II* Registered Garden

16. The development would be visible from the grade II* registered college garden where views through the existing gap between the Nuffield building and main building allow sights of more modern development at Gloucester Green. Such a view detracts slightly from the more historic built development that surrounds part of the garden.

17. The scale of the proposed kitchen extensions is however similar in height to existing development though will create a better articulated bridge between the Nuffield building and the 1840s extension to the main building thus creating a better

enclosed space. Views through to Gloucester Green will still be possible though, as set out below, this is essential to retain views from the public realm through to the Catalpa tree within the garden.

Trees

18. An existing large Catalpa tree planted approximately one hundred years ago lies within the grade II* listed College garden. It is a Champion specimen having been confirmed to be the largest of its kind anywhere in the UK or Ireland. As a result of its size, vigour, excellent form and visibility from the public realm, it makes a substantial contribution towards public amenity such that great weight should be afforded to its preservation.

19. Whilst having immediate and obvious public amenity benefits the tree also creates a pleasant and important verdant juxtaposition between the traditional stone buildings found elsewhere along the Worcester Street frontage of the College site. Whilst this view was unplanned, officers consider it to be nonetheless a particularly visually pleasant and important one that should not be materially harmed.

20. As a result of the foundations of the existing single storey structure linking the main building and the Nuffield building, the roots of the Catalpa tree have been found, through trial trenching, not to extend through into the kitchen quad. As such development within this quad will not give rise to harm to the roots of the tree despite being within its notional root protection area as set out in BS 5837:2005.

21. As a result of the single storey height of the development proposed, no lopping or pruning of the canopy of the tree will be required to facilitate the development and no views through to the tree from the public realm will be lost. However, to ensure that construction work and associated storage/operation of equipment does not result in compaction of tree roots or accidental damage to the tree itself, conditions requiring a tree protection plan and construction method statement are recommended to be imposed.

Archaeology

22. Prior to the submission of the application, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken which revealed at least two distinct phases of negative features truncating the natural terrace gravels. The earliest of these was not securely dated, but was similar in character to prehistoric and earlier medieval features excavated elsewhere in the city. The later phase of features appeared to comprise 15th-16th century pits. These features were overlain by garden soils. In addition, to these features, a number of structural remains were also revealed. One of these was an east-west aligned wall which may correspond to a garden wall depicted on a 17th century engraving and be of medieval origin. The remaining structures are likely to correlate to outbuildings in the kitchen courtyard.

23. In order to better understand the heritage value of any remains found at the site an archaeological investigation should be carried out which consists of historic building recording, a watching brief during demolition/stabilisation works and an appropriate level of archaeological recording prior to or during foundation and service works. This approach is supported by the City archaeologist.

Other Matters

24. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has identified that the access to the site will be from Worcester Street which is subject to particularly heavy traffic congestion during early mornings and evenings where it is one of the main routes into the city centre. To avoid significant harm to the through-flow of traffic in this location it is recommended that a condition requiring a construction traffic management plan is imposed which should, as part of the approved plan, prevent deliveries to the site before 9:30am.

Conclusion:

25. The proposals are considered to preserve important heritage assets whilst modernising the College to allow it to meet modern student and conferencing requirements. The design of the new building and interventions are considered to be respectful of their setting. The proposals are considered to accord with all relevant policies of the development plan. Committee is recommended to approve both the full planning application and the listed building consent subject to the conditions set out at the start of this report.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission and listed building consent, 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 approve, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers: 12/01809/FUL, 12/01810/LBD, 13/01424/FUL & 13/01425/LBD.

Contact Officers: Matthew Parry & Katharine Owen

Extension: 2160

Date: 2nd August 2013