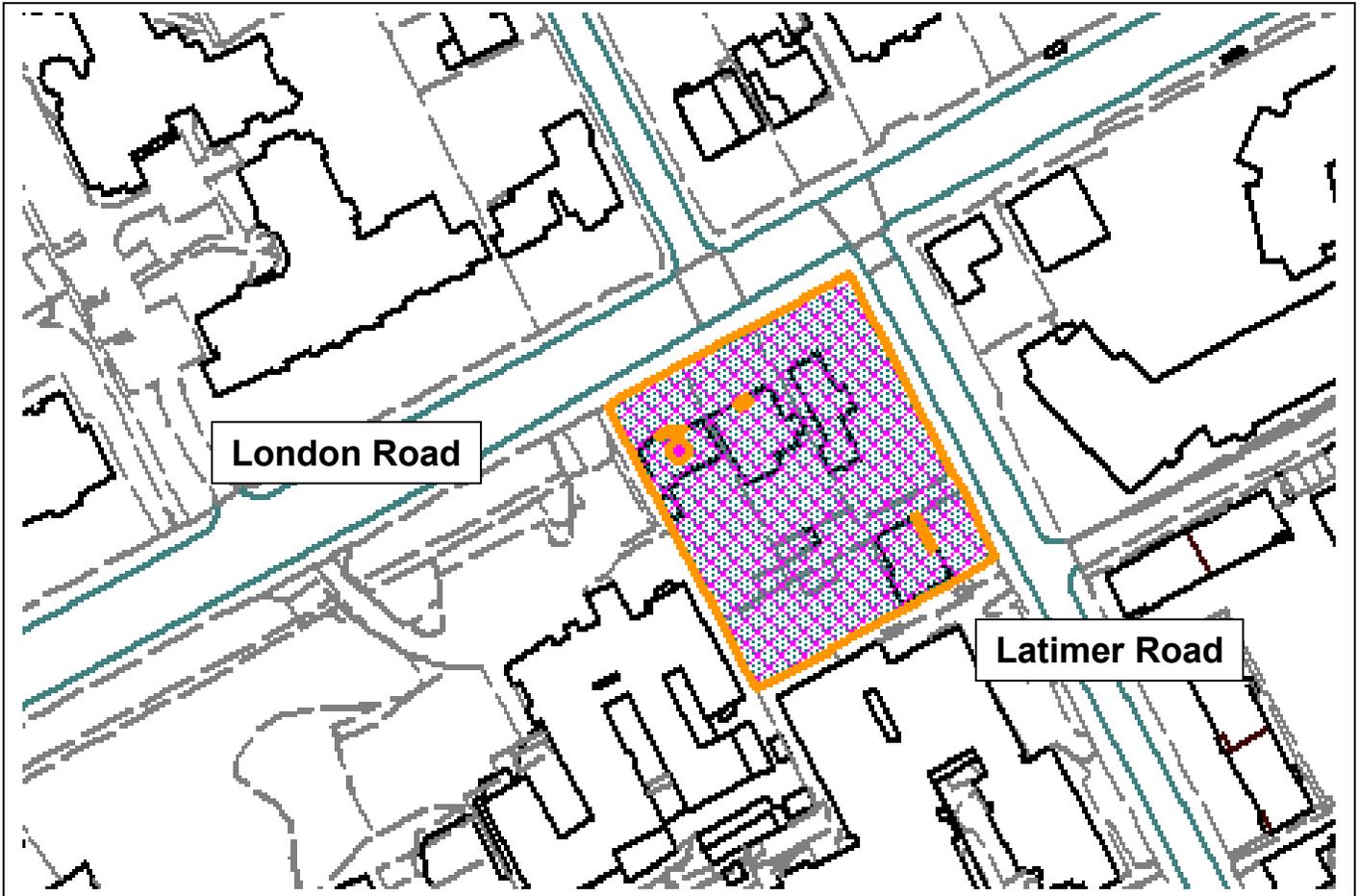


# Appendix 1 - 1

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## London/Latimer Road, Oxford

### Design Workshop

Notes from 16 October 2014

Thank you for attending Cabe's Design Workshop on 16 October 2014. We welcome the opportunity to offer our advice at this stage and look forward to engaging in future dialogue as the proposal develops. We welcome student housing on this site as it is related to other civic, academic and commercial uses in the local area, and we feel that private housing on the site is also appropriate. The proposed building height across the scheme works in this context. However, we do not support the design in its current form. The building feels cramped on the site due to the proposed quantum of housing and seems to be somewhat bland in its design. A clearer design strategy for the building configuration, architectural treatment, internal layout and open spaces is needed to ensure that the distinct character of the site is reflected in the building design and quality internal and external spaces are provided for all residents. We recommend that the design team should develop the scheme through design studies with sketch options and on-going consultation with the local planning authority. We offer the following suggestions in taking the design principles forward.

#### Landscape and shared space

- A landscape strategy that incorporates a richer aboricultural mix is needed across the site. Look at ways of making the open spaces more characterful, accessible and usable with more defined areas for planting and seating. Explore how the private open space along London Road can be treated more creatively to make this space more welcoming and usable. Incorporating seating and more hard landscaping along the pavement will create a resource for local community.
- Consider how to make the open spaces for the student and private housing feel more private as the current arrangement of the student courtyard and garden for the private housing seems contrived and somewhat unsecure. Enhance the character of the courtyard, which currently is likely to be overshadowed and dark, by incorporating larger areas of hard landscaping and seating for groups to congregate. More hard landscaping will also help in the overall maintenance of this space. Extending the look and feel of the courtyard into the main entrance foyer of the student block will help to create a stronger focal point in the building.

#### Building configuration

- Continue to explore the height and massing to determine if/how additional space can be provided to alleviate the strain on the internal and external spaces. Taller building elements can be acceptable on the site provided that that the design is appealing, contextual and built to a high standard with good quality materials and detailing. Variations in height and possibly roof types will also contribute to a more interesting articulation of the building.



- Consider how the whole building can be used more efficiently to provide better quality residential units and open spaces; large outdoor spaces can be provided for the students on the roof, for example.
- Separating the student and private housing blocks can help to make the building functions more distinct and legible for residents, visitors and the local community. A clear separation in the building form and/or elevational treatment of these buildings can also improve the sense of security for both blocks and contribute to the commercial viability of the private housing units. A natural break between the private and student blocks can be created following the stepped frontage along London Road, for example.
- Continue to consider if/how car parking can be provided for the residents living in the private housing, either as on-site bay parking or allocated street parking. Where on-site car parking is possible, explore how it can be incorporated without hindering the quality of the residential accommodation or public spaces. Should on/off-site parking not be feasible, other types of users could be explored who may be more likely and able to use public transportation, such as young professionals.

#### **Architectural treatment**

- Look at the trees as significant structuring elements of the site. Envisaging the trees as “pieces of natural architecture” through a stronger understanding of their height, width and seasonal character and drawing them more accurately in plan and elevation will help to inform the articulation of the façade and material palette. Think about how the London Road will work with the trees and how a restrained, understated façade can work as a background for the trees.
- Creating a building that is inspiring in its design will help to reflect the prominent site location and add to the character of the townscape. The set back and design of the top floor with metal cladding, for example, is not contextual and appears gratuitous. Explore a more homogenous elevational treatment across all floors and/or defining key design elements, such as parapet walls.
- Continue to develop the character of the building along Latimer Road as it is the point of arrival for the majority residents and visitors to the site. A more legible entrance can be developed with more hard landscaping and no trees, for example. We feel that the large, overhanging trees on the opposite side of the road provide sufficient greenery to this main entrance and elevation.
- The junction of London Road and Latimer Road is a focal point that could be more celebrated in the building design. Increasing the height or using the materials more creatively at this corner, for example, will help to add vitality and interest to the street.

#### **Internal layout**

We welcome the variety of clusters of student rooms with shared communal living spaces. However, the student rooms on the basement floor along London Road are not appropriate at this

level and in this position as they will experience poor levels of daylight and have no direct views to the outdoors as a result of the small north-facing windows above head height. Continue to explore the configuration of the rooms on each floor and internal layout to ensure that views and maximum daylight is provided. Strategically position communal living spaces in the building to achieve more sunlight, with larger windows where needed.

**Sustainability**

Develop environmental strategies to promote sustainability through use of renewables, shading and SUDs. For example, the roofscape can be used for solar panels, brown roofs and green roofs that support biodiversity; likewise, green walls can provide habitats for nesting.

**Attendees**

Design Workshop Panel

John Lyall (chair)  
Deborah Nagan  
Eddie Booth

Scheme presenters

Adam Carroll	CJCT architects
Michael Mansell	Frontier Estates
David Morris	Frontier Estates
Roger Smith	Savills
James Stewart-Irvine	Savills

Local Authority

Fiona Bartholomew	Oxford City Council
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Cabe at Design Council staff

Thomas Bender  
Victoria Lee

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## London/Latimer Road, Oxford City Council

### Design Workshop

Notes from 4 December 2014

Thank you for attending Cabe's Design Workshop on 4 December 2014. We are pleased to continue engaging on this scheme and find much to applaud since our last design workshop on 16 October 2014. The proposal is significantly improved by the bold design changes to the building configuration. We commend the initiative to separate the student and private blocks and think the building is beginning to work successfully both internally and with the streetscape, in particular on London Road. In general, the proposed height and massing are sound. With further refinement, the scheme has the makings of a successful architectural piece that helps to marry the academic, residential and civic character of the local area. We offer the following suggestions in taking the design principles forward.

#### Building configuration

- The increased building height at the corner of both streets helps to give this corner prominence, whilst lower building heights towards the west and south help to respond to the surrounding townscape.
- Whilst we welcome the overall building configuration, the student building feels uncomfortably close to the root protection area of the large mature trees on London Road, particularly at the northern corner of the building. More technical information on the footing of the building at this corner and further site investigations via trial holes on the scope of the tree roots is needed as a priority. We recommend that opportunities are explored to create a wider gap between the trees and the building.
- The placement of the private housing on the site boundary to the south needs particular attention at this stage. Investigate the detailed nature of the boundaries and discuss access arrangements for future construction and on-going servicing works with the neighbours.

#### Elevations

- The elevational approach across the scheme has significantly improved; the buildings now appear calmer and more statuesque, in particular along London Road.
- Continue to explore in more detail how the elevations could be a simple and calm backdrop to the existing mature trees on London Road. Think about their size and placement given their north-facing aspect and the likelihood that views and daylight is likely to be obstructed by the tree foliage, particularly for rooms on the upper floors when the trees are in full bloom. We welcome the use of fixed and openable window systems.
- Explore how the depth of windows can help to animate intriguing the simple, planar elevations, for example, using full brick width reveals.



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- The building mass on London Road is successfully broken down by the three separate facades. Think about how to incorporate the westernmost part of this elevation in this design approach as it currently appears like unsympathetic add-on.
- Explore how the main entrance on London Road can be more subtle and elegant, and be more in keeping with the current elevational approach. At present, it does not appear to belong to either of the two adjoining sections of the elevation.
- Treating the ground floor like a loggia could be interesting and also help to inform the elevational approach on London Road.
- The student block elevation on Latimer Road will benefit from further work. Currently it appears commercial and seems overbearing on the surrounding residential context. Continue to investigate the proportions of the façade in relation to the size and placement of the openings to help break down its scale. Explore coupling larger areas of the façade in larger horizontal tiers, for example.
- Continue to address the relationship between the London and Latimer Road elevations and how they meet at the building corner. At present we feel this is yet to be resolved. Investigate how the cornice across both elevations could be maintained across both elevations.
- The proposed elevation of the private block is successful. It feels in keeping with the student block whilst having a strong residential character. Address the southern elevation as it will impact significantly on the existing neighbouring care home. A calm elevation with high quality materials is crucial and some planting, such as a green wall, could be appealing.

**Internal courtyard**

- The internal courtyard shows the beginnings of a lively, attractive space for staff and students. The direct views from London Road through the lounge to the internal courtyard is particularly intriguing.
- The initial design approach to the internal elevation is sound. Consider how the internal elevations could be more in keeping with the character of the external façade, for example using glazed brick. A stronger end point should be created in the design of the north-facing wall.
- The long and narrow access route that divides the scheme from Headington School feels somewhat unpleasant. Consider if/how this space could be wider and more creatively designed, incorporating planting in the dividing wall for example.

**Internal layout**

- The improvements to the internal corridors are to be applauded. They are now more efficiently arranged with less back to back rooms.

- Explore how corridors accessed by bedrooms could be more private. At present students must walk past private rooms to access the communal room at the end of the corridor. Relocating the communal room closer to the lift and staircase will reduce noise and disruption and the number of private rooms facing the internal courtyard, especially at lower ground floor level.
- Explore how the communal spaces could feel more active by considering the range of recreational activities for this space.

### **Public space and entrances**

- The student housing to the north predominantly accessed via London Road and private housing to the south accessed via Latimer Road works well.
- We also welcome the secondary entrance on Latimer Road for students and services. Consider how this entrance can be linked to the main entrance on London Road via an external pedestrian route as this is likely to be a key thoroughfare for students.
- Access to the bike storage at lower ground floor in the student block is acceptable but not ideal. Look for ways to make access to this space easier for students to access, by locating the bike storage closer to the lift, as it will encourage students to continue to cycle. Bike parking facilities in the forecourt on London Road will cause unsightly clutter and should be avoided in this key space.
- Improve the character of the entrance forecourt on London Road using hard and soft landscaping to clearly mark the building entrance. High quality materials and detailing in this space will be crucial. Consider how wayfinding could also be improved with signage that matches the look and feel of the building and the mature trees.
- Look at opportunities to extend the look and feel of the forecourt into the building to better unify the outdoor and indoor spaces, and make the lounge feel more special. This could be achieved by incorporating hard landscaping, such as paving stones, in the lounge. More hard-wearing materials in the lounge would also be more resilient to frequent footfall and moving bikes through this space.
- The scale and placement of the car park at the rear of the private housing seems to work well on the site. However the vehicular route from Latimer Road into this space needs careful attention as it could be dark, unsafe and uninviting, especially at night. Widening the road could also make it feel more open and allow cars to pass more easily; lighting, good quality hard landscaping and detailing will also improve its appearance and make it more resilient to wear and tear. Gates will also help to prevent this car park space from becoming a space for antisocial behaviour and flytipping. The size and configuration of windows looking onto this space also needs to be addressed in more detail.

**Landscape**

- The initial landscape approach is sound. A full detailed landscape strategy on the placement, species and future management of trees and soft landscaping across the scheme is needed. Look at ways of incorporating more planting on London Road, and assess the character of the trees on Latimer Road.
- The green roof in the student block is an attractive new feature of the scheme. Consider how the roofscape could be more characterful with different types of shrubs and planting that better contributes to the local ecology and biodiversity. Explore how more photovoltaic panels can also be sensitively incorporated as solar heating for the scheme will be preferable if CHP is not provided on site. It seems to be a missed opportunity to restrict access onto the roof; health and safety concerns can be addressed through careful design.
- The trees in the private car park work well as they help to soften the impact of the tarmac. Trees in the private gardens will also be beneficial to future residents. Where possible, look at ways to increase the amount of green space, by reducing the number of car parking space for example.

All drawings need to be updated in the planning application package.

**Attendees**

Design Workshop Panel

Keith Bradley (chair)  
Deborah Nagan  
Eddie Booth

Scheme presenters

Michael Mansell	Frontier Estates
Michael Mansell	Frontier Estates
Adam Carroll	CJCT
Roger Smith	Savills
James Stewart-Irvine	Savills

Local Authority

Fiona Bartholomew Oxford City Council

Cabe at Design Council staff

Thomas Bender  
Victoria Lee

**Confidentiality**

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21 September 2015

Michael Mansell and David Morris  
Frontier Estates  
2 Bedford Street  
Woburn  
Bedfordshire  
MK17 9QB

Our reference: DCC/0647

**Oxford City Council: London/Latimer Road, Oxford**

Your reference: 15/00858/FUL

Dear Michael Mansell and David Morris,

Thank you for presenting this scheme to us at a planning application review meeting on 13 August 2015. This is our formal response to the updated planning application drawings, presented at the review, following your discussions with Oxford City Council at the planning application stage.

We continue to support student accommodation on this site which responds to both the civic and residential character of Headington. There has been an improvement in the design for London/Latimer Road since the last ODRP design workshop on 4 December 2014. The client and the design team are to be commended for taking on board the panel comments and resolving a number of elements of the scheme, particularly aspects of the site layout. There are, however, some aspects of the design that will benefit from further resolution, namely the impact of the energy centre on the internal spaces and the elevational treatment particularly on Latimer Road. In addition, an assessment of the full planning application on this prominent site in Headington requires more detailed drawings and design information. The success of this scheme will greatly depend on the quality of the detailed design, materials specified and construction. Ongoing involvement of the design team on the scheme during construction, for example, will provide support to address these issues.

**Landscape design and public realm**

In principle, the landscape design approach is successful. The entrance arrangements for the London and Latimer Road entrances feel safe and are inviting; they could be made more so if the external materials extend into the entrance of the building. This will help to achieve a welcoming and attractive access point which is sufficiently robust to accommodate the high user traffic expected in this entrance space. The internal courtyard has the potential to be a pleasant place for students and staff. We question the benefit of the boundary wall along London Road as the proposed green space already forms a barrier between the street and student accommodation; the boundary could



be further defined by planting. A strategy for protecting the mature trees along London Road and the existing tree planting in the adjacent school site during construction is required.

The rear gardens to the private housing have an awkward relationship to the vehicular service access and communal student courtyard. Further consideration should be given to these gardens to provide the residents with a more rational and functional external amenity space.

### **Internal layout**

The internal layout incorporating clusters of student rooms with shared facilities is working well. The energy centre, however, will benefit from further thought. Whilst relocating the energy centre from south-west of the site at the rear of the proposed private housing to the lower ground floor of the student building is sound, its close proximity to the student rooms is concerning due to noise and disturbance as a result of frequent access and maintenance. Access to the energy centre for large and heavy machinery via the ground floor is likely to be inadequate and needs to be fully thought through. Careful detailing, including sound proofing of the energy centre and adjacent student rooms, will be required.

The proposed bike storage on the lower ground floor and access via a ramp within the central entrance staircase is far from ideal. This will provide an awkward bottleneck for users accessing the lower ground floor facilities and bike store, particularly at peak periods, and is also likely to result in ongoing damage to the stair and stair wells. Alternatives should be explored, such as swapping the bin and bike store with the energy centre, to provide a more robust solution which addresses the functional, service and maintenance requirements of each space and to ensure the in- and out-door communal spaces are not cluttered with bikes in the future.

### **Elevational treatment**

Whilst the elevational treatment has improved, a building of this scale in this prominent location in Headington requires a more confident elevational approach in keeping with its characterful setting. The gridded façade along London Road helps create a simple backdrop to the mature trees and the three pavilions work well in breaking up this long façade. However, the elevational approach along Latimer Road and at the junction of London and Latimer Road is underdeveloped and the proposed elevational drawings in general are still diagrammatic. The building at this key corner should be more special, for example, to respond to the adjacent main road and large trees. In addition, the westernmost corner of the building along London Road feels disjointed and should be more effectively incorporated in the elevational treatment. More detail on the fenestration is needed; this should clearly illustrate the fenestration language proposed and show window frames and fenestration bars to accurately reflect which panes are fixed and opening. This detail will be important as it will greatly influence the appearance of the glazing, cladding and elevations. In developing the design of the fenestration consideration should be given to low level window panels where desks are located in front of windows in student rooms. In order to ensure adequate thermal comfort and daylighting there also needs to be a successful balance between solid and void.



Given the proposed simple palette of materials, the colour and quality of the materials will be crucial to the building's overall appearance and its long-term durability and maintenance. The use of brick is sound but the proposed zinc cladding on the upper floors seems a generic approach and apologetic in terms of trying to reduce its visual impact. A more integrated solution should be developed and care should be taken to show material thicknesses that allow for excellent thermal insulation in the window panels as well as the masonry walls. Further details should be provided on all building materials and their durability as well as key junctions in the proposed buildings.

The proposed staggered layout for the private housing provides a successful transition between the new student accommodation and St Luke's Nursing Home. In keeping with this approach, the elevational treatment of the private housing could appear more different to the student accommodation to relate more strongly its use.

### Sustainability

The ambition to achieve thermal comfort and efficiency primarily through the building fabric is commendable and should be detailed in the planning application. In this respect, we suggest the design team considers the fenestration in more detail, including the effect of overheating as a result of the south-facing communal rooms with floor to ceiling height glazing. Noise from London Road is also an important consideration. Finally, further initiatives to support biodiversity and sustainability should be investigated and integrated in the building design. We urge the client and design team to consider brown roofs for photovoltaic panels and green roofs for planting.

Thank you for consulting us and please keep us informed of the progress of the scheme. If there is any point that requires clarification, please telephone us.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Lee  
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Email Victoria.lee@designcouncil.org.uk  
Tel +44(0)20 7420 5244

cc (by email only)

Adam Carroll	CJCT
Roger Smith	Savills
James Stewart-Irvine	Savills
Fiona Bartholomew	Oxford City Council
Izabela Zoryak	Oxford City Council



**Design Review presentation material**

Drawings presented at the ODRP Design Review included the application submission drawings and updated drawings following discussions with Oxford City Council at the planning application stage.

**Review process**

Following a site visit and discussions with the design team and local authority and a pre-application review, the scheme was reviewed on 13 August 2015 by Joanna van Heyningen (chair), Paul Appleby, Eddie Booth, Tom Holbrook, Deborah Nagan and Mark Swenarton. These comments supersede any views we may have expressed previously.

As this scheme is the subject of a planning application, we will publish our views on our website, [www.designcouncil.org.uk](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk).

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