

# Agenda Item 3

Oxford City Planning Committee

8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Application number:** 21/03057/FUL

**Decision due by** 14th February 2022

**Extension of time** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Proposal** The construction of a new humanities building to include; academic faculty space, a concert hall, a theatre, experimental performance lab, lecture hall, public engagement and outreach facilities, new public realm and landscape space with associated access, servicing route, disabled parking facility and covered and open cycle spaces.

**Site address** Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road– see **Appendix 1** for site plan

**Ward** Walton Manor Ward

**Case officer** Sarah De La Coze

**Agent:** Mrs Stephanie Weeks      **Applicant:** The Chancellor, Masters And Scholar

**Reason at Committee** Major Application

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## 1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1. The Oxford City Planning Committee is recommended to:

1.1.1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 13 of this report and grant planning permission subject to:

- the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers to secure the planning obligations set out in the recommended heads of terms which are set out in this report; and

1.1.2. **agree to delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:

- finalise the recommended conditions as set out in this report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary; and
- finalise the recommended legal agreement under section 106 of the Town

and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers as set out in this report, including refining, adding to, amending and/or deleting the obligations detailed in the heads of terms set out in this report (including to dovetail with and where appropriate, reinforce the final conditions and informatives to be attached to the planning permission) as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary; and

- complete the section 106 legal agreement referred to above and issue the planning permission.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1. This report considers the erection of a new Humanities Building proposed to be located in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ). The building would have four storeys and a double level basement. The overall height of the building would be approx. 21.89m measured from the north entrance and 22.55m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the dome. 19.84m measured from the north entrance and 20.50m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the plant enclosures and 15.67m measured from the north entrance and 16.53m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the roof parapet. The single building would bring together seven faculties, two institutes and several libraries. It would include a 500 seat concert hall, 250 seat theatre, 89 seat lecture and film screening facility, a school engagement centre and café, Bate collection of musical instruments and library. It would also have enhanced facilities for learning, teaching and research, including interdisciplinary research, collaboration with external partners and research in new areas, such as Ethics in AI.
- 2.2. The application was subject to pre application discussions and was reviewed by the Oxford Design Review Panel.
- 2.3. The existing site is the location of the former Radcliffe Infirmary Hospital and is currently a vacant site comprising a temporary car park and a temporary covid19 testing unit.
- 2.4. The development site includes a small part of the southern tip of the North Oxford Conservation Area and the site is bounded by Jericho, Central and Walton Manor Conservation Areas. A number of Listed Buildings are located in the near vicinity, most notably the Radcliffe Observatory Building, the Observer's House, the former parish church of St Paul (Freuds) and the former St Paul's School building in Somerville College.
- 2.5. Officers consider that the development would be acceptable with regard to principle, design, impact on the historic environment, highways and impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 2.6. The historic environment has been carefully considered and great weight has been given to preserving the significance of the designated heritage assets referred to in the report, and where harm would be caused to justify that harm and mitigate it through design choices. The benefits resulting from the development are considered to be of a weight that would outweigh the

moderate level of less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets that it is considered would be caused by the proposed development, officers therefore consider that the development would comply with the requirements of Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

- 2.7. The development would provide a world class building bringing together a number of facilities together with a range of public spaces and enhanced outdoor landscape. Officers consider that the development is acceptable in all other aspects and recommend that the committee resolve to approve the application subject to a legal agreement which is covered in the section below.

### **3. LEGAL AGREEMENT**

- 3.1. This application is subject to a legal agreement to secure a travel plan monitoring fee of £2,379.

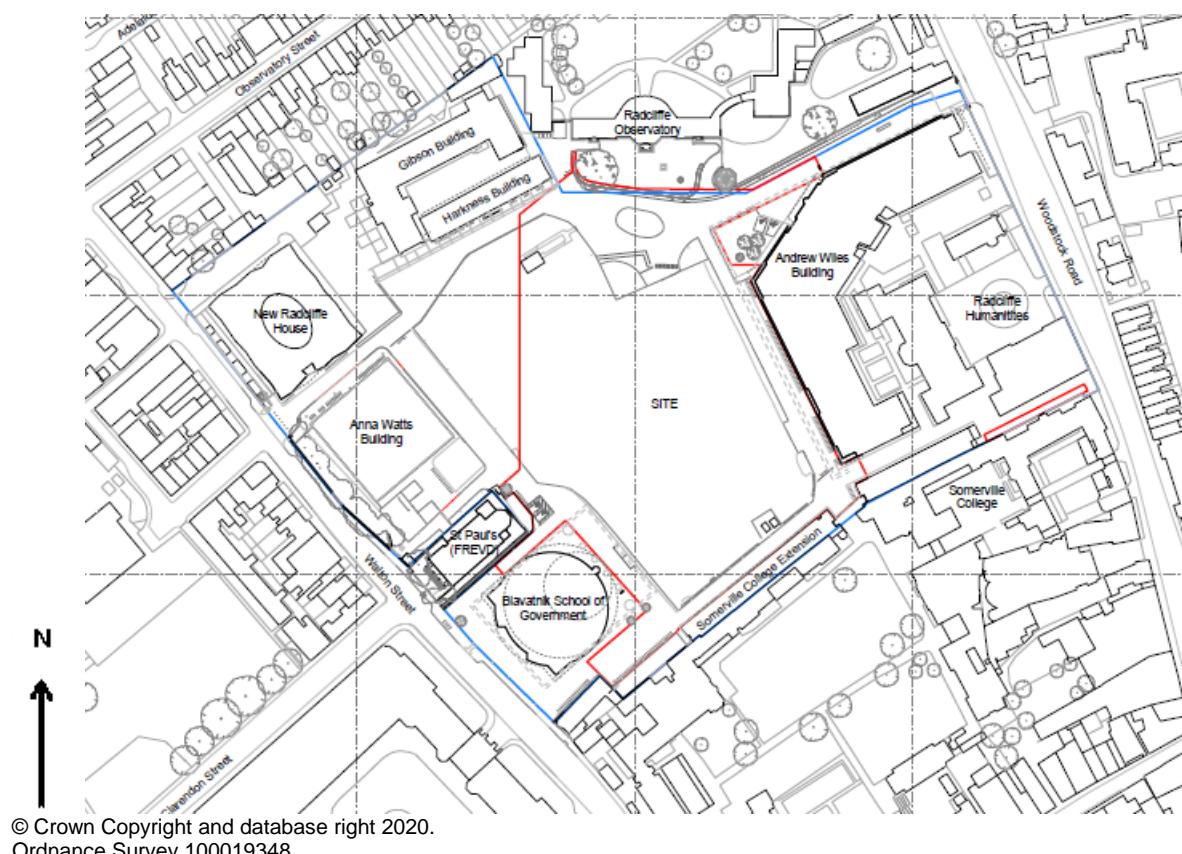
### **4. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

- 4.1. The proposal is liable for CIL at an amount of £716,786.96.

### **5. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 5.1. The site is located within the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ) which is located approximately 1km north of Oxford City Centre. The site is covered in hard standing and currently comprises a temporary car park and Covid19 testing facility.
- 5.2. The land falls approx. 2m from east to west across the site with a smaller fall from north to south. Immediately to the north of the site is the Radcliffe Observatory, a grade I Listed Building dating from C17. To the east, buildings that survive from the former use of the site as the Radcliffe Infirmary and an early C21 building for Maths Faculty. To the south-west the Blavatnik Building, comprising of four storeys and a basement floor, designed for and occupied by the University of Oxford's School of Government. To the south, a four storey C21 range of student accommodation designed by Niall McLaughlin for Somerville College that forms the northern boundary of that college's site.
- 5.3. In addition to the Observatory, the northern edge of the site is bounded by the Gibson Building a mid C20 concrete frame building with strip glazing and brick panels occupied by a number of Oxford University departments and an early C21 Community Health Centre with some research offices and labs which sits on the north-west corner of the ROQ aligned along Walton Street.
- 5.4. An additional plot, earmarked for future development, excavated as part of the earlier archaeological investigation of the site and presently housing temporary buildings occupied by part of the Department of Psychology until their relocation in a replacement for the former Tinbergen Building presently being built in South Parks Road in the University's Science Quarter lies immediately to the west of the site.

- 5.5. Also to the west of the site and fronting onto Walton Street is the former St Paul's Church, presently occupied by Freud's bar, a grade II Listed Building, completed in 1836 to the designs of the architect HJ Underwood in a neoclassical style with a distinctive Ionic columned portico on its front, west end and a later sanctuary added as an apse on the east end of the building, designed by the architect EG Bruton (responsible for plans for Wellington Square and Little Clarendon Street). The church was a parish church playing an important role in the lives of the residents of the evolving, historically working class suburb of Jericho which lies to the west of the site and which expanded rapidly in the C19 as a result of the burgeoning industrial and commercial enterprises in the area, the Oxford University Press and William Lucy Iron foundry being the two of the principal employers. All of the associated churchyard and burial ground related to St Paul's was excavated as part of the earlier archaeological investigation and the former church building now sits isolated, above the surrounding land of the ROQ.
- 5.6. The development site includes a small part of the southern tip of the North Oxford Conservation Area. The site is bounded by Jericho, Central and Walton Manor Conservation Areas
- 5.7. The site is accessed by vehicles from the Woodstock Road and there is an emergency vehicle access from Walton Street. Otherwise pedestrian access is available from a number of points along Walton Street and Woodstock Road.
- 5.8. See site plan below:



## **6. PROPOSAL**

- 6.1. The application seeks permission for a single building which would bring together seven faculties, two institutes and several libraries with enhanced facilities for learning, teaching and research, including interdisciplinary research, collaboration with external partners and research in new areas, such as Ethics in AI. The building would be four storeys and would have a double level basement. The overall height of the building would be approx. 21.89m measured from the north entrance and 22.55m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the dome and 19.84m measured from the north entrance and 20.50m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the plant and 15.67m measured from the north entrance/16.53m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the roof parapet. The building would include new cycle parking areas, disabled parking as well as hard and soft landscaping. The building has been designed to Passivhaus standards. The building would be home to the following facilities:
- 500-seat concert hall
  - 250-seat theatre for lectures, drama and dance;
  - 89-seat lecture and film screening facility;
  - Experimental Performance Lab;
  - Exhibition hall;
  - Rehearsal space;
  - Café;
  - Schools and Public Engagement Centre;
  - Bate Collection of Musical Instruments;
  - Library; and
  - Faculty Centres and shared teaching, research and graduate study spaces.
- 6.2. The 500-seat Hall has been designed to provide world-class acoustics for performances by ensembles and chamber orchestras of up to 60 musicians and would also be suitable for small symphony Orchestras. The 250 seat lecture theatre would be used for large lectures during term-time, but would also be able to accommodate not only student-led dramatic performances but also professional plays and theatre. The Experimental Performance Laboratory has been designed to accommodate a wide variety of performance types and will transform practice-led learning, teaching and research, particularly for the Music Faculty. The Rehearsal Hall would not only house the University's gamelan collection, but would enable both rehearsal and performances.
- 6.3. The building has been designed to be a public building with a public route running through the ground floor level. There are a number of open and public spaces proposed at ground floor level which include the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, the ground floor entry to the Bodleian Humanities Library, a Film Screening and Lecture theatre, an Exhibition Hall, public engagement seminar and display space for the new Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence, and café and coffee bar facilities which would be open to the public.

- 6.4. The building has been designed so that the lower floors include the public spaces and the upper floors will house academic accommodation, including Faculty Centres and Institutes, which would contain specific research, graduate, teaching, administration and staff offices/ tuition spaces; the Bodleian Humanities Library; together with shared graduate study, teaching and research space.
- 6.5. The spaces around the building are proposed to be landscaped and disabled parking would be provided on the site.

## **7. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 7.1. The table below sets out the relevant planning history for the application site:

12/01508/LBC - Replacement of existing Triton statue with new coade stone statue. (Existing to be salvaged and displayed in alternative location). Approved 3rd September 2012.
14/00922/FUL - Installation of a sculpture and various associated sculptures across the site. Approved 2nd June 2014.
14/02311/FUL - Demolition of Holding Unit. Hard and soft landscaping scheme and other works to Doll, Harkness and Gibson buildings to include enclosed external storage areas and additional cycle parking.. Approved 7th November 2014.
15/03198/FUL - Temporary soft landscaping for the central area of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter. Approved 1st April 2016.
20/01974/FUL - Erection of a Temporary Covid 19 Testing Unit for a period of 12 months. (Retrospective). Approved 13th October 2020.
21/00790/FUL - The installation of a chemical store for a temporary period (retrospective). Approved 7th May 2021.

## **8. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

- 8.1. The following policies are relevant to the application:

Topic	National Planning Policy Framework	Local Plan	Other planning documents	Neighbourhood Plans:
Design	126-136	RE2, DH1, DH2, DH7		

<b>Conservation/ Heritage</b>	189-208	DH3,DH4, DH5		
<b>Housing</b>	60-80	H14		
<b>Commercial</b>	86-90	V1,V6		
<b>Natural environment</b>	174-182	G2,G7,G8		
<b>Transport</b>	104-113	M1,M2,M3,M4, M5	Parking Standards SPD	
<b>Environmental</b>	174-182	RE1,RE4, RE6 RE7, RE8, RE9	Energy Statement TAN	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	7-12	S1,S2,E2, H9, RE5, V7,V8,V9,SP54		

## 9. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 9.1. Site notices were displayed around the application site on 26th November 2021 and an advertisement was published in The Oxford Times newspaper on 25th November 2021.

### Statutory and non-statutory consultees

#### Oxfordshire County Council

*Proposal:*

The construction of a new humanities building to include academic faculty space, a concert hall, a theatre, experimental performance lab, lecture hall, public engagement and outreach facilities, new public realm and landscape space with associated access, servicing route, disabled parking facility and covered and open cycle spaces.

The new Humanities building is within the wider masterplan site, located at the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ), located in north central Oxford forming part of the University of Oxford. The masterplan site is bound to the north by Observatory Street, to the south by Little Clarendon Street, to the west by Walton Street and to the east by A4144 Woodstock Road. The ROQ site is currently formed of various university buildings including the Mathematical Institute, Jericho Health Centre, Blavatnik School of Government and Radcliffe Observatory itself.

To facilitate the application process for the above development, a series of Scoping discussions were held with Oxfordshire County Council Officers to agree main issues and information to be included in the TA in support of the development proposals.

### **Key points**

- Transport Assessment and Trip generation
- Public Transport Accessibility
- Pedestrians and Cycle and vehicle Accessibility
- Car and Cycle parking
- Travel Plan
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Delivery Service Management
- Events Management Traffic Plan.

### **Recommendation:**

#### **No objection subject to:**

**Planning Conditions** as detailed below if planning permission is given.

#### **Car Park Layout Plan**

Prior to first occupation of the development, a plan detailing the layout of the car parking area shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. The Car Park Layout Plan must set out so that all car parking spaces meet the minimum dimensions required and can be safely and easily accessed. The parking Layout Plan should include a designated coach and Taxi pickup/drop off and parking areas.

*Reason: in the interest of highway safety*

#### **Cycle Parking**

Prior to first occupation details of the cycle parking areas, including dimensions and means of enclosure, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved Cycle areas shall thereafter be retained solely for the purpose of the parking of cycles.

*Reason: To encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in line with policy M5*

#### **Travel Plan.**

Prior to first occupation a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in line with policy M5*

#### **Delivery Service & Events Management Plans**

Prior to first occupation a Delivery Service Plan and Events Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Plan Authority.

In the interest of Highway Safety

#### **Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)**

A Construction Traffic Management Plan should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed prior to commencement of works. This should identify among others state; the routing of construction vehicles, access arrangements for construction vehicles, Details of times for construction traffic and delivery vehicles, which must be outside network peak and school peak hours to minimize the impact on the surrounding highway network)

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to mitigate the impact of construction vehicles on the surrounding network, road infrastructure and local residents, particularly at peak traffic times.*

### **Detail Comments**

The above site is in a highly sustainable location it is therefore appropriate that the site is proposed as a car free development with exception for limited disabled parking spaces.

### **Vehicle Accessibility**

The main vehicular access is located to the northeast of the site, connecting Woodstock Road to the internal road. Access into the site is controlled by a barrier between the hours of 07:00-17:00 with long stay deliveries arranged through the Facilities Management team and provides a route through to the existing on-site car park via car lifts. There are other vehicle access locations along Walton Street, although access to these is limited and controlled by bollards or landscaped features. A 100 vehicles according University Authorities enter the site daily. Regarding the existing Woodstock Road access, it needs to be re-reviewed whether the visibility for vehicles exiting the existing site access onto the Woodstock Rd/ across the footway is adequate given the presence of the high heritage walls.

### **Pedestrian and Cycle Accessibility**

The Application area is predominantly pedestrian and cyclists access focused from numerous directions therefore pedestrians and cyclists have priority over vehicles in the proposed shares spaces. The existing key pedestrian and cycle route across the site is via Woodstock Road to the south of the Mathematical Institute. An additional route north of the Humanities building runs east to west. It also has an advisory 5mph speed limit for the small number of vehicles that may enter the area. Walking infrastructure surrounding the site will be upgraded as part of the proposal. The pedestrian footways along Walton Street and Woodstock provides convenient connections to bus stops and the railway Station and to National Cycle Route 5 that connects Reading to North Wales, with links within Oxford City and the nearby areas.

### **Public Transport accessibility,**

The above application site is in a sustainable location. It is approximately 1.1km away from Oxford railway Station, with closest bus service allocated along Woodstock Road on the easting frontage of the site. Stagecoach and Oxford Bus routes 35, 300 Park& Ride, 853, NS3 gold, S2 gold and S3, provide frequent services to local destinations in Oxford and in wider Oxfordshire. It is therefore acceptable that majority of trips associated with the proposed development will be by sustainable modes. The TDC Officer therefore recommends the Applicant to work with Oxford City Council to extend the existing bus shelter at Woodstock Road to reflect the anticipated uplift of the number of visitors that may utilise that facility because of the proposed development.

**Car Parking-**. There are approximately 32 car parking spaces in the car park below the Mathematical Institute. These are accessed via Woodstock Road and a security barrier. Drivers then drive into the site and perform a U-turn before entering the car park. The Woodstock Road access also provides access to a surface level car park associated with Green Templeton. Approximately 25 car parking spaces are located to the north of the site. There are existing access points from Walton Street, however, these are lightly used, with signage directing vehicular traffic towards Woodstock Road. Provision has been made for 6 disabled parking within the masterplan.

The existing 24/7 CPZ in surrounding areas will mean that there are restricted overspill parking opportunities. It should be noted the council is currently undertaking a review intended for further reduction in on-street parking spaces on Woodstock Road as part of the funded corridor works.

Regarding the wider ROQ complex, clarification is needed from the Applicant concerning the arrangements that will be put in place to ensure the existing car parking provision is not used (as a default) for on -site car parking particularly for any planned evening events. That said, details of arrangement for managing Coach, parking, pick -up and drop-off will be required by LHA for review.

An experimental traffic regulation order was in place for 18 months starting on 18 November 2019 at the junction of Walton Street / Beaumont Street /Worcester Street (A4144) in relation to the proposal was discussed at pre-application meeting. Though the above restrictions are now removed, there is the possibility of other measures such as a low traffic neighbourhood to improve road safety, air quality being introduced in future for that area.

### **Cycle Parking**

Details of bicycle Storage facilities, for Students. Staff and visitors provided for approval is based on the cycle parking standards for Higher Education with '1 space per 2 students (based on anticipated peak number of students on-site at any one time) plus 1 space per 5 staff'. In line with the Policy M5 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and the Oxford City Council's policy a requirement for 921 cycle parking spaces is needed, 922 spaces are therefore provided, shown in Figure 4.7 in Cycle Parking Locations and based peak occupancy(Table 4.1)

### **Multi-modal Trip generation assessment**

The applicant has provided multi-modal trip generation data undertaken to quantify the anticipated trip generation and impacts of the proposed development. In accordance with the university local and regional policy, no car parking will be provided on site, so most trips generated would be by active and sustainable travel modes. The trip generation assessment has considered the trip impact of the maximum occupancy expected for the proposed development by first-principles approach, since it is considered it would result in a more accurate trip generation than utilising trip rates from the national TRICS data bases, due to the unique nature of the site.

To obtain a profile of the trips across the day for the 3000 students and 534 Staff, TRICS (v7.7.4) trip rate database has been utilised to attain a comparable daily trip

distribution for a university facility. The submitted TA as shown in table 5.1 confirm TRICS daily inbound and outbound trips, and the AM peak hour of 08.00-9.00 with 23% arrivals and PM peak hour at 12.00-13.00 with 13.3% of the trips. The future classroom occupancy has been obtained from the University to provide a comparison with the TRICS profile. It is noted that the timetable varies across the year and therefore a typical profile was selected when the classrooms were well used.

The Transport Officer questions why a more recent survey has not been used. In using the 2016 Mode travel survey of the University staff and students carried out in 2016 for journey-to-work for the occupants of the ROQ at that time, it was considered that the students and Staff of the new Humanities Building will largely follow the same modal split travel behaviour. A small adjustment for the absence of car trips for this proposal, since no additional car parking is proposed, and new staff will travel by sustainable modes. Using this assumption, the modal peak trips generated by were as follows:

### **Students**

- **Bicycle**- 50% of the total peak trips (two -way AM and PM peak hour flows are 275 and 293 respectively)
- **Bus** - 3% of the total peak trips (two -way AM and PM peak hour flows are 17 and 18 respectively)
- **Walk** - 47% of the total peak trips (two -way AM and PM hour flows are 259 and 276 respectively)

### **Staff**

- **Bicycle** - 47% of the total peak trips (two-way AM and PM hour flows are 47 and 50 respectively)
- **Car Passenger**- 1% of the total peak trips (two-way AM and PM hour flows are 1 and 1 respectively)
- **P&R** - 5% of the total peak trips (two -way AM and PM hour flows are 5 and 5 respectively)
- **Bus** - 26% of the total peak trips (two -way AM and PM hour flows are 27 and 28 respectively)
- **Train**- 8% of the total peak trips (two -way AM and PM hour flows are 8 and 9 respectively)
- **Walk**- 13% of the total peak trips (two-way AM and PM hour flows are 13 and 14 respectively)
- **Other** - 1% of the total peak trips (two-way AM and PM hour flows are 1 each way)

It is evident from tables 5.4 and 5.5 in the TA that active and sustainable travel modes are the predominate modes of travel associated with proposal. The student's two-way cycle trips will be 3000 daily trips (1500 each way) and walk 2820 and (1410 each way) Para.5.2.15 refers to these figures including bus trips 90 as two -way trips when it should be one way. The total number of daily Staff trips associated with proposed humanities building is 1108, buses(290trips), train 88trips, walking (139trips) and P&R (being the main modes of travel).

As shown in table 5.8 a total 3,742 people will attend the Humanities building with associated 7484 two-way trips daily. That said the TA reiterates the point that

student trips will not be new trips but diverted trips from existing establishment within the city. It is also noted that this relates to the overall number of students, staff, and visitors and not the maximum occupancy which is lower and has been used to derive the cycle parking spaces.

### **Vehicular Traffic and Servicing**

Besides disable parking deliveries and servicing, no additional vehicular trips will be associated with the proposed development. The TA confirms that the additional service trips will be low, with the existing waste and recyclable collection arrangement, vehicles making addition stops for the proposed development. Added with the two additional general deliveries and catering service trips, the total servicing trips will be 11 for the development. The existing on-site Facilities Management Team will be responsible for all deliveries and where possible, delivery and Service trips will be consolidated and delivered by existing vehicles. The proposed circuit arrangement movement for larger vehicles around the site, is far from ideal, however it is acknowledged that options for turning around larger vehicles are limited so there should be a strict management plan to restrict these movements to the absolute required minimum.

### **Evening events trips**

It is acknowledged that, the additional visitors who will attend performance and public events outside the main and peak hours attributed to the development. In the absence the car park for the development and the nearby CPZ controls, it is reasonable to assume Event Visitor's 'would- be car trips' would be via Park and Ride trips to site and with other available modes of travel such as buses. Table 5.9 in the TA shows 28 taxi trips by visitors to performance events between (18.00 to 19.00) and with 45 entering exiting site after the closing time (22:00-23:00) according to the TRICS estimates. Slight difference relating to 'closing' taxi figures 44 in table and 45 trips referred to in the text.

The Taxi drop-off areas shown in figure 6.4 appears inadequate for the volume of Taxis attracted to site during Public and Performance Events.

It is concerning that the assessment estimates a requirement for up to 45 taxis for evening events, this demand being broadly at the same time (when events finish) rather than being spread out across time periods. It is noted that "**Taxis will be managed and let onto the site as required for pick up / drop off**" however further arrangements for this are not made clear. With the volumes of Taxi's suggested and lack of clarity about the management process concerning this issue , there is real concern this could cause blocking and safety issues on the Woodstock Rd noting the access is immediately adjacent to a bus stop also on the Woodstock Rd. Details of monitoring and management Strategies for managing Taxi movements for the pick-up and drop off Service areas together with how the above concerns will be mitigated should be submitted to LHA for consideration.

### **Pedestrian and Cycle movements**

The Applicant has provided analysis of the baseline and the future estimated proposed Humanities building daily and peak pedestrian and Cycle movements in the shared spaces which is welcomed. The TA how has failed to provide any information regarding the spatial adequacy of the shared space to accommodate the uplift in pedestrian foot fall and cycle movements.

As well as committed funding for improvements to Woodstock Road being available, Walton Street is identified in the councils LCWIP as an important 'quietway' route. In its desire to improve ped/cycle amenability including traffic calming in the area, a contribution will be required from the Applicant to provide funds in support delivery of these measures.

### **Swept path drawings**

The swept path drawing shows a Phoenix 2-15 (with Elite 2 4x2 chassis) Refuse Vehicle which is not the type typically utilised within the City. The dimensions should be 9.19m, in length, 2.25m in width, and a height 3.5m. Also evident in the submitted drawing is both the Refuse Vehicle and the FTA Drawbar vehicles overrun the sections of pedestrian areas within site. These issues should be addressed by the Applicant.

### **External Lighting**

The external lighting provision is acceptable from the Highways viewpoint

### **Travel Plan**

A development of this size (24,000 m<sup>2</sup>) triggers the requirement for a higher monitoring fee. A Section Agreement 106 Legal Agreement will be required to secure a monitoring fee of £2,379 (RPIx Dec 2020). In addition, the submitted Travel Plan does not meet Oxfordshire County Council requirements, so the Applicant should refer to the detailed comments below for the necessary changes.

Travel Plan specific comments:

- Add the planning application number
- Add the size individual elements of the site (GFA / number of units)
- Add a commitment to update the postcode plot of staff including travel information post-occupation
- Is 2016 the most recent survey available?
- 3.5.2 has an incomplete sentence
- Update the bike hire information to ensure the relevant companies are listed.
- All surveys should be analysed and submitted to Oxfordshire County Council within one month of survey completion.
- Please provide more information on how active travel will be promoted for the evening events.
- Information could be provided on the Oxford e-scooter trial
- Add a commitment that "Once it has been approved, any changes to the Travel Plan, in particular the targets, must be made in agreement with the Travel Plans Team at Oxfordshire County Council."

The LHA has no objection to above application from the transport perspective, provided to above conditions and issues are satisfactorily addressed by the Applicant.

### **Informative**

Applicant should note that the County council has committed funding to deliver improvements to the Woodstock Road between Green Templeton College and Wolvercote Roundabout planned to be delivered 2023. Early-stage plan proposals were recently publicly consulted upon. As part of the proposals, applicant is advised

that the County council is looking to reduce on-street parking provision on Woodstock Road in the vicinity of the site. Initial discussions between the County council and relevant local parties are underway. The County council is also currently in discussions with local stakeholders around advancing measures to promote active travel in the adjacent Jericho and Walton Manor area. Details of any scheme are not developed at this point and are dependent upon suitable funding, and wider strategic fit.

Oxfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)

**Recommendation:**

No Objection Subject To Conditions

**Condition**

**Construction shall not begin until** detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. The scheme shall include:

- A compliance report to demonstrate how the scheme complies with the “Local Standards and Guidance for Surface Water Drainage on Major Development in Oxfordshire”;
- Full drainage calculations for all events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change;
- A Flood Exceedance Conveyance Plan;
- Comprehensive infiltration testing across the site to BRE DG 365 (if applicable)
- Detailed design drainage layout drawings of the SuDS proposals including cross-section details;
- Detailed maintenance management plan in accordance with Section 32 of CIRIA C753 including maintenance schedules for each drainage element, and;
- Details of how water quality will be managed during construction and post development in perpetuity;
- Confirmation of any outfall details.
- Consent for any connections into third party drainage systems

Historic England

**Historic England Advice**

**The significance of the site and surroundings**

This site was until recently occupied by buildings that formed part of the John Radcliffe Hospital. These were cleared some years ago and the land has been acquired by Oxford university and is being developed in stages to provide new teaching and administrative facilities. Despite not being location within a conservation area, the site is highly sensitive at the meeting point of 4 conservation areas and near to several listed building, including the grade I Radcliffe Observatory and Freud's café (grade II, former St Paul's church).

The relationship with the Observatory is of the highest importance as Henry Keene and James Wyatt's playful neoclassical tower is one of the most beautiful buildings in Oxford and deserves a good setting. When constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the observatory was set in an informal garden standing in open countryside with the infirmary its neighbour. Keen's building was conceived in response to this rural setting: it is light and delicate, and as a tall tower standing alone it was intended to be a landmark.

While the observatory was surrounded by suburban Oxford during the 19th century its open garden setting persisted until the 1930s when its observatory function ceased and Lord Nuffield, who had acquired the site, donated it to the Infirmary. The garden was then gradually filled in with hospital buildings and a small informal grassed area are all that remains of its historic setting.

The site also abuts the east end of the former church of St Paul. This is also classical, with a temple front facing Walton Street. The apsidal east end was conceived as a rear elevation so is very simple but was intended to be seen and is neatly and carefully designed.

Each of the adjacent conservation areas are valued for their different qualities; Jericho for its working class and artisan housing, Walton Manor for its human scale with 19th century dwellings on modest plots, North Oxford Victorian Suburb for its phases of large residential dwellings with impressive villas, specious gardens and many trees, and the Central conservation area inclusive of the historic city of Oxford and the internationally renowned University Colleges.

As with any site in Oxford the height and form of any new building is important as there is the potential for it to impact upon both the Oxford View cones and important views from high places within the city.

### **The impact of the proposed Humanities building on its surroundings**

Historic England is supportive of the principal of development on this site. Its current state as vacant land does not form an attractive setting for the nearby heritage assets. It is accepted that development will change the setting of the Radcliffe Observatory and that its original largely rural setting has been lost completely. Any new development must give the observatory a new context that, while very different, still respects and, if possible enhances, its architectural qualities.

Creating a handsome building that responds well to the Radcliffe Observatory, Freud's café and the surrounding conservation areas is made more difficult by the fact that the new building is designed as a single, very large block. We understand the rationale for this, given the need to bring several departments together in one place, give all of them adequate space and share facilities along with the University's commitment to creating an energy efficient and thus environmentally sustainable building.

We consider the principal north and south entrance blocks to be architecturally successful. In particular, the classical portico of the northern entrance block responds well to the Radcliffe Observatory opposite.

The east and west elevations are much less formal and less coherent. We understand this is a conscious decision as future development of the plot to the west of the site

would mean that the proposed building would not be seen from any wide perspectives, but instead would be viewed obliquely along a relatively narrow street. As such, the predominant experience along the north-south road to the west of the proposed building will be the landscaped spaces, the stepping in of the building and what we expect to be the high-quality materials used. We accept the aim to achieve an interesting route here that feels suitably coherent with historic Oxford College developments.

Notwithstanding the above, it remains regrettable that the attractive incidental view of the Observatory that was made possible by the demolition of the infirmary buildings, from Walton Street/ Great Clarendon Street in the Jericho Conservation Area, will be obscured entirely. We understand that this site will eventually be development and that any new building would obscure this view and the new Humanities building. When this parcel of land is finally developed it will be important that any new building here is sensitively designed with regard to the impact on the conservation area.

We note that the eastern end of Freud's café presents an untidy appearance to the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter and despite it being outside the ownership boundary of the site the proposals seek to ameliorate this in the medium term with landscaping, which is positive. We hope that the condition of the former St Paul's church can be improved in the future.

We are content that views towards the site and the Observatory (from ground and elevated vantage points including Castle Mound) would not be adversely affected by the proposals. We understand that care and attention has been given to the placement and design of plant on the roof of the building. We are content from the submitted photomontages from views around Oxford, where seen the plant will be discrete and sensitive regarding the prevailing roofscape's character and texture.

The proposed landscaping south of Radcliffe Observatory would be a clear enhancement to the Observatory when contrasted with the most recent infirmary building period, and indeed the vacant site now. It would provide surroundings to the new building, across the whole site, that are both interesting and beautiful, and a positive edge to the road that must remain around the perimeter.

#### Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds.  
We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application.

#### Thames Water Utilities Limited

#### Waste Comments

Thames Water are currently working with the developer of application 21/03057/FUL to identify and deliver the off-site FOUL WATER infrastructure needs to serve the development. Thames Water have identified that upgrades to the waste water network will be required. Works are ongoing to understand this in more detail and as such Thames Water feel it would be prudent for an appropriately worded planning condition to be attached to any approval to ensure development doesn't outpace the delivery of essential infrastructure. "There shall be no occupation until confirmation

has been provided that either:- 1. All foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or- 2. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water to allow additional development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed, no occupation of those additional dwellings shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan." Reason - Network reinforcement works are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents. "Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Planning Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the planning application approval.

Thames Water are currently working with the developer of application 21/03057/FUL to identify and deliver the off site SURFACE WATER infrastructure needs to serve the development. Thames Water have identified that upgrades to the surface water network will be required. Works are ongoing to understand this in more detail and as such Thames Water feel it would be prudent for an appropriately worded planning condition to be attached to any approval to ensure development doesn't outpace the delivery of essential infrastructure. There shall be no occupation until confirmation has been provided that either:- all surface water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or- a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water to allow additional development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation of those additional dwellings shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan. Reason - Network reinforcement works are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid flooding and/or potential pollution incidents. " Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important the Local Planning Authority liaises with the Thames Water Development Planning Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the planning application approval.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer networks.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The developer should liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to

ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network.

There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.

<https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>.

#### Water Comments

Following initial investigations, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. Thames Water have contacted the developer in an attempt to agree a position on water networks but have been unable to do so in the time available and as such Thames Water request that the following condition be added to any planning permission. No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:- all water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows to serve the development have been completed; or – a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan. Reason - The development may lead to no / low water pressure and network reinforcement works are anticipated to be necessary to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to accommodate additional demand anticipated from the new development" The developer can request information to support the discharge of this condition by visiting the Thames Water website at thameswater.co.uk/preplanning. Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Planning Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the planning application approval.

There are water mains crossing or close to your development. Thames Water do NOT permit the building over or construction within 3m of water mains. If you're planning significant works near our mains (within 3m) we'll need to check that your development doesn't reduce capacity, limit repair or maintenance activities during and after construction, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.

<https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-largesite/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>

#### Oxford Preservation Trust

Oxford Preservation Trust OPT welcomes this opportunity to comment on this planning application and supporting information for the proposed development of a new Humanities Building within the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter ROQ.

As the University's plans for the ROQ continue to evolve, we are keen that the site, with its earlier history as Oxford's hospital, and which still holds many memories for local people, should not lose its earlier links to the University, seeking, instead, to bring town and gown together.

From the outset, the University committed to developing the site as a single entity, with the Masterplan stating, '*The site must work as a whole, providing not a series of individual independent facilities, but rather an integrated campus capable of phased development, to provide the flexible and sustainable estate the University requires to maintain and improve upon its current status.*'

This development is an individual high-quality building on a surprising scale, which is intended to have its own individual architectural merit. It needs to be sensitive to the setting of some of Oxford's foremost historic buildings, most notably the Grade 1 Radcliffe Observatory, and sits amongst several substantial and impressive new buildings which have yet to come together to create a place of character and a cohesive whole. With its' public uses, it is an opportunity to integrate the ROQ site into the wider city as well as to bring the whole site together.

OPT are fully supportive of the new humanities building and welcome the introduction of these new uses aimed at creating a place which draws people in, rather than keeping them out, as so many college and university buildings and sites can do.

The approach seeks to marry the old and the new, and, with careful orientation, respects the existing buildings on the site, allows for future development opportunities, and pays particular attention to minimising impact on the Grade I listed Radcliffe Observatory, directly to the north. Introducing a building of this scale comes with its challenges, and we make a number of observations below.

### **Height, Roofscape and the addition of plant, and plant housing**

This building is being asked to do a great deal, with the number of activities intended. Care has been taken to keep those parts of the building above ground as low as possible, as is apparent when viewed from the various high public vantage points where its impact has been minimised. We note how the low dome has been included as an architectural feature without dominating the skyline and views of the Radcliffe Observatory. OPT have, however, been confused by the overall height of the building as shown in the drawings, as on closer inspection it appears that what amounts to a fifth floor is proposed in the large amount of plant to be housed on the very extensive roofscape. Whilst this is unlikely to be seen from ground level, it will be very visible from higher up, and, in particular, from the top room of the Radcliffe Observatory , designed for public lectures from which views would have been enjoyed and which would now look down across a sea of plant. As it is one of the unique features of Oxford that the roofscapes, spires towers and domes can be seen and enjoyed from the various high points, it is unfortunate that, from within the ROQ site, the proposed plant and plant housing will interrupt the views from the roof terrace at the Blavatnik School of Government, and from the upper floors of the Andrew Wiles Building and the Somerville accommodation. We ask that further thought is given to reducing the amount of plant to improve the roofscape and its visual impact.

## **Design and facades**

This building has been well thought out and articulated and has placed a very large building onto this site in a way that breaks up its volume and creates interest when viewed from ground level. The number of activities that will take place will encourage several different users, and thought has gone into those elevations where visitors will arrive, and where the public domain is important. However, OPT notes that the western elevation facing the “Future Building Site” it is somewhat bland. As this façade will be the one that is seen from any new building on the adjoining site, we would ask if sufficient consideration has been given to ensuring that this façade is lively and interesting. OPT have also been interested to note the use of the arched colonnades and have previously expressed our views that this treatment can make a building feel private and exclusive, as can be observed at the Weston Library, a building which is a great asset to Oxford but can feel a little difficult to access for those who might not know if they are allowed in. It is our hope that it will not be necessary to gate the arches as this gives a further feeling of being kept out and does not encourage a welcome feel to the site generally.

## **Permeability and Access**

We note that the intention is for many of the uses and places within the building to be accessible to the public. We would ask that clarification, or indeed, planning conditions are placed on this, as we regret, we have seen too many instances where supposed public spaces have quickly become private once permission is granted and the buildings occupied, such as the café on the ground floor of BSG and the café and visitor centre in Christ Church Meadow, as but two examples.

We are pleased to support the improvements to the public domain with the soft and hard landscaping treatment playing a vital role in encouraging and welcoming people to the ROQ site. We are encouraged by the walkable routes around the building which link to existing routes into, around, and, through the site, enhancing the ROQ’s permeability, which remains open 24 hours a day. There are well landscaped and open areas to the north and south, though we note that the areas to the east and west are less well described. We note the various access routes into the building and are concerned to understand how these will function in practice, with the, presumably, frequent performance venue deliveries, to the west and the east. We hope that thought has also been given to creating spaces that do not ‘catch the wind’, as currently happens at the rear of the Blavatnik which catches the predominant south to west wind, and which would detract people from spending time in the spaces to the south of this building. As routes around the whole building will be available to visitors to cut-through, and as the site remains open at all times, we would ask that thought be given to ensure that there are sufficient levels of natural surveillance to all routes so that they feel safe and attractive to all, particularly in the evening. We note that there are also to be shared ‘access points’ which may cause potential conflicts between the pedestrians, cyclists and refuse vehicles, described as the users, and along relatively narrow lanes.

## **Conclusion**

We are pleased to support the overall approach to this building and can see that great care has been taken to maximise the development potential of the site. We welcome the way it directly addresses the Observatory with the improved setting in the landscaped which we all hope will deliver a successful new civic space between two wonderful buildings. The overall height of the building has also been carefully considered to lessen its impact on the Oxford skyline.

We ask that consideration is given to some further amendment to remove the amount of plant and plant housing on the top of the building which will impact when viewed from elevated positions within the immediate vicinity of the site.

We also would ask for further clarification regarding levels of public access to the inside and outside areas of civic space, to ensure that the spaces are clearly articulated to be welcoming, useable and safe, and that they remain in public use. We feel sure that the University wishes to deliver a building which everyone can agree is a positive new addition to Oxford. We support this aspiration and feel that the proposals have the chance to achieve something more of the aspirations of the masterplan for the site, which has yet to happen.

We hope that the above comments will be taken into consideration as part of the application process.

## **10. Public representations**

10.1. 3 letters of representative have been received. These can be viewed in full on the Council website.

10.2. In summary, the main points of letters of representation were:

- Hope that the building will be built to the highest energy and water efficiency
- What work has been carried out into the possibilities of onsite renewable energy and water storage
- Hope that natural SuDs are proposed
- Hope that swift bricks and nesting opportunities will be incorporated
- Hope that there will be extensive wildlife friendly tree and shrub planting
- Hope that a 'green' roof will be considered and green walls
- I hope there will be extensive cycle parking and EV charging points in any car parking space.
- Hope that there will be areas of the site where the outside lighting will enable the easy and safe passage of wildlife, especially bats.
- I hope that the embedded carbon footprint of the construction process will be the absolute minimum.
- Hope that this proposal will include a properly considered policy for the functioning of the new concert hall for players of heavy instruments including percussion, double bass, harp, harpsichord and many others,

- who need to be able to park close to the hall
- Concerns about the impact of this proposal on traffic volumes and the limited car parking.
  - Would want to see clear plans for traffic management, the predicted increase in traffic and contingency plans if predictions are significantly exceeded.

## **11.PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

11.1. Officers consider the determining issues to be:

- I.Principle of development
- II.Design and Impact on Historic Assets
- III.Impact on Neighbouring amenity
- IV.Highways
- V.Sustainability
- VI.Biodiversity
- VII.Drainage and Flooding
- VIII.Environmental Health

### **I. Principle of development**

11.2. The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter is an allocated site within the local plan. Policy SP54 sets out the requirements for the site.

## Policy SP54: Radcliffe Observatory Quarter



Planning permission will be granted for academic institutional, student accommodation and residential development at the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter site. Residential development could include employer-linked affordable housing in accordance with Policy H3. The minimum number of homes to be delivered is 48. Other complementary uses will be considered on their merits.

The site would only be suitable for redeveloped or additional academic institutional uses provided the requirements of Policy H9 are met. Pedestrian and cycle links through and to the site, including to the University Science Area, should be maintained and enhanced.

Development should be designed to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC. Proposals should be accompanied by an assessment of potential recreational pressure on the Oxford Meadows SAC that may arise from increased numbers of visitors, along with plans to mitigate this impact as necessary.

All proposals should minimise impact on air quality during construction phase and after implementation.

- 11.3. SP54 sets out that the masterplan should be a consideration for applications on the allocation. The proposal does depart from the masterplan in some areas most notably with regard to the pedestrianisation of the southern route of the site. Whilst it departs on some of the points in the masterplan, it is acknowledged that the masterplan for the site was never fully endorsed and therefore the weight that should be attributed to it would be reduced.
- 11.4. Policy SP54 sets out the permitted uses on the site, this includes academic institutional uses and residential uses. The policy sets out that 48 homes should be delivered on the site. The ROQ has a number of vacant plots on the site, therefore whilst the humanities building does not include housing, there are still vacant plots in the ROQ which could accommodate the housing requirement set out in the policy allocation
- 11.5. The policy states that the site would only be suitable for redeveloped additional academic uses provided that the requirements of policy H9 would be met. The application seeks to provide a single humanities centre that brings together a number of departments and institutions across from other sites owned by the University. Policy H9 links redeveloped and refurbished university academic facilities to university provided residential accommodation. The policy states that planning permission will only be

granted for new academic, research or administrative accommodation where it can be demonstrated that a) the new accommodation would not generate or facilitate any increase in student numbers or b) the number of their full-time taught course students living in Oxford in non-university provided accommodation does not exceed 2,500 at the time of the application. The recently published annual monitoring report shows that the number of students at the University of Oxford in non-university accommodation is currently under the threshold set out in the policy. The application confirms that the new Humanities Building will not lead to an increase in student numbers and instead its purpose is to make up that division under one roof. The supporting information states that the various buildings that are vacated by the faculties and departments that are moving into the new building will be used to accommodate other departments and academic activities in need of extra space or will otherwise be disposed of.

- 11.6. The proposal also seeks to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation, with it being considered and addressed within the ecological appraisal. The proposal therefore considered to apply with the requirements of Policy SP54 of the Oxford Local Plan.
- 11.7. The proposed development includes a number of different uses including a 500-seat concert hall, 250-seat theatre for lectures, drama and dance, 89-seat lecture and film screening facility. Policy V1 sets out the requirement for applications that include town centre uses. The application was accompanied by an impact assessment. The assessment detailed the proximity of the development to the city centre and details how other town centre sites would not be able to accommodate a building of this scale to fulfil the requirements and aspirations of the building.
- 11.8. The assessment details the other venues in the city which accommodate a range of different facilities which may be comparable to the concert hall with regard to their music offerings. It identifies that of the offering that is available there are few that have the suitable acoustics for classic music and that having a hall that would be designed as a world class concert hall would add to the offering that Oxford has and would not adversely impact on the facilities within the city centre.
- 11.9. The principle of development is therefore acceptable and would comply with the requirements of the site allocation and relevant planning policies.

## **II. Design and impact on heritage assets**

### **11.10. *Design***

- 11.11. Policy DH1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will only be granted for development which shows a high standard of design, and which respects the character and appearance of an area and uses materials appropriate to the site and surroundings.
- 11.12. Policy DH2 relates to views and building heights. The policy seeks to retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, in particular to and from

the historic skyline. Planning permission will not be granted for development proposed within a view cone or the setting of a view cone if it would harm the special significance of the view. The application was accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment which includes verified views.

- 11.13. Policy DH3 refers to heritage assets and states that planning permission will be granted for development that respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's unique historic environment (above and below ground), responding positively to the significance character and distinctiveness of the heritage asset and locality. For all planning decisions affecting the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight will be given to the conservation of that asset and to the setting of the asset where it contributes to that significance or appreciation of that significance.
- 11.14. The building has been designed to meet the specific needs of the departments that will inhabit it. This has led to the aspiration for one building that will be used by all and which would allow a greater ability for collaboration whilst still maintaining the intimacy required for individual and more established methods of working. Officers required the university to demonstrate the necessity for a single building and to show clearly how the large, single building would respond to its surroundings and result in the highest quality placemaking. Whilst the building as a single footprint produces a deep plan the applicant has set out why the organisation and relationship between spaces would work and indeed is a requirement and officers considered that this is justified. With regard to the one building approach the supporting documents set out that "*The project brings together seven faculties and departments, six libraries and a number of research institutes, including the recently established Ethics in AI Institute and the Oxford Internet Institute, under one roof to create a magnet for scholars to come together in a spirit of intellectual and creative collaboration, optimised to enable ease of cross-disciplinary engagement, both planned and serendipitous*". The building would not only be home to a number of faculties and teaching spaces, it would also serve as a building which can be used by the community and the aspiration for the building is to ensure that the building is for everyone.
- 11.15. This requirement to accommodate both members of the public and different styles of academic learning and teaching has resulted in the proposed layout. Officers acknowledge that it is important to understand the different styles of learning and teaching that has informed the layout and design of the building. The design and access statement details the layout of the building
- 11.16. "*The building is also organised simply and legibly, according to a gradient of seclusion. The upper levels accommodate the academic facilities. The lower levels the academic & public facing performance venues, with their strictly controlled lighting and acoustic requirements. Between them, combining both academic and public engagement, the main access level at ground floor. Whilst the upper floors of the building accommodate academic functions in the form of the Faculty Centres, the Library and Institutes, the ground floor and lower levels are given over predominantly to public facing activities, although several spaces will support both academic activity and the Humanities Cultural Programme. These include the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, the*

*Schools and Public Engagement Centre, a Film Screening Theatre, an Exhibition Hall and the public engagement spaces of the new Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence on the ground floor together with a new café to the south and coffee shop to the north. In addition, accommodation will comprise the Concert Hall, Large Lecture Theatre, Black Box Experimental Performance Lab and Rehearsal space on the lower levels. All of these will be open to the public, and the design therefore strives to ensure that the building feels welcoming and accessible to all.*

- i) Academic Accommodation (including the Library) and
- ii) Public Engagement spaces, which can be further split into highly serviced, performance spaces with more controlled public access and other less ‘structured’ event/ exhibition spaces. (It is noted that both of these spaces will also serve academic activity as required)”.

11.17. This division and requirement of space is visible in the size and layout of the buildings and the spaces within it. The smaller tutorial rooms are set near the top allow for the intimate space that is required for the teaching that the University is known for and which it seeks to continue. These spaces are peppered with larger lecture theatres and spaces that would allow for the wider teaching, learning and collaboration to take place. The building has been carefully considered to ensure that the complex requirements of the spaces and organised in a logical manner and that they benefit from daylight either by windows or proximity to the atrium where possible.

11.18. It is understood that the proposal and design has always aspired to create a new internal route through the ROQ. The building has been designed to allow people to travel through the building when crossing the site. Whilst this aspiration is referred to in the design, officers acknowledge that there are some shortcomings with the proposed approach in that it has not fully evolved to that the extent that would truly read as a street and be freely accessible throughout the day. Instead open access would be subject to closing times and the route does follow a slightly convoluted journey prioritising the entrance down to the theatre. Whilst not subject to planning control a number of alternative options were explore about how the ‘street’ might be manifested within the building. Particular considerations included how it could draw people in and how it would be accessible to everyone. These aspirations could still be achieved with more detailed design of the interior of the building and signage. The inclusion of a café at the southern end of the building with good outdoor spaces and linked to an exhibition space would enable the casual passersby, the local resident or curious visitor to observe and engage with activities inside the building and the placement of this and the museum near the front doors should help draw people in to the building and encourage some exploration where this is facilitated.

11.1. The principal entrances at north and south ends of the building have been designed with colonnades and covered areas or loggias that are intended to indicate the points of entry. Parts of the ground level of the building are designed to allow public access, particularly to the lower levels where the concert hall and lecture spaces will be located and therefore the design does

not include security barriers. It is anticipated that these parts of the building would have opening hours in line with the library which is likely to be around 9am-9pm with the exception of events taking place in for example the concert hall. During the public consultation comments were made with respect to the need for the gates within the colonnades. The colonnades have been designed with provision for gates but these have been designed so that they can fold back against the solid elements of the colonnade thus ensuring that they will be visually as discreet as possible in response to officers' similar concerns regarding how welcoming the building would be with the addition of these security features.

- 11.2. The route through the proposed building would allow users to experience different open spaces that are designed for University and public engagement. The proposed Great Hall at the centre of the building would act as a focal point for the building and which would extend up through the centre of the building to the rooflight dome. The Great Hall has been designed to accommodate a wide range of uses including exhibition, performance and reception/function events.
- 11.3. As mentioned previously whilst the building is considered to be open to the public it has been designed in a way that allows the academic spaces to be on the upper floors which makes it clear which are public and more private areas allowing for the building to manage the requirements and expectations of the users/visitors more suitably.
- 11.4. The western and eastern facades of the building are less articulated deferring to the principal, grander north and south ends of the building. Concerns were raised by officers at the lack of opportunity or provision of landscape spaces that are proposed along the western edge of the building. These apparently secondary elevations appear more functional with the western elevation appearing particularly muted or pared back in detail and architectural expression seemingly in order to accommodate a future building on the vacant plot opposite. Officers have sought to resolve these issues with the applicant's architects to ensure these elevations would be designed to provide natural surveillance over the spaces alongside these long stretches of facades with windows serving areas that would be populated where possible providing activity. Officers have also sought to increase the quality of the landscape design of spaces alongside these facades to ensure that there would be strong connections between the inside and outside spaces. The hard and soft landscape design would be considered to be more successful in this alongside the eastern façade of the building.
- 11.5. With regard to materials warm, yellow natural stone alongside a matching brick is proposed to be used in the elevations. The choice of materials has been selected to reference the traditional University and College buildings.
- 11.6. The roof is proposed to house a large amount of plant. This is in order to adhere to passivhaus principles. The location of plant on the roof has been a concern for officers and this concern is also voiced by Historic England. There are a number of factors that require the plant to be located on the roof namely, the requirement for fresh air for the air handling equipment, air source

heat pumps and chillers and the need for this equipment and plant to be located in an accessible location. Having the plant at roof level would reduce the level of ducting required which would result in a smaller built footprint. If the plant were to be located at lower levels then additional grilles would be required and they would have to be designed to accommodate safe working practices which require certain head heights which can then limit the extent at which it can be kept low.

- 11.7. To try and mitigate visual harm, the plant has been designed with the visibility in viewpoints in mind. The plant has been proposed to be consolidated and laid out in the most space efficient way and has been proposed to be pulled back from the building edges to ensure it would not be visible from ground level in near views. In addition the plant has been treated as part of the building in terms of its external design with articulated blocks which break up the massing and by using materials that complement the materials of the main building (brick and aluminium), to ensure that in longer views the plant is read as part of the building. The impact of the building in views is discussed in further detail in the section below.

#### 11.8. **Impact on views and the Conservation Areas**

- 11.9. Policy DH2 of the Oxford Local Plan refers to views and building heights. The policy seeks to retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, in particular to and from the historic skyline. The policy states: "*The area within a 1,200 metre radius of Carfax tower (the Historic Core Area) contains all the buildings that comprise the historic skyline, so new developments that exceed 18.2 m (60 ft) in height or ordnance datum (height above sea level) 79.3 m (260 ft) (whichever is the lower) are likely to intrude into the skyline. Development above this height should be limited in bulk and must be of the highest design quality. Applications for proposed development that exceeds that height will be required to provide extensive information so that the full impacts of any proposals can be understood and assessed.*"

- 11.10. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that "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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

- 11.11. The development site includes a small part of the southern tip of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area (NOVSCA). Whilst this area may be seen as an anomaly in terms of the dominant character and appearance of this Conservation Area, the designation does include the surviving elements of the Observatory and its gardens (presently Green Templeton College's principal campus). Given this, officers are required to take account of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended and section 16 of the NPPF which states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

- 11.12. In addition to the above it is also important to note that Conservation Areas have settings and that the ROQ falls within the setting of four Conservation Areas, Jericho, Walton Manor, NOVSCA and Central.
- 11.13. The NOVSCA is significant for its “designed” development, as a residential suburb during the Victorian period and extending through the Edwardian period. The Observatory and its surviving gardens, including its boundary wall are included in the NOVSCA. The tower of the Observatory can presently be seen from a number of places more distant than the immediate surroundings of the ROQ and the application site. The results of the applicant’s Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) have shown that the new building would be apparent both as backdrop and foreground to the Observatory in these views.
- 11.14. From the Castle Mound the view of the spire of St Phillip and St James is clearly visible. This is a structure whose architectural presence symbolises the importance of the church to the spiritual welfare of the residents of the North Oxford Suburb, physically symbolises the Conservation Area in long views towards the suburb and which additionally makes an important contribution to Oxford’s historic skyline. The profile of the new building, the mass of its rooftop plant would cut across the lower level of the spire of the former church altering the present view. The quantum and therefore built mass associated with the roof top plant has been justified in terms of providing a sustainable – non fossil fuel generated – power source the choice of ASHP (air source heat pumps) resulting in the need for a sizeable interface with the open air (i.e. not in the basement) and it is argued that there could be no substantive reduction or indeed design mitigation. Officers therefore consider that the intrusion of the building in this view would impact on the significance of the NOVSCA and the setting of the Observatory.
- 11.15. The Jericho Conservation Area was designated in February 2011 and lies immediately to the west of the ROQ which includes the application site. The character and appearance of Jericho Conservation Area benefits from the imposing presence and distinctive architecture of St Barnabas Church as well as the church’s interrelationship with the Radcliffe Observatory. A number of factors are identified as contributing to the significance of the Conservation Area. The most relevant to the application site and the proposed development being its distinctive townscape featuring late Georgian and Victorian working class cottages and artisans housing interspersed with landmark buildings of significant architectural importance. In addition the framed views within streets and the vista on to St Barnabas Church from the canal and beyond make important contributions to the character and appearance of the place. Overall there is a vibrant urban character defined by its built form, mix of uses, mixed tenure and independent businesses.
- 11.16. Walton Manor Conservation Area was first designated on April 1975. The fundamental character and appearance of this area is defined by the small houses on small plots set in long terraces occasionally broken by shorter pairs. There is some 20<sup>th</sup> Century infill which breaks this pattern but this is not presently sufficient to disturb the distinctive grain. The human scale of the houses, similar to and perhaps more so than those that typify the

neighbouring Jericho Conservation Area makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of this Conservation Area. This scale is reinforced by long stretches of generally unbroken, simple pitched roofs that are clearly evident to the observer standing in the street. There are some gaps between buildings and together with the small scale of development these offer long views in which the distinctive profile of the upper part of the Observatory Tower can be seen against the backdrop of open sky to the south of the Conservation Area.

- 11.17. The Central Conservation Area (CCA) was first designated in April 1971 and has been extended on five occasions with the most recent being in May 2019. The ROQ is bounded by the CCA on its south-eastern and southern edges. There are a number of high points and places where views of the site can be seen from within the CCA and this will be covered in a section that considers views but suffice to say that these views have the potential for the proposed development to impact on the setting of the CCA and of particularly prominent buildings and or monuments within it
- 11.18. The buildings of Somerville College that have most bearing on the site are a 21<sup>st</sup> Century building range designed by Niall McLaughlin which houses student accommodation rising to a height of four storeys running east-west along the southern edge of the development site. These buildings are not primarily inward looking towards the existing college grounds rather they presage the arrival of a “new street” on the ROQ site. The north-western corner of Somerville comprises a small group of C19 and earlier buildings of which the most significant is the grade II listed former St Paul’s School building. These buildings are fundamentally inward looking, appearing as unpunctuated red-brick walls of two storey plus attic height defining a domestic residential scale and appearance with traditional clay tiled roofs. The former school building can be distinguished by the large window in its east façade which looks out onto the ROQ and the stone detailing of its dormer windows and chimneys that give an architectural interest to the building’s north façade which also faces onto the ROQ and in particular the recent Blavatnik Building whose principally glazed façade intriguingly offers broken reflections of its surroundings. Freud’s is also located within the CCA and is discussed in more detail further in the report.
- 11.19. The building would be approx. 21.89m measured from the north entrance and 22.55m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the dome and 19.84m measured from the north entrance and 20.50m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the plant and 15.67m measured from the north entrance and 16.53m measured from the southern entrance to the top of the roof parapet.
- 11.20. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted with the application. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”

11.21. Both daytime and night time verified Views were taken from a number of viewpoints, as well as view from summer and winter, the most relevant views are discussed below.

11.22. Long range views

11.23. Due to the location of the site, the development would sit in the Boars Hill and Raleigh Park view cone. From Boars Hill the building would not be particularly evident due to the intervening vegetation that would obscure it. From the western hills the Observatory tower and the spires of St Barnabas (Jericho) and the former Church of St Phillip and St James make a clear contribution to Oxford's historic skyline, extending the observer's panoramic view northward. From Raleigh Park views of the new building would be clearly evident as an extensive, horizontal profile with elements of it appearing above some of the intervening trees and vegetation. Although visible in long views, given that it would be seen next to the Observatory tower and would be partly obscured by vegetation in the foreground of the view it would be seen as an addition to the present roofscape.

11.24. From the LVIA study, views from here after dark would not be significantly altered due to the presence of existing light sources although from some viewpoints an additional, distinct point of illumination would be evident.

11.25. Medium range views

11.26. From the Castle Mound the view of the spire of St Phillip and St James is clearly visible. This is a structure whose architectural presence symbolises the importance of the church to the spiritual welfare of the residents of the suburb, physically symbolises the Conservation Area in long views towards the suburb and which additionally makes an important contribution to Oxford's historic skyline. The profile of the new building, the mass of its rooftop plant would cut across the lower level of the spire altering the present view. The quantum and therefore built mass associated with the roof top plant has been justified in terms of providing a sustainable – non fossil fuel generated – power source the choice of ASHP (air source heat pumps) resulting in the need for a sizeable interface with the open air (i.e. not in the basement).

11.27. The base of Observatory Tower and that of St Phillip and St James would be obscured by the new building. As the verified images show, the new building would be read in the context of the various roof forms visible from this view. Notwithstanding this, both the Observatory tower and the spire of St Phillip and St James contribute to the setting of the NOVSCA as well as to Oxford's skyline. Therefore cutting across views of these buildings the proposed development would have a harmful impact on these medium range views.

11.28. It is regrettable that what causes the harm as detailed above is the plant that is required to run the building. During pre-application discussions, officers questioned the requirement for such plant as well as seeking to understand why it could not be provided elsewhere. The LVIA concludes that with regard to this viewpoint "The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high, the operational effects are neutral, the magnitude of the effect is medium as the building

blends in with the Oxford skyline and the overall effect is moderate adverse in Year 1 and minor in Year 5." The importance of the heritage assets that would be impacted in the view is high and this is reflected in the sensitivity level set out in the LVIA. The LVIA suggests that the size or magnitude of the impact would be of a medium amount, indicating that this is because it would not sit in isolation in the view and therefore be very prominent or highly visible but is rather seen with a foreground and surrounded by roofs and elements of buildings and that by year 5 it would become assimilated or accepted in the view and would therefore be only of minor harm. Officers consider that the long expanse of horizontal mass (the plant) which although the design has sought to mitigate this has only been partially successful and it is this form that makes a substantial contribution to the moderate level of harm.

- 11.29. A number of other photographs show that the building would not be visible from other prominent public buildings such as Carfax and St Michaels in the medium views. From St Mary's the building would have limited visibility in views and in this view the building would be read alongside the Observatory tower. Again similarly to the harm from Castle Mound the LVIA states that "The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high, the operational effects are neutral, the magnitude of the effect is medium as the building blends in with the Oxford skyline and the overall effect is moderate in Year 1 and minor in year 5. As set out previously, officers consider that the long expanse of horizontal mass (the plant) makes a substantial contribution to the moderate level of harm.

#### Short and Close Range views

- 11.30. The building would be highly visible in certain close range views. Verified images taken from Great Clarendon Street shows how the building will sit behind Freuds and how present views of the Observatory would be dissected or obscured by the building.
- 11.31. From Walton Street you would be able to see the building alongside the Observatory in certain views and the light from the dome would also be visible at night. The light would be seen in the context of the existing, surrounding street lighting and therefore not appear out of character in these shorter views. Verified images have also been provided from a location along Woodstock Road and St Johns Street which show how the building would only be glimpsed in views from these locations although it would partially obscure present views of the Observatory tower in some of these views and officers consider that this would result in a level of harm to the contribution that the tower presently makes in these views.
- 11.32. Whilst currently glimpsed views of the Observatory are available in shorter range views, there are still vacant plots of the ROQ site and as these plots are developed what can be seen in these short views will continue to change and in particular the view of the Observatory tower within these views will also change. With regard to these glimpsed view Historic England notes "*it remains regrettable that the attractive incidental view of the Observatory that was made possible by the demolition of the infirmary buildings, from Walton Street/ Great Clarendon Street in the Jericho Conservation Area, will be obscured entirely. We understand that this site will eventually be development*

*and that any new building would obscure this view and the new Humanities building. When this parcel of land is finally developed it will be important that any new building here is sensitively designed with regard to the impact on the Conservation Area”.*

- 11.33. The intended colour palette of the proposed building would sit comfortably alongside those of the buildings in the near vicinity and would be seen in the context of the various buildings that surround the site. Whilst appearing prominent in these immediate or shorter range views, it is not considered that the building would have an adverse impact on the setting of the surrounding Conservation Areas from these short range, ground level views. It is considered regrettable that the plant would be highly visible from the Observatory but it is acknowledged that the Observatory is not a wholly public view. In addition it is acknowledged that at that range any building on the application site would have a significant impact on the view from the Observatory, the harm from this view is principally caused by the requirement for and size of plant on the building which could only be mitigated against if it was located elsewhere completely or covered and integrated in the building. Such mitigation measures are not considered to be possible due to the amount of plant necessary for the size of the building and the nature of activities and functions within the building, the requirement for access to the plant and the requirement for the plant to be exposed to open air.
- 11.34. With regard to the impact in views of the Observatory Historic England raises no objection and states “*We are content that views towards the site and the Observatory (from ground and elevated vantage points including Castle Mound) would not be adversely affected by the proposals. We understand that care and attention has been given to the placement and design of plant on the roof of the building. We are content from the submitted photomontages from views around Oxford, where seen the plant will be discrete and sensitive regarding the prevailing roofscape’s character and texture*”.

### ***Impact on Listed Buildings***

- 11.35. In accordance with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when considering whether to grant planning permission, “special regard should be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”
- 11.36. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that “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 the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”

- 11.37. There are a number of Listed Buildings sited around the edges of the site and whose settings might arguably include parts or all of the site. Perhaps the most significant being The Radcliffe Observatory building and associated listed buildings that fall within Green Templeton College but also bounding the

edge of the site the former St Paul's Church (Freuds) and the former St Paul's School, just to the south west on the west side of Walton Street the original buildings of the Oxford University Press and on the ROQ itself the original Radcliffe Infirmary Building and St Lukes Chapel (the former Infirmary Chapel). Given the number of Listed Building's potentially impacted by the proposed development the report focuses on the immediate Listed Buildings but great weight and consideration has been given to preserving the significance of all of the Listed Building's including those in the wider setting when determining the application.

#### Radcliffe Observatory Tower

- 11.38. The Radcliffe Observatory Tower is grade I listed. The building now falls within the campus of Green Templeton College. Originally built on open land to the north of the C17 expansion of Oxford beyond its medieval walls along the turnpike route along St Giles and north out of the Oxford, the building sat in a substantial garden enclosed by walls and gates from the open fields and road ways that surrounded it and in which there were generous paths for perambulation and conversation.
- 11.39. The setting of the building has been much altered from its arrangement when the building was originally built in the main due to the subsequent development and C20 expansion of the Radcliffe Infirmary. There are however views in which the building makes an important contribution from viewing places within the town, places both within the medieval walls and outside these and it is these views, often glimpsed views of the upper part of the building, the tower, as well as from closer to the building, from Jericho and from the north and east of the building that it is important to preserve in order to ensure that the contribution that these views make to the complete appreciation of this building and to the building's present setting is preserved
- 11.40. There are important, albeit glimpsed views of the building from a number of locations in the city, including from the southern end of Walton Street, close to Worcester College, from the south end of St John's Street where it meets Beaumont Street and from Banbury Road at the point where Mickie Lane crosses the northern edge of the Acland site as well as closer views from Woodstock Road both from the northern and southern edges of the ROQ, looking north across the central glazed roof of the Mathematical Institute and south across the more domestically scaled buildings of Green Templeton College and the distinctive stone wall that now runs along that college's eastern boundary and which was built to enclose the Observatory gardens. Other views, from the west are more sporadic and shorter glimpses and comprise of views from Gt Clarendon Street and Cardigan Street in Jericho. The tower of the Observatory can also be seen in views from St Mary's Church tower in the High Street and from St Michaels Tower which marks the point where Oxford's medieval wall enclosed the medieval town and from where post medieval development spread northward along St Giles.
- 11.41. The setting of the building has been much altered from its arrangement when the building was completed much due to the subsequent development and C20 expansion of the Radcliffe Infirmary. There are however important views

from points within the town, both within the medieval walls and outside these that survive today and it is these views, often glimpsed views of the upper part of the building, the tower, as well as from closer to the building, from Jericho and from the north and east of the building that it is important to preserve in order to preserve the contribution that these views make to the complete appreciation of this building and to the building's present setting.

- 11.42. The significance of the building is derived first and foremost from its architecture and its historic function (the observatory function has been relocated to a site/building within the University's science area to the north of South Parks Road as well as to places outside the city). The setting of the building having been substantially altered makes a limited contribution to its architectural or historical significance

Freuds (St Pauls Church)

- 11.43. The building was built in 1836 in a Greek Revival architectural style with a distinctive ionic columned portico on its west front all to the designs of H J Underwood, an architect working extensively in Oxford at the time. A semi-circular apse designed by E G Bruton was added to the east end of the building in 1853 and a vestry was added to the north side of the building in 1893, in the form of a lean-to structure designed by the architect H W Moore, examples of whose domestic architecture was appearing frequently across the North Oxford suburb in the last part of the C19 and beginning of the C20.
- 11.44. Prior to recent excavation of the ROQ site the former church building sat within its churchyard which joined with the burial ground associated with the Infirmary. The land around the church remains excavated to a considerably lower level than the burial grounds stood leaving the church building in an apparently precarious position, elevated above its surroundings.
- 11.45. The building has primarily an architectural significance derived from aesthetic value of both its external fabric but also its interior spaces and decorative elements of its interior which survive. In addition the building has a social and communal value, having played an important role in meeting the spiritual needs of the workers in the various industries, the Oxford University Press and the Eagle Iron Foundry amongst others.
- 11.46. The setting of the listed building has been substantially altered by the 2009 excavation of the ROQ site and the construction of the Blavatnik building immediately to the south. The building's setting to the west, to Walton Street and Great Clarendon Street which reinforces its connection with Jericho is preserved and this contributes to the significance of the listed building.
- 11.47. It is considered that the application has the opportunity to enhance the setting of Freuds as the current arrangement is poor given its prominence on the site and the contribution to the Conservation Area. The proposed imagery provided is not considered to be sufficient to meet the requirements of paragraph 206 of the NPPF which states that "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.”

11.48. With regard to the setting of Freuds Historic England state “*We note that the eastern end of Freud's café presents an untidy appearance to the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter and despite it being outside the ownership boundary of the site the proposals seek to ameliorate this in the medium term with landscaping, which is positive. We hope that the condition of the former St Paul's church can be improved in the future.*”

11.49. Therefore whilst there has been no objection by Historic England to the proposed intermediate arrangements, an agreement with the applicant has been made to further work on the landscaping and screening for the back of Freuds to further enhance the setting of the building. A condition is therefore included to ensure a more appropriate screening solution can be achieved for the long term.

#### Conclusion to harm to heritage assets

11.50. It is considered that the proposal would have a high level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Observatory through intrusion into and obstruction of views. A moderate level of less than substantial harm caused by obscuring the view of the spire of the former Church of St Phillip and St James and in consequence overall a low level of less than substantial harm would be caused to the special character (significance) of the NOVSCA. There would be harm caused to the setting of the former St Paul's Church through the failure to address the altered landscape by thoughtful and considered landscape design and use of spaces causing a moderate level of less than substantial harm to the overall setting and thereby significance of the listed building, although this is something the University have committed to work on with the Council.

11.51. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would result in moderate less than substantial harm to the setting of the neighbouring Conservation Areas, Radcliffe Observatory Building and St Phillip and St James's in both long and medium range views but would not result in harm to the Conservation Area when viewed in short and close up views. With regard to short range views, the harm to the Observatory would be considered to be less than substantial and there is the opportunity to improve the setting of Freuds

11.52. Historic England raises no objection to the proposal.

11.53. Officers consider that there would be a level of less than substantial harm that would be caused to the significance of heritage assets the reasons why having been set out in previous paragraphs of this report. In line with paragraph 202 of the NPPF where a proposal would result in less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The public benefits of the scheme are explored as part of the balancing exercise further in the report.

## ***Landscaping***

- 11.54. The landscaping of the space around the building not only seeks to enhance the setting of the Observatory and the building itself but a way to welcome people in to the site. The aspiration for the ROQ is that it is open and accessible to all, it has been designed to allow people to enjoy, sit and loiter in the area. Each area of landscaping offers something different to those visiting the site. The new public areas have been to be truly welcoming to those that enter the site. In addition to the landscape encouraging people to enjoy the space it has also been designed to filter people in to the building visually signposting where the entrances are. Ensuring that it is obvious that the building is a public one which can be accessed by all, whether that is to take part in an activity that is happening within the building or just to be used as a cut through across the site. Through the evolution of the design of the site, emphasis has been given to the landscape design of the residual spaces around the building, consideration of their functionality and purpose, connections between them both physically and visually and importantly how they enhance visual connections to and from the surroundings of the ROQ site.
- 11.55. The design and access statement further details the decision behind the orientation of the building and how that has informed the landscaping detailing the decision process behind it “*One of the earliest design decisions was to configure the building form such that it did not align or run generally parallel to its neighbours to create notional streets. This was done to create a diverse set of landscape spaces and opportunities which could offer far greater choice to the building user, visitor or passerby, inflected by preferences for sunshine vs shade, quietness versus activity, harder terracing versus softer planting and so on*”.
- 11.56. The first of these spaces is the space at the northern end of the new building. Here the context is primarily the setting of the Observatory. Originally the Observatory Gardens, reduced to a relatively narrow lawn on the south side of the Observatory. The landscape design proposes to offer a new, enclosed “garden”, referencing the historic context of the Observatory. The design and siting of the new building, no longer aligned to the axis of the Observatory appears to pay deference to rather than challenging the significance of the historic building with the landscape acting as an appropriate intermediary and creating a setting for both new and old. Additionally the design of the “garden”, the considered positioning of trees, heights and location of hedge and shrub planting together with the alignment and articulation of the northern facades of the new building are intended to provide the observer with framed views across and out of the ROQ from east to west and vice-versa. Out and across the ROQ to St Barnabas, the Jericho church and in from the residential suburb with the Observatory tower providing the stop-end to the view. These new additions making connections both physical and visual between the ROQ and its surrounding urban contexts.
- 11.57. The second principal space sits at the southern end of the site. Here the elements that provide a context are the Somerville buildings that present the rhythm and continuity of an urban street, the Blavatnik building with its

faceted, reflecting glass skin and strong, cylindrical form, the surviving elements of mid C19 Victorian gothic domestic architecture that sit on the north west edge of Somerville with their typical red brick and stonework detail markers of Oxford's Victorian expansion north of its medieval core, the elegant, classical facades of the Oxford University Press buildings that sit on the west side of Walton Street opposite the Blavatnik and one of the key pedestrian entrances to the ROQ and St Paul's Church.

- 11.58. The landscape design seeks to create a series of gardens and footpaths. The new building's southern facades are proposed to be set back from the boundary allowing a relatively generous open space. The design proposes that this be a publicly accessible space connected to a café and exhibition space in the ground floor of the new building. Soft and hard landscape is designed to draw the visitor to the building's entrance and to provide clear outside routes connecting across the site to the existing buildings on the south eastern edge of the Quarter and out to Jericho. Views of the building on approaching from outside the Quarter are intended to be partial and glimpsed from outside the Quarter and to gradually unfold in order to draw the visitor in.
- 11.59. The topography of the site, the considerable fall from east to west has been used in the landscape design to create separation between garden spaces and the roadway.
- 11.60. The space along the west and east sides of the new building prioritises the service/access road.
- 11.61. To the east the new building would address the western façade of the Maths building creating a street with a directed focal view of the Observatory tower at its northern end. This view has already been established by the alignment of the Maths building which necessitates an open space on its western side and reinforced by the alignment and design of the elements of the Somerville building to the south.
- 11.62. The design appears to prioritise the status of the east side of the new building over the western side. Not to the level of north or south but as more significant with points of connection from inside the building to outside spaces designed as small gardens or gathering places carved out of the breakdown or articulation of the whole building façade into a series of apparently smaller elements that may be read as individual buildings joined together into a whole. The new building design does not specifically engage with the architecture of the Maths building with its uninterrupted methodical façade but rather sets its own language to inform the character of the completed street.
- 11.63. The west façade of the building is more consistently aligned with the roadway here with no carving out of garden or resting outdoor spaces and little or no connection between inside and out. The resultant appearance at street level would be a service façade with limited interest. The proposed siting of a tree that would be visible looking northward along this street is a positive element of the landscape design providing some amelioration or mitigation of what would otherwise appear as a rather austere place.

- 11.64. No detail has been offered as to the possible design of development on the empty plot to the west of the site which will form the western side of the street. The southern end of the west façade of the new building faces the east end of Freuds, with its later added eastern semi-circular apse. The post-excavation land restoration has resulted in a dramatic difference between the floor level of the church with the narrow strip of ground around it which sits considerably higher than what is intended to be the new road level (similar to the existing remediated land level). Reinforcement and stabilisation of the steep bank left by the 2009 excavation has been carried out in a fairly peremptory, inelegant manner. The proposed landscaping to the rear of Freuds is not considered to enhance the setting of the building and does not appear to have been as well considered as the other spaces which are proposed to surround the new building. Officers are of the opinion that a long term landscaping strategy needs to be developed to enhance the setting of the building. It is also considered that a more appropriate long term strategy would also help to counterbalance the sterility of the present, hard landscape around the Blavatnik and the appearance of this in views south along the western street.
- 11.65. In addition to the above the site needs to be functional and accommodate a large range of users and associated visitors. There are disabled car parking spaces located across the site as well as cycle storage areas, all of which have been designed within the landscaping where possible. The hard landscaping has been designed to complement the hard landscaping that can be found across the city whilst still being fit to accommodate the range of vehicles that may access the site.
- 11.66. With regard to the proposed landscaping Historic England states "*The proposed landscaping south of Radcliffe Observatory would be a clear enhancement to the Observatory when contrasted with the most recent infirmary building period, and indeed the vacant site now. It would provide surroundings to the new building, across the whole site, that are both interesting and beautiful, and a positive edge to the road that must remain around the perimeter*".
- 11.67. It is therefore considered that with the exception of the rear of Freuds the landscaping scheme is considered to be well designed and an asset to the ROQ, it would enhance the setting of the Observatory and the neighbouring Conservation Areas.

### **Archaeology**

- 11.68. Policy DH4 of the Oxford Local Plan relates to Archaeological remains.
- 11.69. This application involves peripheral works (around a mostly excavated and recorded site) that has the potential to encounter multi-period remains including 1) a Middle Neolithic to Bronze Age ritual and funerary landscape, 2) Early Saxon settlement activity and 3) remains relating to the post-medieval infirmary gardens and structures.

11.70. Previous excavations at this site have revealed Oxford's earliest recorded monument (a possible Middle Neolithic mortuary enclosure) which provided the orientation for a later (Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age Linear Cemetery). The route ways through this monument complex may have subsequently influenced the layout of the Saxon town. Furthermore, early Saxon settlement remains have been recovered at this site (the settlers seeming attracted by the extant prehistoric earthworks) and the extensive 18th-early 19th century burial ground has been substantively excavated providing exceptional information of the region's working poor (individuals who were not claimed for parish burial by family members). This exceptional archaeology warrants on-site interpretation in the form of external upstanding permanent information boards.

11.71. A small area to the north of the main building where an attenuation tank is proposed lies outside the scope of previous recording works and would warrant a controlled strip and record excavation.

11.72. NPPF Paragraph 205 states that 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. Given the results of the desk based assessment and the previous excavations that have taken place on the site, it is considered further target archaeology recording should take place. In addition to there will be a condition requiring the erection of 2 public information boards to be erected around the site to further allow the findings of the site to be publicly accessible on the site and to contribute the other offers that are available within and around the building.

11.73. It is considered that the proposal would therefore result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the archaeology of the site.

#### ***Harm to the historic environment and public benefits***

11.74. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

11.75. The National Planning Policy Guidance sets out what is meant by the term public benefits:

11.76. "*Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.*"

11.77. There are aspects of the development that would result in a moderate level of less than substantial harm to the view of the spire of the former Church of St Phillip and St James – the building has important cultural and social values associated with the development of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb therefore having an overall low level of less than substantial harm would be caused to the special character (significance) of the NOVSCA. In addition due to the unresolved landscaping proposed to the rear of Freuds there would be moderate level of less than substantial harm which could be reduced and mitigated through a revised landscaping strategy secure by a condition. Whilst the design team have worked hard on the design and landscaping to enhance the site, the most harmful element being the plant on the roof cannot be further mitigated and Historic England raise no objection to the proposals.

11.78. The existing site is not considered to contribute positively to the setting of the neighbouring Conservation Areas the harm is associated with the inclusion of plant on the roof and its impact on views. The overall size and scale of the development would not be considered out of keeping with the area.

11.79. Historic England through their comments do not apportion the same level of harm as officers and significant weight is given to their comments. Historic England conclude that “the application meets the requirements of the NPPF.”

11.80. There are a number of benefits associated with the scheme and due to the multifaceted nature of the building there are many direct and indirect benefits to the scheme.

- The building itself provides a number of significant benefits. The inclusion of a 500 seat concert hall, 250 seat theatre and 100 seat experimental lab, café, Bate museum. These facilities will be available to the public in a number of ways and add to the performance offering available in Oxford. The proposals will increase equal access to library facilities and historical exhibitions which have not previously had the opportunity to be viewed widely. The Bate Collection is the most comprehensive collection of European woodwind, brass and percussion instruments in Britain. It comprises over 2000 instruments and will for the first time be available to the public to visit and view as a direct result of this development. In addition there is a schools engagement centre. This space will allow for a wide range of users to experience and visit the building. It allows for strengthened ties and engagement between schools and the University.
- The Humanities Cultural Programme (HCP) is a new initiative set up by TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) (which is a hub for intellectual collaboration and cross disciplinary research projects, based in the Humanities at the University of Oxford). In the years leading up to the new building opening, the HCP is developing strong and sustainable public engagement streams for each of the new spaces in the building. This work is being generated in collaboration with local, regional, national, and international cultural partners. The ability for the building to provide space for a new stream of public engagement events and being a space that can accommodate a

variety and range of benefits is a significant benefit and great weight is given to this.

- The new open public space and landscaping proposed to support the building and the site is considered to be a significant benefit to the scheme which is given substantial weight. Not only will the open space benefit those using the building it will form a new gathering and open space for the residents in the wider area. The building will also create another destination building for those visiting Oxford.
- New access routes through the site will be created, connecting to the established cycle and pedestrian routes enhancing the sustainable transport network.
- The scheme will bring together the ROQ and provide a high quality building as the centre piece of the ROQ site with the current arrangement failing to preserve or enhance the neighbouring Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- The proposals will provide an energy and carbon efficient building which uses Passivhaus principles. Passivhaus sets goals above and beyond BREEAM targets.
- Zero fossil fuel consumption within the building. By eliminating fossil fuel emissions completely this will significantly improve local air quality benefiting the users of the building but also the wider Oxford area.
- There are a range of economic benefits that the build will bring both in the shorter term during construction as well as longer term in the operational stage.
- There are other benefits which are more difficult to quantify but which weight is given, such as the creation of a collaborative work and lecture space, where departments can work together and further strengthen the academic work that Oxford University carries out and how that feeds in to the larger academic research and findings that come from the work undertaken.
- The proposal will also increase the biodiversity of the scheme allowing for the site to provide a biodiversity net gain as well as using sustainable methods to ensure that the building of this scale is built and operational in line with the sustainability standards.
- Archaeology notice boards will also be provided which will allow information relating to the archaeology of the site to be available and presented to members of the public on site.
- The inclusion of a condition will allow for the rear of Freuds to be enhanced and to ensure that the setting of the listed building is enhanced, this is also considered a considerable benefit.

11.81. On the basis of the above, having given great weight to the conservation of the designated heritage assets, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme collectively would on balance outweigh the identified moderate level of less than substantial harm and would comply with the requirements of paragraph 202 of the NPPF. As a result the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of national and local planning policies in relation to the impact on designated heritage assets as required by section 16 of the NPPF and Policies DH1, DH2, DH3 and DH4 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

### **III. Impact on neighbouring amenity**

11.82. The site area is mostly surrounded by non-residential buildings with the Radcliffe Observatory, Health Centre, Mathematics building, Freuds and Blavatnik building bounding the site. To the south of the site is Somerville residential student accommodation block. It is considered that the building would be sufficiently distanced from the student accommodation so not to adversely impact on the light available to the properties. Whilst the outlook would change from the student accommodation, it is considered that given that the proposed building would be angled the outlook would be varied and because of this would not be considered oppressive. In terms of privacy the building would face on to each other but again due to the separation distances (approx. 19m from the closest corner) and the fact that it is a built up area, distances between these uses in an location such as this would not be out of keeping and would not lead to an unacceptable loss of privacy and overlooking.

11.83. The plant has been designed so to minimise any noise that may be experienced by plant and whilst there may be noise associated with the use of the building at certain times it would not be something over and above other large buildings located in a built up location.

11.84. In the wider area there are properties located on Walton Street and Observatory Street but there is the Gibson Building, Health Centre, Department of Experimental Psychology building and Radcliffe Observatory that are all substantial buildings that sit between the development site and the residential properties. With the proposed building being located approx. 80m away from properties in Observatory Street and over 70m from the properties located in Walton Street, and given the scale of buildings located between, the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

11.85. Given the accessibility of the site and the distance from neighbouring bus stops and the railway station whilst there may be large movement patterns associated with some of the larger events most visiting the site would do is by public transport. The use of taxis will be managed on the site on event days. The site is located within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). Therefore the general use of the site may bring with it disturbance for neighbours when large events take place these would be isolated to large events. The noise and disruption associated with these events would be in keeping for a use that sits close to the Town Centre and with the performance venues that the building will bring, and would be considered appropriate for the site and location. A

condition will be included requiring the University to set out how events will be managed to ensure that nuisance is kept to a minimum and that those visiting the venue to partake in performances can access and leave the area appropriately given the potential range of instruments and equipment that may need transporting. An issue which has also been raised in the representation.

11.86. With the use of conditions the impact of these movements associated with the building are not considered to have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity.

#### **IV. Highways**

11.87. Policy M1 of the Oxford Local Plan states that Planning permission will only be granted for development that minimises the need to travel and is laid out and designed in a way that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport. The application was supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and a Travel Plan (TP).

11.88. The main access to the site would be from the Woodstock Road. There is a barrier at the entrance to the site which manages traffic entering and leaving the site. The barrier is proposed to remain as part of the proposed access arrangements. It is estimated that currently there are approximately 100 vehicles entering the site daily.

11.89. The TA sets out that the University operates a consolidation strategy for deliveries which will continue and be expanded as part of the proposal. Parcels are all collected at the drop off area near Mathematics and then sorted and delivered by bicycle around the site, limiting the need for delivery drivers to access the site. Other regular deliveries such as refuse collection, catering, milk deliveries, cleaning and maintenance are also consolidated which reduced the traffic entering the site.

11.90. The TA also details the occupancy level of the building and the projected visitor numbers

## 4.2 Staff and Student Numbers

- 4.2.1 The number of staff and students to be accommodated within the proposed Humanities building and the expected occupancy levels are shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 Staff and Student Numbers**

	Peak Daily Occupancy	Total Daily
Staff	554	554
Students	1,620	3,000

- 4.2.2 In addition to the staff and students, a number of daily visitors are likely to visit the site and these are shown in Table 4.2.

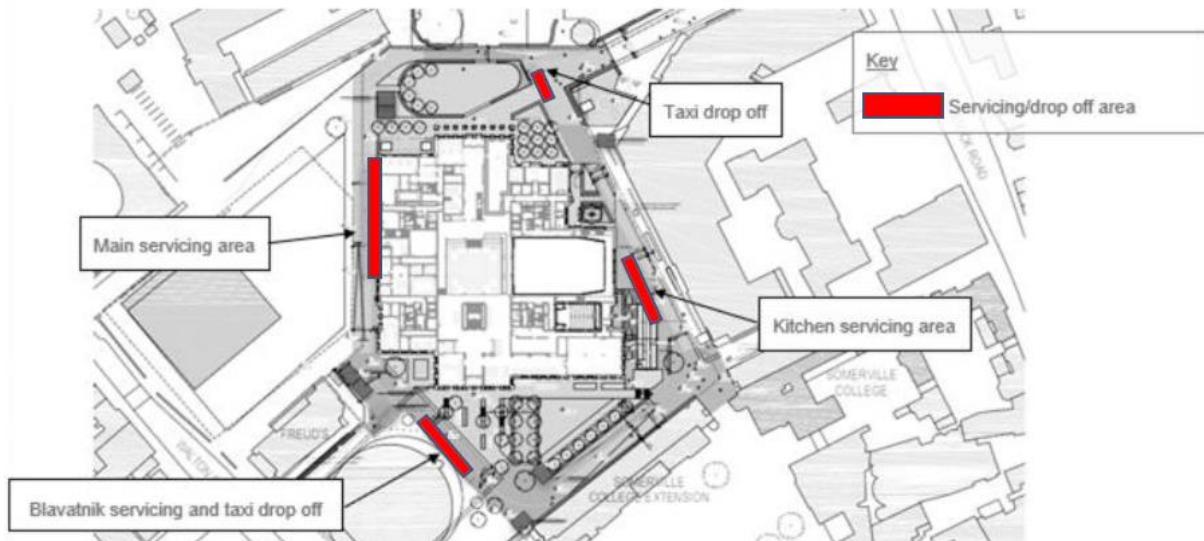
**Table 4.2 Humanities Building Estimated Daily Visitors**

Estimated Daily Visitors	
General daytime visitors	90
Afternoon conferences (4pm-7pm)	100
Evening performances	350 – 750
Out of term time events	1,000 – 1,200

- 4.2.3 Generally there are predicted to be circa 190 daily visitors to the new Humanities building. However, if there is a special event, then there could be an additional 350-750 visiting in the evening to view a performance (or similar event at the concert hall).
- 4.2.4 Outside of term time, then there could be festivals which result in 1,000-1,200 visitors. However, it is important to note that these visitors would not attend the site at the same time as staff, students or other visitors noted above and therefore this type of event is not considered to be part of the worst case scenario.

- 11.91. The site is expected to experience up to 120 vehicles per day (approximately 10 per hour).
- 11.92. The application site is in a highly sustainable location and is proposed to be mainly car free with the exception of disabled parking. The site is easily accessible by pedestrians and cyclist and there are a number of routes across the site that can be used. Within the ROQ there is parking available in a number of the neighbouring buildings with 32 spaces located below the Mathematical Institute and 25 spaces located north of the site.
- 11.93. There are a number of bus stops located on Woodstock route and the site is in walking distance to Oxford railway station. It therefore accepted by Oxfordshire County Council that the majority of trips made in association with the site will be made by sustainable methods of transport.
- 11.94. The neighbouring roads fall within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).
- 11.95. The proposed development would feature a shared pedestrian, cycle and vehicular road around the site although there are some pedestrian only safe zones have been designed into the layout to accommodate the needs of vulnerable pedestrians who may feel uncomfortable using the shared space.
- 11.96. Two servicing areas are proposed for the new building. One to the south east corner of the site. This would be used for deliveries accessing the café and

kitchen areas. The second servicing area is proposed to the west of the building and provides the main servicing area and will be used for special events, which could accommodate large vehicles with trailers.



11.97. 9 disabled parking spaces would be provided across the site with associated electric charging points.

#### Cycle parking

11.98. The cycle parking has been distributed across the ROQ site with a range of covered and non-covered spaces available. Policy M5 would require 921 spaces to be provided for the proposed development based on the standard for Higher Education. A total of 922 spaces are being proposed across the site and there are staff changing room within the building.

11.99. The TP details that a travel pack will be developed and sent to staff and all made available of all occupied building on the ROQ to help meet the overall objectives of the University's transport strategy are met which include ensuring that ROQ occupants maintain the currently low proportion of journeys by car by staff and, if possible, reduce car use further, Increase the proportion of ROQ car sharers compared to current journeys by staff to central Oxford University sites, ensure that ROQ occupants maintain the currently high proportion of cycle and pedestrian journeys and improve ROQ occupants use of public transport/park-and-ride journeys by staff.

11.100. Oxfordshire County Council highways have been consulted on the application and raise no objection subject to conditions and a legal agreement securing £2,379 for monitoring.

#### **V. Biodiversity**

11.101. Policy G2 of the Oxford Local Plan refers to the protection of biodiversity and geo diversity. The policy requires a net gain from the existing situation. An ecology report was submitted with the application.

11.102. The Site does not contain or adjoin any statutory or non-statutory wildlife sites and direct adverse impacts on such sites due to the Development are not anticipated. The site is currently dominated by compacted gravel with habitat interest restricted to small areas of marginal ephemeral vegetation and species-poor grassland of low value in habitat and botanical terms. The Site has limited potential to support protected animal species due to the habitats present, high levels of disturbance and its location context, with no evidence of such species recorded during the Site survey.

11.103. The soft landscape proposals include a range of new wildlife friendly habitats in addition to bat and/or bird boxes (e.g., house sparrow and swift) which are proposed to be built-in (integrated) into the new building. A green roof is also proposed to part of the building.

11.104. A condition will be included to secure the biodiversity scheme proposed on the site. The proposal is considered to comply with policy G2 of the Oxford Local Plan.

## VI. Sustainability

11.105. Policy RE1 sets out the sustainability requirements for new major development. Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals for new build major developments (over 1000sqm) which achieve at least a 40% reduction in the carbon emissions from a code 2013 Building Regulations.

11.106. The application was submitted with an energy and sustainability assessment. The supporting information shows that the building design is following a passivhaus methodology and focuses on a fabric-led approach to minimising energy consumption.

11.107. The sustainability report summary sets out the following:

- *The proposed building promises to be an extremely energy efficient building, with no gas-consumption on-site and all energy needs being met through electricity. The building will therefore be future proofed and zero carbon ready. Space heating will be provided efficiently through Air Source Heat Pumps located on the roof of the building. In addition to utilising low carbon heat, the building will host photovoltaic panels to provide renewable electricity directly to the building.*
- *Water will be used efficiently in the building through the use of water efficient appliances. Sustainable Urban Drainage features will be provided through a mixture of permeable paving, rainwater attenuation and tree pits.*
- *The design team has been assessing the embodied carbon impact of the building at each of the main RIBA Stages and responding to reduce embodied carbon as far as possible. All timber used on the project will be from certified sustainable sources.*

- *The scheme will provide a total of 922 additional secure-safe cycle storage spaces, 176 of which will also be covered. The site will be predominantly car free, however disabled car parking spaces will be provided some of which will be provided with electric car charging points.*
- *Recycling points will be provided throughout the building at appropriate spaces. All kitchen areas, the cafe, microwave room, coffee shop and assembly hall will have a full set of built-in recycling bins (mixed recycling, general waste and food waste – with the cafe having segregated glass recycling too).*

11.108. The proposal is compliant with policy RE1 of the Oxford Local Plan and the 40% target set out in the policy.

## **VII. Drainage and Flooding**

11.109. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore deemed to be at a low risk of surface water flooding. A condition is recommended requiring a surface water drainage scheme to be provided. Subject to the provision of a satisfactory scheme as required by condition it is considered that the development would comply with the requirements of Policies RE3 and RE4 of the Oxford Local Plan.

## **VIII. Environmental Health**

### ***Contaminated Land***

11.110. It is considered that the contamination risks at the site are likely to be low. Notwithstanding this, as no near surface sampling has occurred in areas proposed to be landscaped and in areas where there may be exposure to future users of the site a condition has been included to contamination status of soils in these areas and to determine if any remedial actions may be necessary to protect future site users and construction workers. The proposal therefore complies with policy RE9 of the Oxford Local Plan.

### ***Air Quality***

11.111. The Application Site is located within the Oxford city-wide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The building's heat demand is to be met by air source heat Pumps (ASHPs) coupled with PV technology systems, which are proposed to be grid connected. These technologies are zero emission, and as such there will be no negative impacts on local air quality from the use of these systems. Mechanical ventilation will also be used to guarantee excellent air quality to all areas, provide filtered fresh air into offices, and allow heat recovery in winter on ventilation air to significantly reduce the building energy consumption.

11.112. The proposed trip generation for the re-development will generate 63 LDV trips and 6 HGV trips, with the AADT values further reducing once distributed onto the local road network. This is below the indicative criteria set out in the Institute of Air Quality Management planning guidance (100 AADT

within or adjacent to an AQMA). The site is also proposed to be mainly car free and where car spaces are provided electrical charging points will be provided.

11.113. The impacts of demolition and construction work on dust soiling and ambient fine particulate matter concentrations have been assessed on the AQ Assessment. The risk of dust causing a loss of local amenity and increased exposure to PM10 concentrations has been used to identify appropriate mitigation measures.

11.114. With the inclusion of conditions the proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with policy RE6 of the Oxford Local Plan.

### **Noise**

11.115. The majority of plant servicing the building will be located either in the basement or on the roof. An acoustic assessment has been submitted which identifies the key sources of noise that would impact the site. The nearest noise sensitive receptors that may be affected, are considered to comprise residential housing/flats, including university student accommodation (i.e. rooms for residential purposes). The nearest receptors, where are the Somerville College Extension building and Somerville College. Another university student accommodation building is Green Templeton College. The nearest non-university residential dwellings are along Woodstock Road to the west and Observatory Street to the north.

11.116. The submitted calculations show that noise levels are all more than 5 dB below background, at all the noise sensitive receptors for day and night periods. The acoustic assessment incorporates mitigation measures to ensure that these levels are maintained. As such, the noise emissions from plant would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of those neighbouring receptors and a condition will be included to ensure the development is completed in line with the proposed mitigation measures. The proposal would therefore comply with policy RE8 of the Oxford Local Plan.

### ***Health Impact Assessment***

11.117. A Health Impact Assessment has been submitted in accordance with policy RE5 which seeks to promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities and reduce health inequalities. A completed Health Impact assessment has been included with the application

11.118. The conclusion that can be drawn from the submitted HIA is that the development would not have any notably adverse impacts in terms of health outcomes and overall impact on public health would be positive. The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of policy RE5

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1. Having regards to the matters discussed in the report, officers would make members aware that the starting point for the determination of this application

is in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which makes clear that proposals should be assessed in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 12.2. The NPPF recognises the need to take decisions in accordance with Section 38(6) but also makes clear that it is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application (paragraph 2). The main aim of the NPPF is to deliver Sustainable Development, with paragraph 11 detailing the key principle for achieving this aim. The NPPF also goes on to state that development plan policies should be given due weight depending on their consistency with the aims and objectives of the NPPF. The relevant development plan policies are considered to be consistent with the NPPF despite being adopted prior to the publication of the framework.

#### *Compliance with Development Plan Policies*

- 12.3. Therefore in conclusion it is necessary to consider the degree to which the proposal complies with the policies of the development plan as a whole and whether there are any material considerations, such as the NPPF, which are inconsistent with the result of the application of the development plan as a whole.
- 12.4. The proposal is considered to comply with the development plan. Where issues have been raised with regard to harm to the historic environment, in line with the NPPF, paragraph 202 has been engaged. Whilst some harm has been identified to the historic environment and whilst great weight has been given to the conservation of the designated heritage assets, taking into account all the material considerations, it is considered that the benefits to the scheme would outweigh the less than substantial harm that has been identified.

#### *Material considerations*

- 12.5. The principal material considerations which arise are addressed below, and follow the analysis set out in earlier sections of this report.
- 12.6. National Planning Policy: The NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development. NPPF paragraph 11 states that proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay, or where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant plans are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in the framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 12.7. Officers consider that the proposal would accord with the overall aims and objectives of the NPPF for the reasons set out within the report. Therefore in such circumstances, Paragraph 11 is clear that planning permission should be approved without delay. This is a significant material consideration in favour of the proposal.

- 12.8. The proposal seeks to provide improved a new multi-purpose academic building in a highly sustainable location, the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity or the historic environment and conditions have been included to ensure this remains in the future. The proposal will allow for sufficient cycle parking and will provide biodiversity enhancements.
- 12.9. It is therefore recommended that the Committee resolve to grant planning permission for the development proposed subject to the satisfactory completion (under authority delegated to the Head of Planning Services) of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **13. CONDITIONS**

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Subject to other conditions requiring updated or revised documents submitted with the application, the development permitted shall be constructed in complete accordance with the specifications in the application and approved plans listed below, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To avoid doubt and to ensure an acceptable development as indicated on the submitted drawings in accordance with policy S1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

3. Prior to the commencement of development excluding demolition and enabling works a schedule of materials together with samples and sample panels of the exterior materials to be used including details of any screening/safety barrier details proposed for the roof terrace shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the start of work on the site above ground and only the approved materials shall be used unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure high quality development and in the interests of the visual appearance in accordance with policies DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

4. Prior to the commencement of development excluding demolition and enabling works, large scale drawn details and specifications of the proposed

roof mounted solar PV panels, window and dome details shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Only the approved details shall be carried out unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The solar PV panels shall be colour matched to the roofing material.

Reason: To ensure a sympathetic appearance of the proposed development in accordance with policy DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

5. Prior to occupation, details of any signage at the proposed development shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Only the approved details shall be carried out unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a sympathetic appearance of the proposed development in accordance with policy DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

6. Prior to occupation, details of the lighting fittings shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Only the approved details shall be carried out unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a sympathetic appearance of the proposed development and enhance the safety and amenity of residents in accordance with policies RE7 and DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036

7. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved Energy Statement (UOONHB-MXF-XX-XX-RP-J-51000 revision P04) and the revised Sustainability Strategy.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development sufficiently incorporates sustainable design and construction principles in accordance with policy RE1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

8. Notwithstanding the indicative details provided for the screening of Freuds. A screening and landscaping strategy to incorporate the existing supporting bank to the rear of Freuds shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning authority. Only the approved details shall be carried out unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure high quality development that preserves the setting of the Listed Building and in the interests of the visual appearance in accordance with policies DH1 and DH3 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

9. Any existing retained trees, or new trees or plants planted in accordance with the details of the approved landscape proposals that fail to establish, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective within a period of five years after first occupation or first use of the development hereby approved shall be replaced. They shall be replaced with others of a species, size and number as originally approved during the first available planting season unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies G7, G8 and DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

10. The landscaping proposals as approved by the Local Planning Authority shall be carried out no later than the first planting season after first occupation or first use of the development hereby approved unless otherwise agreed in writing beforehand by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies G7, G8 and DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

11. No development shall take place until the complete list of site specific dust mitigation measures and recommendations that are identified on Table 7.1 (pages 22-24) of the Air Quality Assessment that was submitted with this application, are included in the site's Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP will need to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the overall dust impacts during the construction phase of the proposed development will remain as "not significant", in accordance with the results of the dust assessment, and with Core Policy RE6 of the new Oxford Local Plan 2036.

12. Prior to the parking spaces being made available, details of the Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure that is expected to be installed on-site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The electric vehicle infrastructure shall be formed, and laid out before the development is first in operation and shall remain in place thereafter.

Reason: To contribute to improving local air quality in accordance with policies M4 and RE6 of the new Oxford Local Plan 2036.

13. Prior to the commencement of the development, other than that required to undertake contamination risk assessment, a further phase of ground contamination risk assessment shall be carried out by a competent person in accordance with relevant British Standards and the Environment Agency's Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) procedures for managing land contamination.

The additional phase shall include further intrusive investigation in order to characterise the type, nature and extent of contamination present in proposed landscaped areas of the site, the risks to receptors and to inform the remediation strategy proposals.

Should any potentially significant ground contamination be identified then a remediation strategy, validation plan, and/or monitoring plan shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority to ensure the site will be suitable for its proposed use.

Reason: To ensure that any soil and water contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with the requirements of policy RE9 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

14. The development shall not be occupied until any approved remedial works have been carried out and a full validation report has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that any soil and water contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with the requirements of policy RE9 of the Oxford Local Plan 2016 - 2036.

15. Throughout the course of the development, a watching brief for the identification of unexpected contamination shall be undertaken by a suitably competent person. Any unexpected contamination that is found during the course of construction of the approved development shall be reported immediately to the local planning authority. Development on that part of the site affected shall be suspended and a risk assessment carried out by a competent person and submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Where unacceptable risks are found remediation and verification schemes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local

planning authority. These approved schemes shall be carried out before the development (or relevant phase of development) is resumed or continued.

Reason: To ensure that any soil and water contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with the requirements of policy RE9 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

16. There shall be no occupation until confirmation has been provided that either:-

1. All foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or- 2. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water to allow additional development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed, no occupation of those additional dwellings shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan.

Reason: Network reinforcement works are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents in accordance with the requirements of policy RE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

17. There shall be no occupation until confirmation has been provided that either:-

all surface water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or- a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water to allow additional development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation of those additional dwellings shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan.

Reason: Network reinforcement works are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid flooding and/or potential pollution incidents in accordance with the requirements of policy RE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

18. No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:- all water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows to serve the development have been completed; or – a development

and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan.

Reason: The development may lead to no / low water pressure and network reinforcement works are anticipated to be necessary to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to accommodate additional demand anticipated from the new development in accordance with the requirements of policy RE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

19. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Because the development may have a damaging effect on known or suspected elements of the historic environment of the people of Oxford and their visitors, including prehistoric, early Saxon and post-medieval remains in accordance with the requirements of Policy DH4 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

20. Prior to occupation of the new structures the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the installation of two permanent, upstanding information board detailing the archaeology of the prehistoric and early Saxon landscape and the archaeology of the Infirmary burial ground in accordance with a method statement which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. All works shall be carried out, completed and retained thereafter in accordance with the approved method statement, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In mitigation of the development impact on buried archaeological remains in accordance with the requirements of Policy DH4 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

21. The swept path drawing shows a Refuse Vehicle which is not the type typically utilised within the City. The dimensions should be 9.19m, in length, 2.25m in width, and a height 3.5m. Also evident in the submitted drawing is both the Refuse Vehicle and the FTA Drawbar vehicles overrun the sections of pedestrian areas within site. Therefore a revised swept path drawing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy M1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

22. Prior to first occupation of the development, a plan detailing the layout of the car parking area shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning

Authority. The Car Park Layout Plan must set out so that all car parking spaces meet the minimum dimensions required and can be safely and easily accessed. The parking Layout Plan should include a designated coach and Taxi pickup/drop off and parking areas.

Reason: in the interest of highway safety in accordance with Policy M1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

23. Notwithstanding the details provided, prior to first occupation details of the cycle parking areas, including their external appearance, dimensions and means of enclosure, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved Cycle areas shall thereafter be retained solely for the purpose of the parking of cycles.

Reason: To encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and to protect the visual appearance of the area in accordance with Policy M5, DH1 and DH3 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

24. Prior to first occupation a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and shall include the following:

- The planning application number
- Add the size individual elements of the site (GFA / number of units)
- Add a commitment to update the postcode plot of staff including travel information post-occupation
- Is 2016 the most recent survey available?
- 3.5.2 has an incomplete sentence
- Update the bike hire information to ensure the relevant companies are listed.
- All surveys should be analysed and submitted to Oxfordshire County Council within one month of survey completion.
- Please provide more information on how active travel will be promoted for the evening events.
- Information could be provided on the Oxford e-scooter trial
- Add a commitment that “Once it has been approved, any changes to the Travel
- Plan, in particular the targets, must be made in agreement with the Travel Plans
- Team at Oxfordshire County Council.
- 

Reason: To encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policy M5 of the Oxford local Plan 2036.

25. Prior to first occupation a Delivery Service Plan and Events Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The events management plan shall include details of how taxis, performers and those working the events and their associated equipment shall be managed.

Reason: In the interest of Highway Safety and neighbour amenity in accordance with Policies M1 and RE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

26. A Construction Traffic Management Plan should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed prior to commencement of works. This should identify among others state; the routing of construction vehicles, access arrangements for construction vehicles, Details of times for construction traffic and delivery vehicles, which must be outside network peak and school peak hours to minimize the impact on the surrounding highway network.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to mitigate the impact of construction vehicles on the surrounding network, road infrastructure and local residents, particularly at peak traffic times in accordance with policies M1 and RE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

27. Noise emitted from plant and equipment located at the site shall be controlled such that the rating level, calculated in accordance with BS4142 2014, does not exceed a level of 5dB below the existing background level, with no tonal element to the plant.

Reason: To ensure that the amenities of occupiers of other premises in the vicinity are protected in accordance with Policies RE7 and RE8 of the Oxford Local Plan.

28. Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a construction management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Details shall include control measures for dust, noise, vibration, lighting, delivery locations, restriction of hours of work and all associated activities audible beyond the site boundary to 07:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday daily, 08:00 – 13:00 Saturdays No works to be undertaken on Sundays or bank holidays, advance notification to neighbours and other interested parties of proposed works and public display of contact details including accessible phone contact to persons responsible for the site works for the duration of the works. Approved details shall be implemented throughout the project period.

Reason: To ensure that the amenity of occupiers of surrounding premises is not adversely affected by noise, vibration, dust, lighting or other emissions from the building site in accordance with Policies RE7 and RE8 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

29. Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme of ecological enhancements shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority to ensure an overall net gain in biodiversity will be achieved. The scheme will include details of bat and bird boxes to be installed, including dedicated swift boxes.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Policy G2: Protection of biodiversity and geo-diversity of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036.

30. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation.

i. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- b. Description and evaluation of features to be managed, both on and off-site;
- c. Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management;
- d. Aims and objectives of management;
- e. Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives;
- f. Prescriptions for management actions;
- g. Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period);
- h. Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan; and
- i. Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. Long-term management shall be for a minimum of 30 years.

The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The prevention of harm to species and habitats within and outside the site during construction in accordance with Policy G2: Protection of biodiversity and geo-diversity of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036.

31. Notwithstanding the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) or any order amending or re-enacting those provisions the areas shown on the approved plans to be used as a concert hall, experimental laboratory and café shall remain open to the public for those uses as approved unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the public benefits are secured and to secure public access in line with Policy DH3 of the Oxford Local Plan

## **Informative**

1. The applicant should note that the County council has committed funding to deliver improvements to the Woodstock Road between Green Templeton

College and Wolvercote Roundabout planned to be delivered 2023. Early-stage plan proposals were recently publicly consulted upon. As part of the proposals, applicant is advised that the County council is looking to reduce on-street parking provision on Woodstock Road in the vicinity of the site. Initial discussions between the County council and relevant local parties are underway. The County council is also currently in discussions with local stakeholders around advancing measures to promote active travel in the adjacent Jericho and Walton Manor area. Details of any scheme are not developed at this point and are dependent upon suitable funding, and wider strategic fit.

2. Removal of any buildings or vegetation shall be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). If this is not possible, then a suitability qualified ecologist shall check the areas concerned immediately prior to the commencement of clearance works to ensure no nesting or nest-building birds are present. If any nesting activity is confirmed, no clearance will be permitted within the area until the birds have fledged and the nest is considered inactive.
3. The proposed planting includes a non-native Oak species: Quercus frainetto. Restrictions on the import of most species of oak into England were introduced in 2018 to protect native trees from the threat of Oak Processionary Moth. The applicant must obtain any Oak in accordance with the relevant regulations, including those set out in The Plant Health (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 2018.

## **14. APPENDICES**

- **Appendix 1 – Site location plan**

## **15. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998**

15.1. Officers have considered the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to approve this application. They consider that the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8/Article 1 of Protocol 1 is justifiable and proportionate for the protection of the rights and freedom of others or the control of his/her property in this way is in accordance with the general interest.

## **16. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

16.1. 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.