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Heritage Statement regarding revised gardeners' facilities

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Patrick Christopher Maguire, IHBC, Associate Director at Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., on behalf of Trinity College, Oxford.
- 1.2 As part of consents refs.18/01340/FUL and 18/01341/LBC for the demolition of the Cumberbatch North building and the erection of the new Levine Building (which is currently undergoing construction), permission was granted for replacement gardeners' stores, a glass house, and alterations to the President's Garage, alongside limited changes to the Small Quad (called the 'Cumberbatch Quad' in Asset Heritage's June 2015 Heritage Audit & Statement of Significance).
- 1.3 This application seeks revisions to those elements of the consented proposals to better meet the college's needs. These revised proposals have been the subject of informal pre-application discussion with the planning and conservation officers of Oxford City Council, who raised no objection to them in principle.

The revised proposals

- 1.4 With the gardeners' facilities at Trinity College displaced by the construction of the Levine Building, the recent consents allowed for a new free-standing machine and tool store and a lean-to glasshouse to be constructed adjacent to/against the listed northern garden wall. Cold frames and compost areas were to be located against the listed eastern garden wall.
- 1.5 The revised proposals make little change to the design of the new structures (the glasshouse is still to be toughened glass over a natural stone plinth, the store to be timber cladding over a natural stone plinth) but it is now proposed to

provide a smaller tool shed, this to be in the same location as the permitted structure but set at an angle away from the northern wall.

- 1.6 The position of the lean-to glasshouse has been revised and this is to be set against the eastern garden wall, in the location indicatively shown for the compost area and cold frame in the permitted scheme.
- 1.7 The permitted scheme also saw bin stores located on the ground floor of the President's Garage. The revised scheme instead proposes using this area as an office and washroom for the use of the gardeners, alongside a garage for garden machinery (hence the smaller proposed tool store to the north). A new timber-clad bin store is the subject of a separate application submission.
- 1.8 In the Small Quad, it is simply proposed to retain the existing rose arbour (to be removed under existing consents) and to replace the metal screen allowed under existing consents with a simple timber trellis.

The heritage issues

- 1.9 The minor revisions to the existing consents have been the subject of pre-application discussion with Council officers and no objections were raised to the principle of these changes.
- 1.10 Asset Heritage prepared a detailed Heritage Audit & Statement of Significance for the Trinity College in June 2015. That was submitted with applications refs.18/01340/FUL and 18/01341/LBC and this Heritage Statement is informed by the detailed analysis of the heritage interest of the college site set out in that report and makes reference to it where necessary.
- 1.11 Asset Heritage also prepared a Heritage Impact Assessment for those applications in March 2018 where, regarding the then-proposed (and now consented) gardeners' facilities it was noted that:

'[T]hey will be tucked into the corner in the angle between the listed north and east boundary walls of the College. Although this is a discreet position, great

care has been taken to ensure that the buildings (the design has been prepared jointly by ADAM Architecture and LDA Design) will cause no harm either to the fabric of the walls - the lean-to roof tucks neatly beneath the string course of the walls - or in views towards this location.

'The design of the buildings has been deliberately kept as simple as possible as befits their function and their position in the College's garden where it is important that they do not 'shout too loud' and instead meld gently into the background.

'The creation of the new gardeners' facilities has naturally received the input needed from the College's gardening team, which is of course important to ensure that they have the proper facilities required to continue the ongoing maintenance of Trinity's internationally famous gardens' (paragraphs 3.31-33).

- 1.12 In my view, this analysis remains wholly applicable to the revised proposals; this remains a discrete location in the corner of the principal garden and somewhere where one 'expects' to see gardeners' facilities.
- 1.13 Indeed, the lean-to glasshouse will be filtered and partially screened in views along the lawn from the west, due to the existing line of yew trees. That said, it will be visible as the sort of simple, "low key" garden structure found in formal and institutional gardens like those at Trinity.
- 1.14 Equally, the tool shed will be smaller than the similarly-designed machine and tool store allowed under existing consents and, if anything, will be a more discreet addition to the corner of the main lawn area.
- 1.15 Taking this into account, I am of the view that the revised gardeners' facilities will be at least as sympathetic to the heritage significance of this highly sensitive site (i.e. the settings of listed buildings, including the adjacent walls but also views from the listed buildings of the Garden Quad and elsewhere, the character of the registered park & garden, and the character and appearance of the Central (University & City) Conservation Area) as the consented scheme.

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- 1.16 Regarding the President's Garage, this block was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in the 1930s' alongside his design of the New Bodleian Library (now the Weston Library) in compensation for the loss of one of the college's buildings on Parks Road.
- 1.17 Early iterations of the Levine Building proposals including the demolition of this building but, during the lengthy and detailed pre-application process, it was decided to retain the building as a result of its perceived heritage value and the contribution that it makes to the conservation area street-scene on Parks Road.
- 1.18 As this suggests, the heritage value of this simple building is principally tied to its external character, its contribution to the street-scene and its group value with the listed New Bodleian Library.
- 1.19 As the revised application proposals relate only to the interior of the building, they will clearly have no impact on these elements of its heritage interest. That said, the proposed uses of the ground floor (as a store for garden machinery and as a office/wash room for the college gardeners) is clearly appropriate for this ancillary structure that has historically housed a gardener's flat on the first floor.
- 1.20 Finally, I note the changes to the proposals affecting the Small Quad (as described above), which are minor in nature and, in my view, will not have any discernible impact in heritage terms.
- 1.21 Taking this all into account, I am firmly of the view that this application would not result in any 'harm' in heritage terms, including to the significance of the listed buildings of Trinity College (either through the physical impact on the walls or the impact on setting more generally), the character of the Trinity College registered park & garden, or the character and appearance of the Central (University & City) Conservation Area.
- 1.22 As such, it is my considered opinion that the proposals are compliant with both local and national policy and guidance on the conservation of the historical built environment, including the guidance set out in the NPPF and its accompanying PPG, and, most importantly of all in heritage planning terms, pass the statutory

tests set by Sections 16, 66, & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.