

EDGARS

Planning Statement

Dining Hall, Linacre College
Prepared for: Linacre College
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Edgars has been instructed by Linacre College (hereafter the applicant) to submit a planning application regarding 'erection of single storey extension to the southern elevation, replacement rooflights and internal and external alterations' at the dining hall and O C Tanner building at Linacre College, Oxford.
- 1.2 This statement provides a description of the site and its surroundings, a summary of the relevant planning history, a description of the proposed development and the planning policy context, and an assessment of the main planning considerations.
- 1.3 Alongside this planning statement, the following documents comprise the full document package:
 - Application Forms;
 - CIL Forms;
 - Heritage Statement;
 - Design and Access Statement;
 - 6957.100 Location Plan;
 - 6957.101 Site Plan;
 - 6957.102 Existing Plans;
 - 6957.104 Existing Elevations;
 - 6957.105 Proposed Plans; and
 - 6957.107 Proposed Elevations.
- 1.4 Within the above context, this statement concludes that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms and is in accordance with the Local Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework and there are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.

2 Site and Surrounding Context

Surrounding Area

- 2.1 Figure 1 shows the location of Linacre College which lies north east of the centre of Oxford on the intersection of South Parks Road and St Cross Road. The site lies within the Central (University and City) Conservation Area, but there are no listed buildings within immediate proximity of the site. None of the buildings on site are included on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register. University Parks, which is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden lies adjacent to the north of the College. The site is within the Historic Core Area and within a view cone - North Eastern Hills (Elsfield). No other planning designations apply to the area.



Figure 1 – Site Location

- 2.2 Linacre College presents as an enclosed pocket of College development, east of the University Science area with green space surrounding it on all other sides. The New College Recreation Ground wraps around the site from the south and east, while University Parks is located north, moving further east is Green Belt land and more college playing fields.
- 2.3 The College contains a number of buildings which provide student accommodation, teaching and study space and administrative functions on site together contributing to the provision of education for students at the College. Linacre House was first established in 1962, became Linacre College in 1967 and moved to this site, formerly known as Cherwell Place in 1977. The O C Tanner building was built in the late 19th century, with other buildings progressively added by the College in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s including the dining hall, Abraham building, Bamborough building, and Griffiths building.

The Site

- 2.4 The application site relates to the college dining hall, labelled in figure 2 below.



Figure 2 – Site Plan

- 2.5 The dining hall is the central facility for the College serving daily meals for members of the College. The College also runs formal and informal guest nights on a weekly basis. At the current time this service is limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. The College also host a range of functions throughout the year. Due to the size and configuration of the dining hall only one function can take place at once and marquees often have to be used for larger events. The dining hall as a facility is outdated and requires both improvements and maintenance work.
- 2.6 The dining hall comprises one of the more recent buildings within the college campus. It is shown on figures 3 – 6 below. Constructed in the late 1970's, the building is comparatively small within the setting of neighbouring structures. It is 1.5 storeys, constructed from red brick, clay tiles and white timber windows on the southern elevation facing the internal courtyard. There are roof lights on the southern and northern roof slopes. The building has a simple brick detail visible below the eaves. The single storey element is also of red brick, with a flat roof with three rooflights and double doors in the eastern elevation exiting into the courtyard. Overall, the structure is considered to be of limited architectural or historic interest.



Figure 3 – North elevation from Mesopotamia Walk



Figure 4 – Access doors to Dining Hall and external fire escape door (left) on O C Tanner



Figure 5 – View of south elevation of dining hall and eastern elevation of O C Tanner building from enclosed courtyard



Figure 6 – Access door to Dining Hall

- 2.7 The dining hall is an extension to the most north easterly point of OC Tanner building. This includes the single storey element directly attached to the O C Tanner building and the 1.5 storey element to

the north of this. The OC Tanner building is the oldest part of Linacre College, built in 1886 with additions in 1908-9. It contains most of the central communal facilities for members of the College such as the library, common rooms, teaching and study spaces all staff offices and some student accommodation. It is the core building on the site, around which the other College buildings have been developed. Although not specifically identified by Oxford City Council as such, the building is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The building is built in the Queen Anne style. Its external walls are of red brick with dressed details, Dutch gables and oriel windows. The existing windows are primarily white timber frame with single-glazed sash or casement units. A fire escape door on its northern elevation exits out into the application site and therefore needs to be replaced.

2.8 Adjacent to the east of the dining hall is the four storey Abraham building, to the west the entrance building, and to the south the eastern wing of O C Tanner building. Together, the O C Tanner building, Abraham building, Griffiths building and the dining hall form an enclosed courtyard. There are no public views of the courtyard outside of the confines of the college campus. The proposed development seeks to partially infill this area to provide an extension to the dining hall. The northern elevation of the dining hall is visible from Mesopotamia Walk.

2.9 In assessing the site context, the following considerations are drawn:

- The dining hall is a pre-existing College facility;
- The site is located within the designated Central Conservation Area;
- Neither the application site or adjoining buildings are listed or on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register;
- There are no public views of the application site, only of the northern elevation of the dining hall;

3 Planning History

3.1 The relevant recent planning history for the site is listed in the table below.

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
20/00822/FUL	Conversion of loft to create 4no. student bedrooms with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities and creation of 1no. additional student bedroom on the second floor of the OC Tanner Building. Alterations to roof and insertion of 7no. rooflights and 3no. glazed lanterns. (Amended plans and description)	Approved	15/06/2020
19/00483/FUL	Insertion of 2no. rooflights to south roofslope (Amended description).	Approved	07/05/2019
11/01343/FUL	Installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the roof of 2 college buildings. (Additional Information & Amended Plans).	Approved	11/08/2011
08/01948/FUL	Change of use of land from recreation to amenity/garden for use by students resident on the Linacre College site. Construction of new boundary wall. Variation of boundary treatment as approved under 06/01912/FUL. (amended plans).	Approved	12/02/2009
06/01912/FUL	Erection of 32 student study rooms on 4 floors. Construction of temporary access from St Cross Road.	Approved	24/11/2006
90/01020/NFH	Erection of 4 storey residential block to provide 18 No. study bedrooms plus recreational area in basement. Extension of the existing entrance block to provide new entrance and offices on upper floors (amended plans).	Approved	07/10/1991
83/00353/NFH	Erection of four storey block to provide twenty study bedrooms.	Approved	11/07/1983
82/00160/NOH	Outline application for three-storey block to provide 21 bed-study rooms.	Approved	05/07/1982
75/00190/A_H	Conversion of existing building and construction of new extension to form entrance and dining hall to accommodate Linacre College.	Approved	23/04/1975

4 Planning Policy

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is echoed in paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in February 2019, which is itself a material consideration.

4.2 The development plan comprises the Oxford Local Plan 2036, adopted in June 2020.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of an application.

4.4 **Paragraph 10** states that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.5 **Paragraph 11** sets out that for decision taking, the presumption means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. **Paragraph 64** of the NPPF states permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take opportunities available for improving character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

4.6 **Paragraph 109** states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

4.7 **Chapter 11 'Making effective use of the land'** promotes the effective use of land. **Paragraph 117** states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

4.8 **Chapter 12 'Achieving Well Designed Places' - Paragraph 124** sets out that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

- 4.9 **Chapter 16 ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’** – This states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
- 4.10 **Paragraph 189** states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 4.11 **Paragraph 190** states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.12 **Paragraph 192** sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.13 **Paragraph 193** 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.
- 4.14 **Paragraph 196** 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 securing its optimum viable use.
- 4.15 **Paragraph 197** sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.16 **Paragraph 201** states that not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance.

Oxford Local Plan 2036

- 4.17 **Policy H9: Linking the delivery of new/ redeveloped and refurbished university academic facilities to the delivery of university provided residential accommodation** - Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic, research or administrative accommodation for the University of Oxford 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. This threshold will be reduced to 1,500 at 01 April 2022.
- 4.18 **Policy RE2: Efficient use of land** - Planning permission will only be granted where development proposals make efficient use of land. Development proposals must make best use of site capacity, in a manner compatible with the site itself, the surrounding area and broader considerations of the needs of Oxford, as well as addressing the following criteria:
- the density must be appropriate for the use proposed;
 - the scale of development, including building heights and massing, should conform to other policies in the plan. It is expected that sites at transportation hubs and within the city and district centres in particular will be capable of accommodating development at an increased scale and density, although this will also be encouraged in all other appropriate locations where the impact of so doing is shown to be acceptable;
 - opportunities for developing at the maximum appropriate density must be fully explored; and
 - built form and site layout must be appropriate for the capacity of the site.
- 4.19 **Policy DH1: High quality design and placemaking** - Planning permission will only be granted for development of high quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness.
- 4.20 All developments other than changes of use without external alterations and householder applications will be expected to be supported by a constraints and opportunities plan and supporting text and/or visuals to explain their design rationale in a design statement proportionate to the proposal (which could be part of a Design and Access Statement or a Planning Statement), which should cover the relevant checklist points set out in Appendix 6.1.
- 4.21 Planning permission will only be granted where proposals are designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development as set out in Appendix 6.1.
- 4.22 **Policy DH2: Views and building heights** - The City Council will seek 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 any building or structure that would harm the special significance of Oxford's historic skyline.
- 4.23 **Policy DH3 - Designated heritage assets** – 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.

- 4.24 For all planning decisions for planning permission or listed building consent 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.
- 4.25 An application for planning permission for development which would or may affect the significance of any designated heritage asset, either directly or by being within its setting, should be accompanied by a heritage assessment that includes a description of the asset and its significance and an assessment of the impact of the development proposed on the asset's significance. As part of this process full regard should be given to the detailed character assessments and other relevant information set out any relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan.

Conservation Area Appraisal: Central (City and University)

- 4.26 The College is located within the Central Conservation Area which was designated in 1971. There is currently no up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal, however the brief overview of the area from Oxford City Council's website does provide some context and detail of the area which covers a large area of central Oxford and a huge variety of aspects of significance. Overall, the historic centre of Oxford is described as one of the masterpieces of European architectural heritage. Many of its historic buildings still function for the purpose which they were built and provide accommodation for the University of Oxford and its colleges (Oxford City Council). A draft Conservation Area Appraisal was prepared by the City Council and Alan Baxter Associates and was available for public consultation in September/October 2018. There is currently no formal commentary in respect of the relative significance/value of Linacre College or any of its buildings.
- 4.27 A change to the boundary of the Central Conservation Area to incorporate the University Science Quarter was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 29 May 2019. The College is adjacent to this recently included area which includes areas north and south of South Parks Road. The University Science Quarter is described as "a physical demonstration of the university's commitment to the promotion of scientific research within the city during the mid-19th century, and beyond. Each building in the area is of its time and designed to reflect its use, which is continuously changing as the field adapts. Changes in building styles and types is expected and encouraged in this area in order to maintain the university's place as a world leader in scientific excellence" (Oxford City Council).
- 4.28 The Heritage Statement provides an overview of the heritage significance of the Central Conservation Area and the contribution of the site to this.

5 Proposed Development

- 5.1 The development proposals comprise a single storey extension to the college dining hall. It also includes the replacement of rooflights and part of the flat roof structure and internal and external alterations, some of which do not require planning permission but are included for completeness. The accompanying Design and Access statement provides full details and outlines the rationale behind the proposal.
- 5.2 Linacre College has in excess of 550 postgraduate students. It strives to accommodate as many as possible on its main campus and has a number of student accommodation blocks. The dining hall is open to students both off and on campus and serve daily meals as well as guest nights. The dining hall is also used for special functions and due to the current configuration can only hold one private function at once. The extension is to provide additional dining space for general use for the existing student and staff population but will also provide additional space for special functions and the ability to provide a separate space for private dining.
- 5.3 The proposal involves infilling a courtyard between the O C Tanner building and existing dining hall. The proposal is for a single storey flat roofed extension off the south and east elevations of the existing dining hall. It will have glazed timber windows in the eastern elevation, similar to the existing windows, and double doors in the southern elevation. It will be constructed in matching materials to the existing dining hall. The existing flat roof form will extend over the new extension and the existing bitumen flat roof finish will be replaced with a single-ply membrane flat roof. The eastern elevation and new fire door is shown in figure 7 below.
- 5.4 The extension will block off an existing fire escape door in the northern elevation of the O C Tanner building, this will be re-provided as a glazed timber door on the eastern elevation along with an adjoining paved access ramp running parallel to the building.
- 5.5 The dining hall is in need of general maintenance and improvements to enhance its functionality. The proposal also seeks to replace the existing metal framed rooflights located on the north of the dining hall with new powder-coated, steel framed rooflights. It is further proposed that the small polycarbonate rooflights in the existing flat roof area be replaced with new Plateau rooflights. A larger Plateau rooflight is proposed for the roof of the new extension to allow light into this area.
- 5.6 Inside the dining hall an extending screen will be inserted to subdivide the dining hall, into two areas as required.

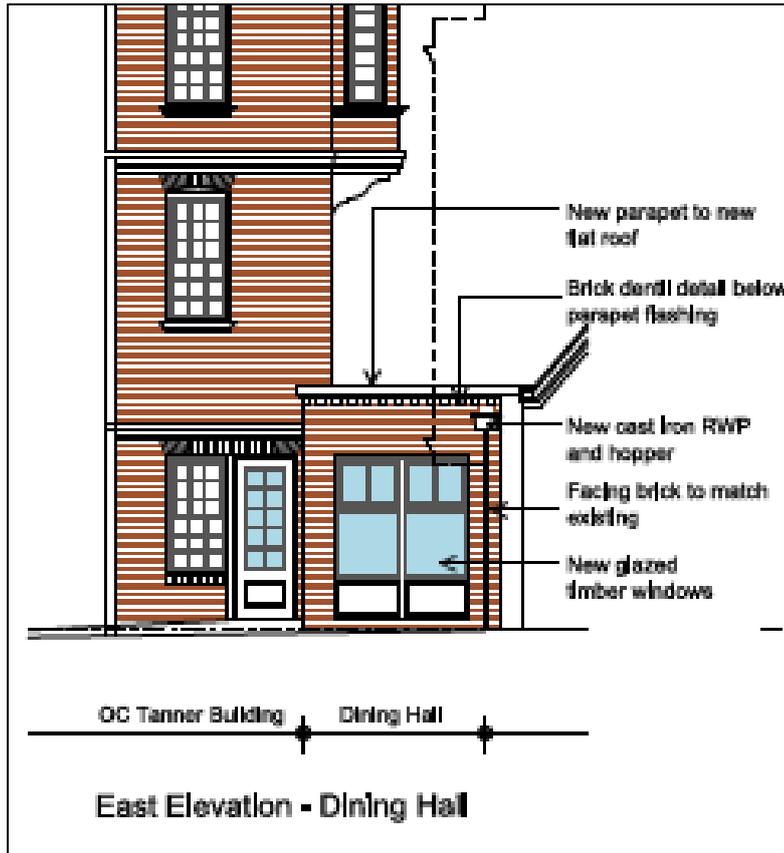


Figure 7 – Extract from 6957.107 Proposed Elevations

6 Planning Considerations

6.1 This section assesses the proposed development against the relevant planning policy. The main planning considerations are:

- Principle of Development
- Design
- Heritage

Principle of Development

6.2 Linacre College is one of the constituent Colleges of the University of Oxford. The site on the corner of St Cross and South Parks Roads is the main College campus where the majority of students are accommodated. It contains the central teaching and learning facilities including the College library, social spaces and supporting administrative functions. The proposed development is for the provision of additional dining hall space to better serve the existing students and staff and provide the flexibility to host more than one function at a time.

6.3 Principal consideration is given to Policy H9 which sets out that planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic, research or administrative accommodation for the University of Oxford where it can be demonstrated that the new accommodation would not generate or facilitate any increase in student numbers.

6.4 The rationale behind additional dining hall space is to better accommodate the needs of the existing college cohort which is currently just over 550 in number, for daily College dining, functions and private dining. On a day to day basis, the dining hall principally serves students and staff who live and work at the main Linacre Campus. Linacre students who live at other Linacre accommodation or elsewhere in the City can also use the dining hall but have alternative facilities at their accommodation to prepare meals. There is limited opportunity or space for the College to develop additional student accommodation on site to generate an increase in student numbers. Therefore, the small increase in capacity for the dining hall that the extension will provide will not generate or facilitate an increase in student numbers in line with policy H9.

6.5 The extension will also allow a more flexible dining space which the College can use to accommodate the various functions it hosts each year. The extension and internal screen will facilitate the provision of two separate dining areas so that two events can be hosted at once. The extra space is likely to reduce the need for an external marquee for some events. The extension facilitates investment into the maintenance and improvement of the dining hall to enhance the student experience and overall appearance of the building.

6.6 Within the wider campus setting, there is no alternative site for the extension and the proposed structure is diminutive and subservient in stature making efficient use of unutilised space on the campus.

6.7 A review of the site and surrounding context, planning history and relevant planning policy has yielded no other planning designations or policies which would preclude a small dining hall extension in principle in this location. The proposals will not generate an increase in student numbers and also constitutes an efficient use of land. The proposed development is in accordance with local plan policies H9 and RE2 of the adopted Local Plan.

Design

- 6.8 Policy DH1 states that planning permission will only be granted for development of high-quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness and where proposals are designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development as set out in Appendix 6.1 of the Local Plan. A Design and Access Statement has been prepared by the architect, GBS which sets out the design rationale for the project.
- 6.9 The proposed extension is located on the south elevation of the existing dining hall set within an enclosed courtyard area screened from wider public view. Both elements of the dining hall are modern buildings, considered to be of lower architectural quality than other buildings on the campus. There is no other viable location for an extension to the dining hall. The extension continues the form of the existing flat roofed element of the dining hall. The extension will not have an impact on the street scene, it will only be visible from inside the Linacre campus. The extension has been sympathetically designed to provide a contemporary structure which complements the buildings on the wider campus. This is achieved via the following principles:
- A diminutive and subservient structure;
 - Features including windows and doors to match existing features on dining hall and O C Tanner building;
 - Use of a complementary materials palette matching the existing building comprising brickwork, timber glazing and steel framed roof lights; and
 - Discrete siting in a sheltered, underused part of campus.
- 6.10 The proposal also seeks to replace the existing metal framed rooflights located on the north roof slope of the dining hall with new powder-coated, steel framed rooflights. It is further proposed that the small polycarbonate rooflights in the existing flat roof area be replaced with new Plateau rooflights. A larger Plateau rooflight is proposed for the roof of the new extension. As this is a contemporary structure adjoining a more modern building on the campus in an area overshadowed by larger buildings it is considered the large rooflight is appropriate and will allow more light into this space.
- 6.11 The replacement rooflights will comprise an improvement to those existing in both functionality and appearance and replicate the form and appearance of those recently approved under the loft conversion at OC Tanner building (application reference: 20/00822/FUL) promoting an enhanced continuity between historic and modern materials across the campus.
- 6.12 The new door inserted in the eastern elevation of the O C Tanner building replicates the form of other doors on surrounding buildings and is required for fire escape reasons. The ramp will provide level access to the eastern part of the O C Tanner building.
- 6.13 Overall, the proposals are in accordance with Local Plan policy DH1 and Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

Heritage

- 6.14 The proposed development relates to an extension of the Linacre College dining hall, replacement rooflights and alterations to the dining hall. The dining hall is a pre-existing modern extension to the OC Tanner building with a single storey flat roof and main 1.5 storey pitched roof element.

- 6.15 The site is located within the Central (University and City) Conservation Area and is adjacent to the University Parks which is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The significance of these heritage assets should therefore be described in a manner proportionate to their importance so that the potential impact of the proposals on this significance can be assessed in accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF.
- 6.16 The O C Tanner building is not a listed building, nor is it included on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register. For the purpose of this application, it will be treated as a non-designated heritage asset. Paragraph 197 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. The dining hall is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.17 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement, which describes the significance of the Central (University and City) Conservation Area, the University Parks Grade II Registered Park and Garden, nearest listed buildings and the O C Tanner building. It goes on to assess the impact of the proposals on the heritage significance of the Central (University and City) Conservation Area and the O C Tanner building and on the parts of the setting of University Parks Grade II Registered Park and Garden and listed buildings which contribute to their significance.
- 6.18 The replacement door and extension will affect a small part of fabric of the O C Tanner building. The proposals are respectful of the higher order status of the O C Tanner building and do not obscure important features such as the Dutch gables, oriel windows, stone mullion windows, 'bridge' or detailing. The proposed development will not harm the heritage significance of the O C Tanner building.
- 6.19 The proposals relate to an enclosed courtyard area not visible from public vantage points at St Cross Road, South Parks Road or University Parks. Given the application site is obscured from the wider public realm, and that the proposed extension is single storey and alterations introduce no new features to the existing dining hall it is considered the proposals will not harm the significance of the Central Conservation Area, University Parks or closest listed buildings. The replacement roof lights in the northern roof slope will be visible from Mesopotamia Walk but will be of the same size and similar in specification, this change will not cause any harm to significance.
- 6.20 The proposed extension is single storey and other alterations relate to existing buildings and do not increase their height, therefore there will be no adverse impacts on the view cone.
- 6.21 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will cause no harm to the identified heritage assets and is therefore in accordance with Local Plan policies DH2 and DH3 and chapter 16 of the NPPF.

7 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 This Planning Statement relates to the planning application for the 'erection of single storey extension to the southern elevation, replacement rooflights and internal and external alterations' at the dining hall and O C Tanner building at Linacre College, Oxford.
- 7.2 The principle of altering the building and partially infilling the courtyard to facilitate an extension the dining hall is acceptable. It will allow additional dining space for general use for the existing student and staff population but will also provide additional space for special functions and the ability to provide a separate space for private dining.
- 7.3 The design solution has considered the site context as well as the client brief, it addresses the level changes and delivers a viable solution to provide a sympathetically enlarged building. The design is discrete, subservient but is also of high quality in its own right, referencing features on the main building.
- 7.4 The proposed development will not be harmful to the heritage significance of the O C Tanner building, Central Conservation Area, University Parks Registered Park and Garden or listed buildings and an appropriate Heritage Assessment has been undertaken.
- 7.5 Overall, the proposed development is in accordance with the Local Plan and the NPPF.