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L 210216 RB Covering Letter inc PS



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Dear Amy,

Application for planning permission and listed building consent at the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory, South Parks Road, Oxford

Savills has been instructed by The Chancellors, Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford (hereafter 'the Applicant') to submit a planning application at the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory (ICL) on South Parks Road for the following:

"Installation of steel brackets to stone external walls to support temporary scaffold and working platform."

This follows pre-application discussions with Amy Ridding at Oxford City Council as the Council's Senior Conservation Officer in December 2020 and in February 2021.

The application is accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- Application Forms
- CIL Form

Drawings

- Location and Site Plan by FJMT - Drawing No: 4-A-12000
- Temporary Works for Support Scaffolding Above Museum Store by Purcell – Drawing No. 3008
- Temporary Works Required to Support Scaffolding Above Museum Store by Stantec– Drawing No. 48961-STR-TW-SK006

Reports:

- Design and Access Statement by FJMT architects
- Heritage Statement from Purcell
- Repair Specification Section F10 by Purcell

The Site

The site is located on the northern side of South Parks Road within the University Science Area of Oxford. The entire site falls within the Central (City and University) Conservation Area. The site is located within the western part of the Science Area, which is dominated by purpose built science buildings in a variety of styles reflecting the range of ages of construction from the 19th Century to the modern day.

The proposed platform is to be installed at the site of Reuben College, formerly the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL) and west wing of the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory (ICL).

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The RSL and ICL are both Grade II listed buildings.

The Historic England listing covers both the Abbot's Kitchen and ICL and reads, "The 1st building was the Abbot's Kitchen built in 1860 to the South of the Museum, the octagonal design being a copy of the kitchen at Glastonbury Abbey. It was extended to join the Radcliffe Library in 1901; it is now an annexe of the Library, the chimneys of Bath stone. (2) The present main building was constructed in 1878 in Bath stone; it was extended and reconstructed in 1929. (The link between this building and the main block of the Museum was altered completely by Lanchester & Lodge, 1972)"

The proposals relate to an enclosed lightwell with a flat roof over the ground floor below on the western elevation of the west wing of the former Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory. Photographs of the area are included within the Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement.

Proposal and background

In July 2020 the Applicant received planning permission and listed building consent for the following as part of a new graduate college, Reuben College:

"Refurbishment and alteration of the Radcliffe Science Library, Abbot's Kitchen and west wing of the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory (D1 use) to enable use as a graduate college, museums' collections teaching and research centre and library (D1 use). External works to include creation of new lift extension between Jackson Wing and Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory, installation of new roof mounted plant equipment, insertion of new entrance to eastern elevation of Worthington Wing, creation of an accessible entrance to south elevation of Jackson Wing including remodelling of existing footpath, new landscaping, provision of cycle parking and external bin store."

The applications were granted under delegated powers under references 20/00942/FUL and 20/00943/LBC on 31 July 2020.

The applications included essential external repairs to the existing first floor elevation and roof of the western elevation of the west wing of the former Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory. The works included the replacement of existing windows at first floor level, the replacement of an existing box gutter and the addition of new roof vents at roof level. However, there is currently no safe working access to these areas.

In order to carry out the approved repair works, a safe working access to the existing first floor elevation and roof is required. The proposals are for a temporary working platform consisting of a series of temporary steel beams spanning between the Reuben College Lounge and Dining Hall, supported by permanent steel brackets fixed with resin anchors to the existing load-bearing stone external walls. The beams and platform will be removed following completion of the approved works which is anticipated to be within three years.

The brackets and resin anchors supporting the beams will be in direct contact with the existing external walls and will remain in place following completion of the approved works. This will ensure there is provision for access to carry out future repair and maintenance work to the listed building.

Pre-application discussions have confirmed the proposals are acceptable provided the proposal can demonstrate it is fully justified as the most feasible option. The accompanying Design and Access Statement sets out other options that were explored, including placing temporary scaffold directly on the single storey roof or working from a suspended scaffold or a mobile elevating working platform however these options were discounted because of restricted access to the site area and because of the structural limitations of the existing single storey below. It is not feasible to undertake structural alterations to the roof, walls or foundations of the existing single storey extension below so that a temporary scaffold could be placed directly on the existing roof as it is an occupied space outside the demise and ownership of the Reuben College project.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for Oxford comprises the Oxford Local Plan 2036 which was adopted in June 2020. The following policy is considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- DH3 Designated heritage assets

Policy DH3 states, *“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”*

Paragraphs 189-190 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are informative for consideration of this proposal.

Paragraph 189 requires an applicant *“to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.”* The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement from Purcell, who have a detailed knowledge of the RSL that has informed this proposal. Paragraph 190 requires the decision-maker to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, including its setting.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF reads, *“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.”*

Planning Assessment

The temporary working platform will be removable and will enable the approved works to the listed building to take place. The brackets supporting the platform will be permanent and will allow future repair and maintenance works to take place by installing the temporary working platform.

A number of options were explored to provide access to the area of the building, however, the proposed option was the only feasible option and has sought to minimise the harm to the listed building in accordance with Policy DH3. The accompanying Heritage Statement assesses the impact of the proposal to the listed building.

The brackets will not be publicly visible or affect the ability to appreciate the architectural value of the building as a whole. The brackets have been designed to minimise the physical and visual impact on the listed building. The benefit of enabling the consented external works to be carried out as part of the Reuben College project and enabling future repair and maintenance work to be carried out is considered to outweigh the minor impact to the listed building.

Overall, the Applicant contends that this proposal has been fully considered, justified and is compliant with local and national planning policy.

We trust you will be able to support these applications. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Bacon MRTPI
Senior Planner