

# ACCESS PLATFORM, REUBEN COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

## Heritage Statement

February 2021

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### 1.0 Background

This brief heritage statement concerns the proposed platform to be installed at the site of Reuben College (formerly the Radcliffe Science Library/Abbot's Kitchen/inorganic chemistry laboratory), which is required in order to provide temporary works access for the permitted refurbishment scheme.<sup>1</sup> The proposed platform is to be located over an enclosed lightwell with a flat roof over the ground floor room below. Photographs are appended to this note.

The site is located within the Central (City & University) Conservation Area. The Radcliffe Science Library (RSL) building to the west is listed at Grade II, as is the Abbot's Kitchen located between the RSL and Grade I listed University Museum. By virtue of its physical attachment to the Grade II Abbot's Kitchen and pre-1948 date, the Inorganic Chemistry courtyard may technically also be considered curtilage listed.

### 2.0 History

The elevation on the east side of the internal courtyard was originally fully exposed to ground level before the area between the staircase and laboratory annex was infilled at ground floor level sometime between 1893 and 1953. This would explain the use of an ashlar finish. The structure and former first floor laboratory to the east was originally built between 1860 and 1893.

The window boxes on the west elevation (a wall dating to between 1893 and 1953) are interesting examples of historic fume cupboards, most likely from the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The brickwork is laid in an English bond pattern, also indicating an early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction date, although there is evidence of re-pointing, fixings and openings.

A phased development plan is appended to this note.

### 3.0 Heritage Impact

The proposed platform requires 16 structural beams to be embedded into the east and west elevations with the use of brackets which will be permanently fixed into the walls. This will instigate localised cutting into the ashlar masonry on the east side and the brickwork on the west side.

The ability to appreciate the 19<sup>th</sup>-century masonry elevation is diminished by its limited visibility, as well as the overall 'back-of-house' character as a result of redundant services left in situ and modern flat roof. Some inconsistencies in the pointing and block sizes indicates that interventions have historically been made to this elevation, which would be in keeping with the rest of the inorganic chemistry laboratory

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<sup>1</sup> Listed building consent 20/00943/LBC.

where there is considerable evidence of service interventions. There will be a minor adverse impact as a result of the localised removal of historic built fabric to accommodate the required brackets.

The west elevation (brickwork) is comparatively less significant than the east, being later in construction date and much simpler in its design. There will be a negligible degree of impact as a result of the localised fabric removal to accommodate the inserted brackets.

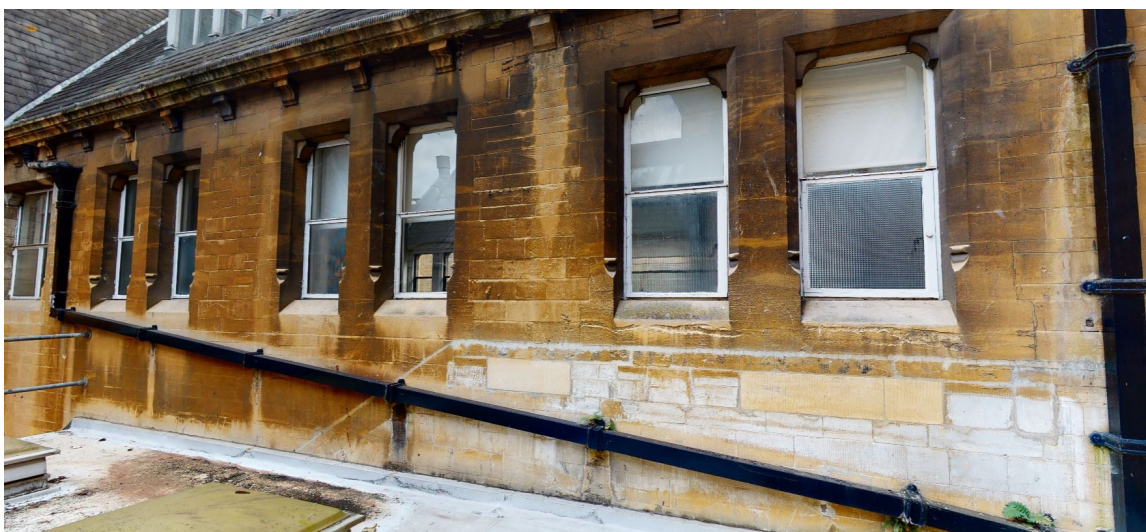
The brackets being left in the masonry/brickwork will not be publicly visible or affect the ability to appreciate the architectural value of the building as whole, and offer a minor benefit in being able to accommodate future high-level repair or maintenance work. The steelwork itself is a temporary measure to facilitate the wider permitted project. Any local visibility of the remaining brackets (i.e., from surrounding windows) will be minimised by colour-treating them to blend in with the masonry and brickwork.

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## Photographs



West elevation

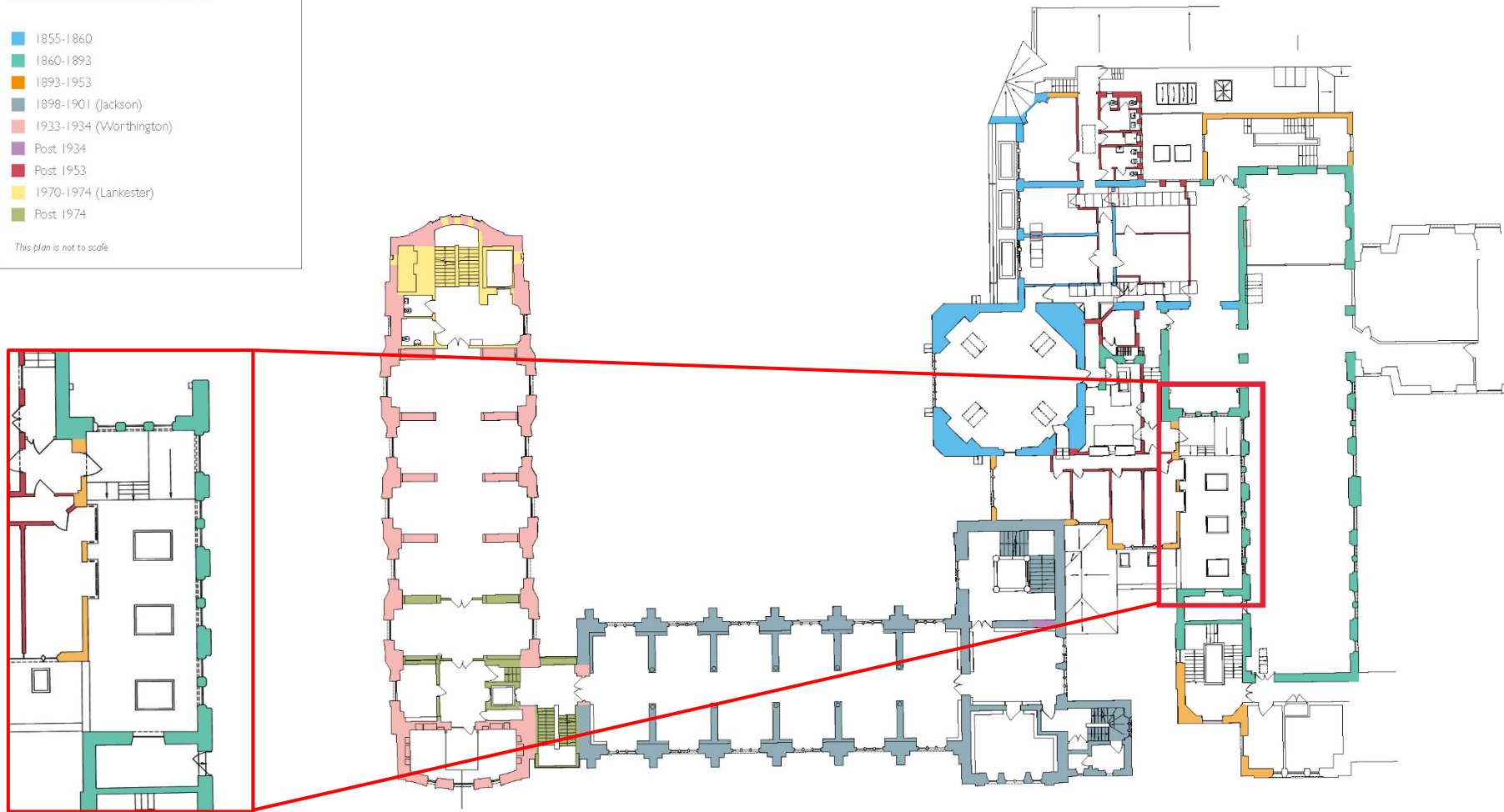


East elevation

FIRST FLOOR  
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 1855-1860
- 1860-1893
- 1893-1953
- 1898-1901 (Jackson)
- 1933-1934 (Worthington)
- Post 1934
- Post 1953
- 1970-1974 (Lankester)
- Post 1974

*This plan is not to scale*



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