

4 CORNMARKE STREET, OXFORD
HERITAGE STATEMENT
ISSUE 01
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On behalf of Purcell ®

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Planning Application

4 CORNMARKE STREET, OXFORD: HERITAGE STATEMENT

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SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Devonshire Metro Limited and concerns the proposed works to 4 Cornmarket Street, Oxford. The building is not listed but is located within the immediate vicinity of several listed buildings, as well as within the Central (City & University) Conservation Area. It is therefore a requirement to demonstrate that the proposed works have been informed by an understanding of the site's history and significance, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The assessments set out in this document focus on the significance and potential impact on the identified heritage assets.



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— 4 Cornmarket Street

SECTION 2.0

CONTEXT

The proposals concern the first to fourth floors of 4 Cornmarket Street in central Oxford, plus the area of flat roof at the front of the building. The ground floor is currently in retail use – one unit facing onto Cornmarket Street and another accessed via the Golden Cross courtyard – and does not form part of the proposed scheme. The upper floors are, or have recently been, in use as office space. A flat roof area is accessed from the fourth floor. Each floor is accessed via a staircase on the east side of the building, which extends off the entrance within the Golden Cross courtyard. Each floor is configured slightly differently, but all with a principal outlook onto Cornmarket Street.

The west (principal) elevation has a modern shopfront fascia at ground floor level, with the covered passageway into the Golden Cross courtyard on the left-hand side. The archway is marked at the Cornmarket Street end with a carved timber shallow arch and timber gate with wicket; the courtyard end is marked with two fluted pilasters. Large metal-framed windows and marbled cladding characterise the first and second floors, under a corniced stringcourse. Above is the third floor which has smaller windows with simple moulded details and a metal parapet rail. The fourth floor is recessed and not visible from street level.

The Golden Cross courtyard elevation has a pebbledash render with a series of small windows opening on to the stairwell and the back portions of the upper floors. The recessed fourth floor and part of the flat roof are discernible from the courtyard.

Inside, the interiors have modern finishes, joinery and fixtures, including suspended ceilings and internal partitions.



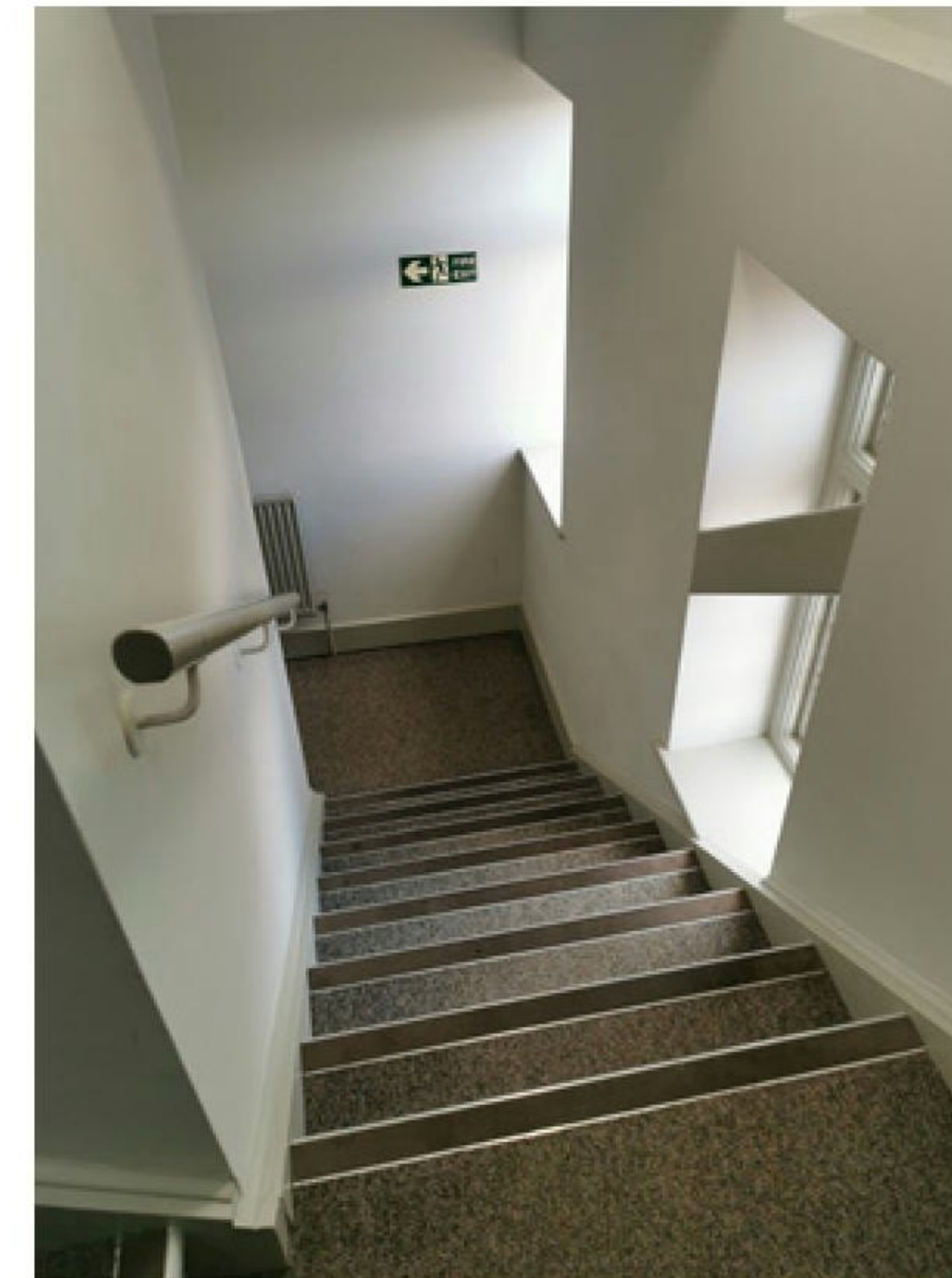
Cornmarket Street elevation



Golden Cross courtyard elevation



Golden Cross passage



Stairwell

CONTEXT



First floor



Fourth floor



Roof



Second floor



Third floor

SECTION 3.0

HISTORY

Cornmarket Street was historically called 'Northgate Street', linking Carfax Tower with the gate in the north wall of the medieval city. It was already a commercial thoroughfare in early medieval Oxford. In recognition of the corn trade that took place here in the mid-16th century, the route was re-named Cornmarket Street.

A medieval inn historically occupied the plots of nos. 3 and 4 Cornmarket Street before it was subdivided into two plots in 1555. The 15th-century core survives within 3 Cornmarket Street, which also has late 16th-century wall paintings and a 17th-century upper storey. The Golden Cross Hotel, which wraps around the courtyard accessed via the passageway off Cornmarket Street, comprises a 15th-century north range, a late 17th-century south range and a 19th-century east range.



A sketch by Buckler in 1824 shows the Golden Cross courtyard, looking towards the passageway off Cornmarket Street. On the left-hand side, the bay windows survive as shown. The structure over the passageway has been rebuilt, although the right-hand gable end survives as shown. Prior to its rebuilding, the rear portion of 4 Cornmarket Street appears to have had a jettied gable looking out onto the courtyard.



A 1904 photograph shows much the same courtyard composition as the 1824 sketch by Buckler.

HISTORY

From approximately 1839 until 1956, 4 Cornmarket Street operated as a restaurant with on-site accommodation for its proprietor. In 1919 there was a serious fire which subsequently instigated the complete re-building of 4 Cornmarket Street in 1924.⁰¹ The 15th-century gateway into the Golden Cross courtyard survived the fire and remains in situ at the passage entrance. The new building was taller than the previous and returned to restaurant use before being converted into a shoe shop in 1956. At this time, the elevation onto Cornmarket Street was remodelled to its current configuration, with metal-framed windows and marbled cladding above the ground floor.⁰²

A 1907 photograph shows 4 Cornmarket Street before the fire that instigated its rebuilding. The elevation had a Venetian window at first floor level, with a mullion and lead lighted window at second floor, under a parapet wall which extended across the neighbouring property.

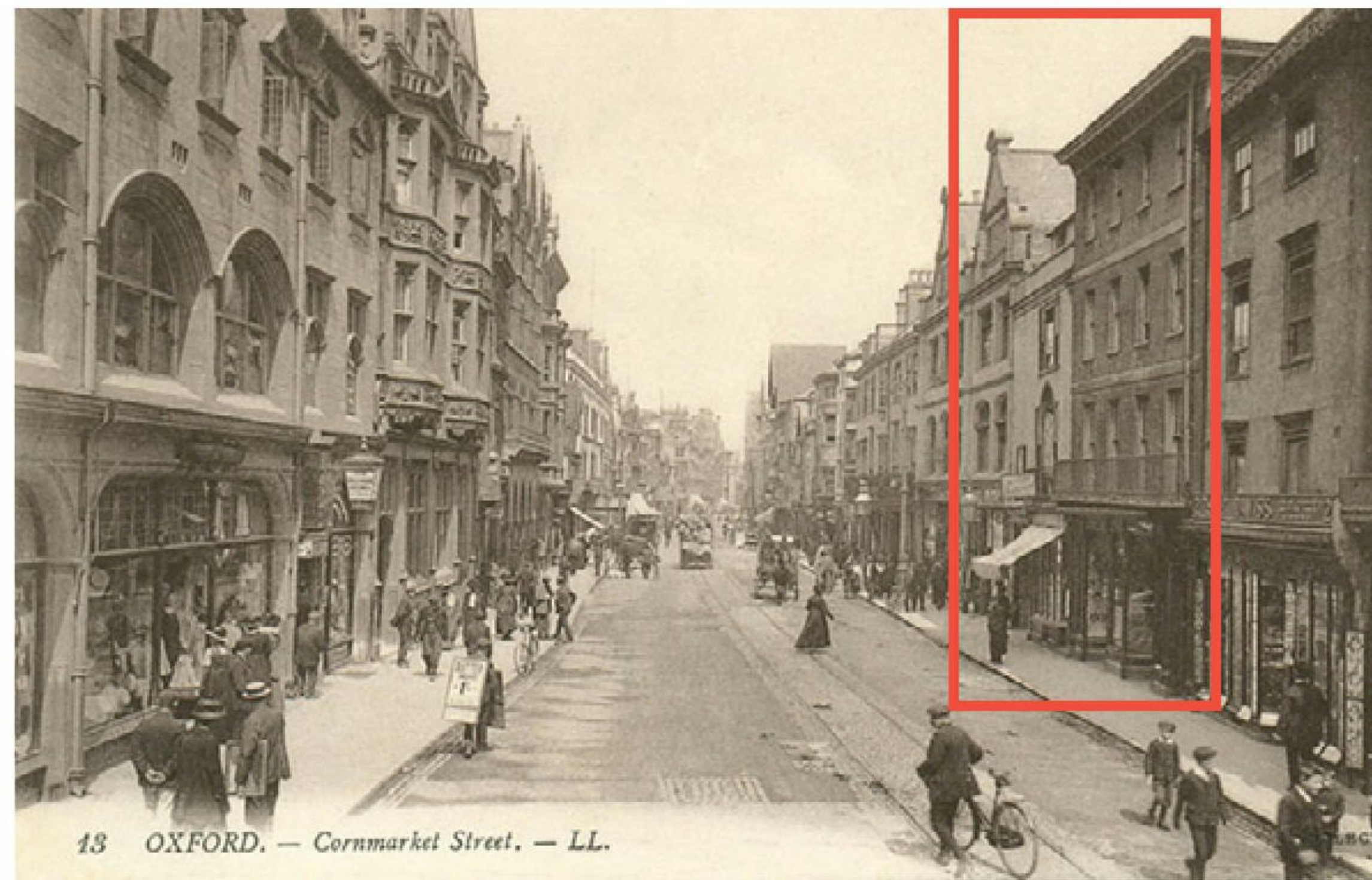
Another photograph from c.1910 shows a recessed third floor behind the parapet wall, which was inscribed with 'City Restaurant'. Note how much lower it sat compared to the neighbouring 3 Cornmarket Street, the elevation of which survives today.

A late 19th/early 20th-century postcard shows 4 Cornmarket Street before it was rebuilt, but after the building immediately to the north (far side) was rebuilt with its prominent Dutch gables.

The internal finishing and features which survive in situ are indicative of a recent modern refurbishment. Other than some early 20th-century windows, there are no historic features. Given the age and precedent for archaeological discoveries in the neighbouring buildings, it is possible that older fabric survives at the core of the south party wall and possibly over the passageway.



1907



Late 19th/early 20th century



c.1910

⁰¹ <http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/cornmarket/east/04.html> (accessed January 2021).

⁰² Planning application ref. 56/05192/A_H, 13 March 1956.

SECTION 4.0

HERITAGE ASSETS

4.1 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Listed buildings and conservation areas are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. National and local planning policies recognise that changes to other buildings or sites in the vicinity of a heritage asset can affect the special interest of that asset. It is therefore important that the works to 4 Cornmarket Street recognise the potential impact on the neighbouring listed buildings and wider conservation area. Policy DH3 of the Oxford Local Plan specifically concerns planning applications affecting designated heritage assets.

4.2 LISTED BUILDINGS

4 Cornmarket Street is not listed. However, there are a number of immediately neighbouring buildings:

- 3 Cornmarket Street (Grade II*) – significant for late 16th-century painted surfaces on the second floor and the age of its core fabric. Its Cornmarket Street elevation demonstrates the polite classical style of the 18th century and contributes to the character of the streetscape.
- Golden Cross Hotel (Grade I) – significant for the varied age of its built fabric and historical value as a coaching inn. It also defines the distinctive character of the courtyard.
- 8-10 Cornmarket Street (Grade II) – significant for its balanced classical elevation and group value with other Cornmarket Street listed buildings.
- Lloyds Bank (Grade II) – significant for its architectural prominence at the corner of Cornmarket Street and the High Street, and group value with other Cornmarket Street listed buildings.
- Midland Bank, 64 Cornmarket Street (Grade II) – significant for its architectural prominence at the corner of Cornmarket Street and Queen Street, and group value with other Cornmarket Street listed buildings.
- K2 telephone kiosk next to Carfax Tower (Grade II) – significant as an instantly recognisable urban streetscape feature and association with Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.
- Carfax Tower (Grade II) – significant as a surviving feature of the Church of St Martin Carfax and streetscape presence at the junction of Queen Street, Cornmarket Street, St Aldate's and the High Street. Views out from Carfax Tower across the city skyline are also significant.



Heritage Assets plan. Ordnance Survey (c) Crown Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

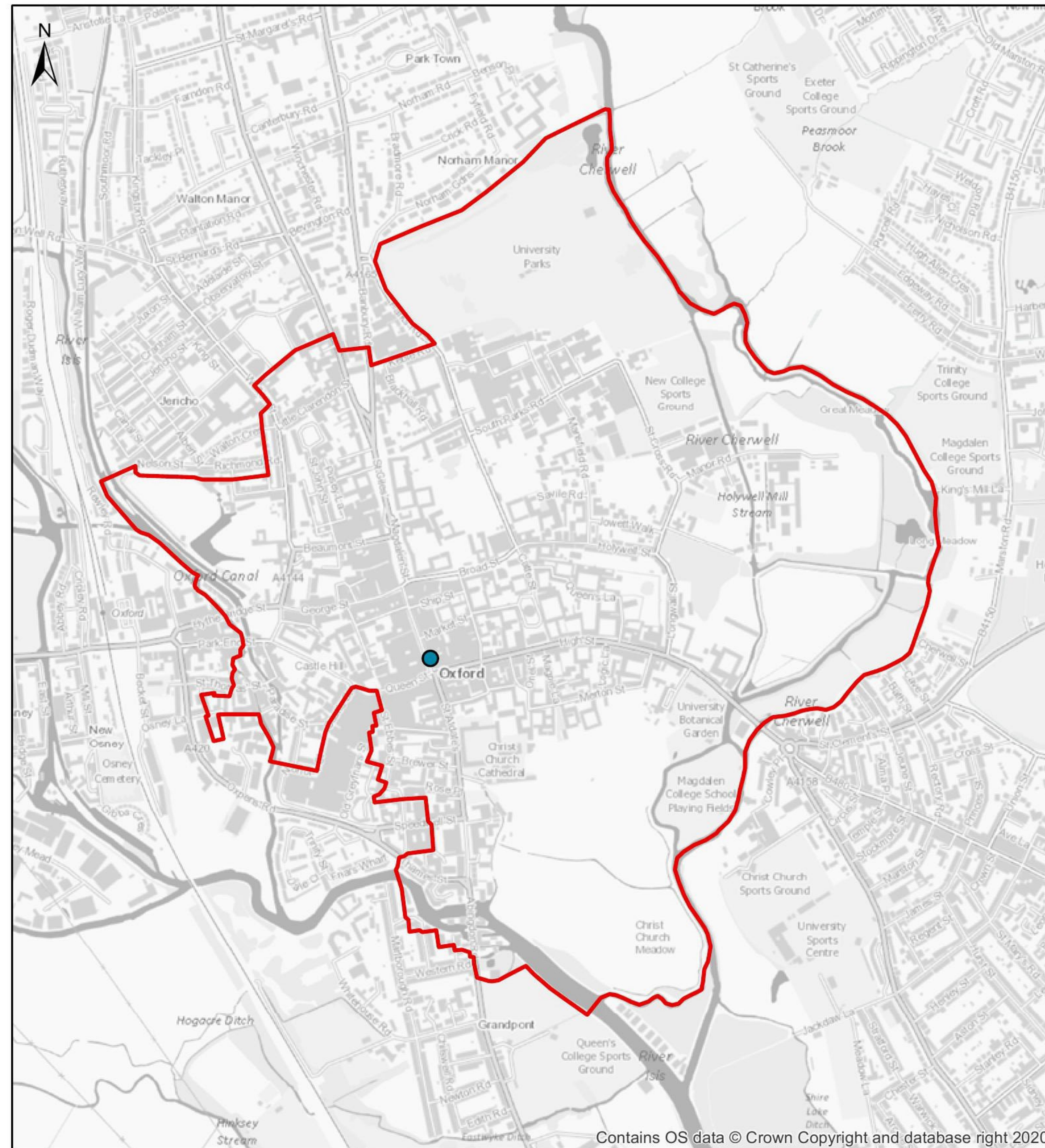
■	Grade I Listed Building
■	Grade II* Listed Building
■	Grade II Listed Building
■	4 Cornmarket Street

This plan is not to scale

HERITAGE ASSETS

4.3 CONSERVATION AREA

Cornmarket Street is one of the principal thoroughfares through the Central (City & University) Conservation Area, a detailed appraisal of which has not been formally adopted. The street is characterised by its rich architectural variety and long history of commercial activity. As is typical of a medieval city centre, there are a number of secondary and alley routes off the main thoroughfare, including the Golden Cross passageway and alleys leading to The Crown and Frewin Court.



SECTION 5.0

PROPOSALS

5.1 SUMMARY

The proposals seek to convert the upper floors of 4 Cornmarket Street into three residential units, with an extension on the fourth floor opening onto a roof terrace.

5.2 PLANNING POLICY

The Oxford Local Plan 2036 was adopted on 8 June 2020 and contains the policies against which the proposals will be measured. Specifically, policies DH1 (design and placemaking), DH2 (views and building heights), DH3 (designated heritage assets) and DH5 (local heritage assets), which concern Oxford's built heritage.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 directs that, in determining planning applications, '*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance*' of any affected conservation area. Under paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, due consideration should also be given to the setting of any heritage asset which may be affected by the proposals.

5.3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

An assessment of impact measures the special interest of identified heritage assets against the degree of change proposed. The degree to which the proposed development positively or negatively impacts the identified heritage is measured according to the following criteria.

Consequence of Proposed Change	Level of Impact
The proposal considerably enhances the special interest of the heritage asset, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest.	High Positive
The proposal enhances to a clearly discernible extent the special interest of the heritage asset, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest.	Moderate Positive
The proposal enhances to a small extent the special interest of the heritage asset, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest.	Minor Positive
The proposal does not change the special interest of the heritage assets, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest.	None
The proposal damages to a small extent the special interest of the heritage asset, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest.	Minor Negative
The proposals damages to a clearly discernible extent the special interest of the heritage asset, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest	Moderate Negative
The proposal considerably damages the special interest of the heritage asset, and/or the ability to appreciate that special interest.	High Negative

5.4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Heritage Asset	Assessment and Mitigation	Level of Impact
Central (City and University) Conservation Area	<p>The principle of residential accommodation over a retail unit recreates the historic tradition for 'living above shop', especially at 4 Cornmarket Street where the proprietors of the restaurant here are documented throughout history as living at the address as well. The proposals will have a positive impact on the streetscape by creating a more active frontage, as opposed to the current office use where activity through the windows is limited to working hours.</p> <p>The present roof configuration is modern and an unattractive feature within views across the city centre roofscape. The proposed extension will be visible from Carfax Tower, but does not impede views of any significant features as the extension is modest in scale and its position extends off the already extant fourth floor block. It will not be visible from street level on Cornmarket Street. There is potential for the extension to be more apparent at night-time as a result of both internal and external lighting.</p> <p>The intervening topography and roofscape blocks views of the rooftop at 4 Cornmarket Street from the elevated vantage point at St Michael at North Gate. A very small portion of the extension may be visible from public vantage points at the University Church and the roof terrace of The Varsity Club; however, this is substantially mitigated by the fourth floor block which already protrudes up.</p>	<p>None, on balance taking into consideration the minimal visibility/light emittance on the fourth floor and benefits of active street frontage</p>



View from Carfax Tower (reproduced from Google Streetview due to present restrictions)

PROPOSALS

Heritage Asset	Assessment and Mitigation	Level of Impact
Golden Cross Hotel, Grade I	The Golden Cross Hotel defines much of the character of the courtyard off which 4 Cornmarket Street is accessed. There are no external works proposed to the courtyard elevation of the site. A small portion of the fourth floor extension will be visible from the courtyard. This is a minor visual change and does not detract from the ability to appreciate the spatial qualities and character of the courtyard.	None
3 Cornmarket Street	There are no external works which affect the character of 3 Cornmarket Street, or any intrusive structural work which has the potential to impact its historic built fabric.	None
Other nearby listed buildings as identified in section 4.2.	Other than the minor visual impact of the roof extension which is assessed in the context of the Central Conservation Area, there are no external works which alter the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings.	None

