

---

# Design and Access Statement

Incorporating Heritage Appraisal

---

**1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford**

27 Park End St, Oxford, OX1 1RR

February 2021

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford

---



# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford

---



## Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Site Details	1
3.	Site Analysis	5
4.	Proposal	6
5.	Heritage Appraisal	11
6.	Access	14
7.	Conclusion	14

## 1. Introduction

This document has been prepared to support a full planning application submission for a proposed extension and infill of the undercroft at 1-3 Cambridge Terrace which lies within the Oxford City central conservation area.

This includes the following:

- New external walling including fenestration
- Demolition of existing under croft external walls
- Construction of new external walls
- Creation of a new single storey flat roof glazed lobby
- Installation of timber boundary treatment to create a secure cycle store
- Resizing of one external window
- Some Internal remodelling

This document should be read in conjunction with the drawings showing the proposed arrangement for the ground floor, site and elevational treatment, Structural Inspection and Arboricultural report. A Heritage Appraisal is incorporated into this document. All proposed work will take place on the ground floor, the extent of which includes the southern frontage of building 1, the undercroft containing cycle storage and the main entrance and forecourt. No work is proposed to the upper floors of any of the buildings and only non-structural remodelling of the interiors, unless otherwise specified on the ground floors to incorporate the changes to the building envelope.

## 2. Site Details

### Site Location

The building(s) are located on the northern side of the no through road at the eastern end opposite Oxford Magistrates Court. The site is located in the St Ebbs / Greyfriars district of Oxford City. It also falls within the southern extent of the Oxford City central conservation area.

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford

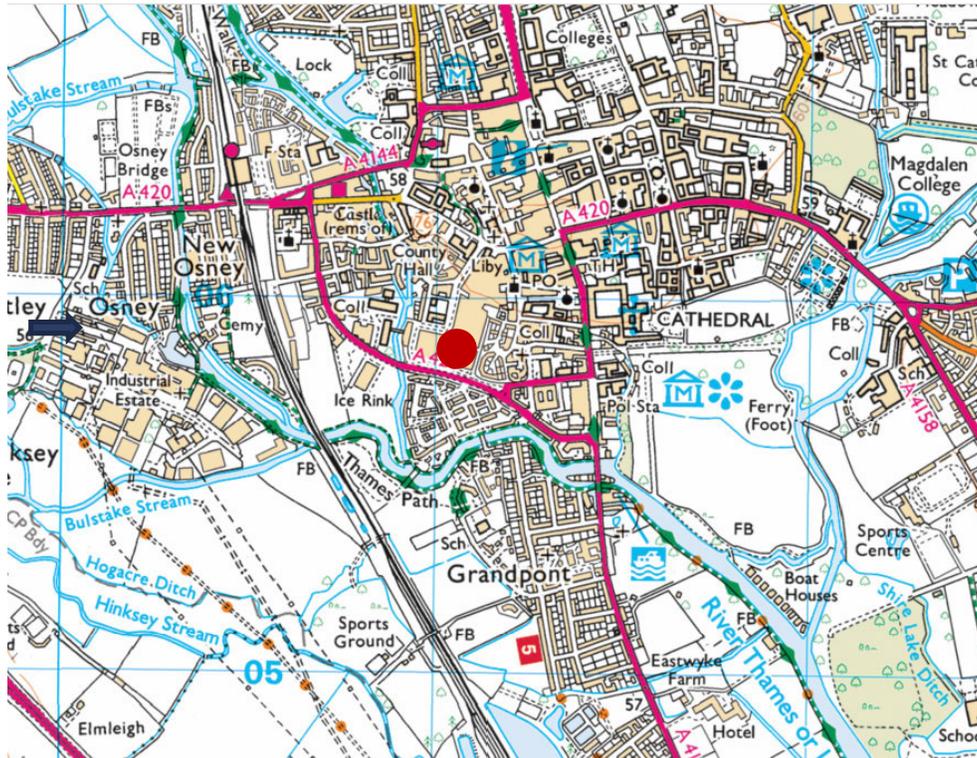


Image 1: Site Location

## Site Description

The buildings are predominately brick faced, constructed in the 1970's over three storeys in what could be considered the brutalist style, although the use of buff brick and curved corners also echo elements of the minimalist movement. Fenestration is aluminium framed with mirror finished glazing incorporating filleted corners. The façade that connects building 3 to buildings 1 & 2 is tile clad with large rectilinear windows. It has a generous undercroft that also acts as a covered walkway for building 1. A small courtyard / forecourt sits in front of the entrance with a block pavier finish, this also incorporates a circular raised planter with a single mature Silver Maple. The forecourt at the entrance to the site is currently fenced with security railings and gates. This is a reaction to unauthorised access and anti-social behaviour that has to some extent blighted the area.

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford



Image 2: Buildings identified



Image2: Main entrance

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford



The frontage of the building is further enclosed by temporary Heras style security fencing.



Image3: Covered Walkway

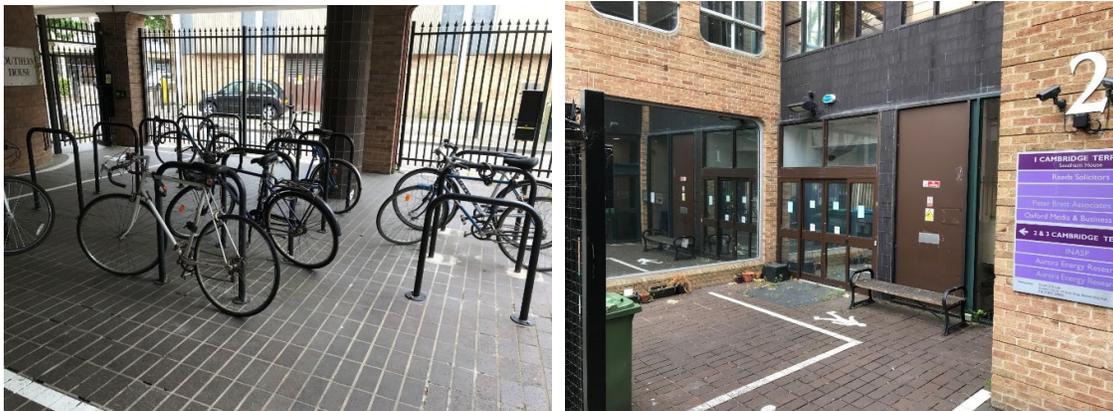


Image4: Forecourt & Undercroft

## 3. Site Analysis

A planning application 17/00619/FUL was approved in 2017 to infill the remaining undercroft areas with matching railings. This was never implemented.



Image 5. Proposed Southern elevation from the consented 2017 application

Although the previously approved scheme would have created an ‘unbroken’ frontage to the building making building 1 far more secure than the current arrangement, it did not address the problem that fencing the buildings off from the street creates an unwelcoming and somewhat ‘fortress’ appearance.

The previous scheme in structural terms would have represented a light touch to the building fabric, but did nothing to enhance either the buildings relationship to the street or the appearance of the buildings from an architectural viewpoint.

The fundamental problems that need to be addressed are the set back of the main entrance from the street which creates an unsurveilled area especially out of hours and the undercroft and covered walkway which offer shelter inviting unauthorised use.

The original 1960’s design would have envisaged these spaces as adding to the function of the buildings as a whole, creating an open forecourt and providing almost a cloistered architectural element. The concept of fencing them off would represent the complete opposite from the function for which they were intended.

At present, the entrance courtyard has become an unused and uninviting space and access to buildings 1 & 2 in particular has become more convoluted, these two factors make the commercial aspect of the office buildings less appealing to potential tenants.

## 4. Proposal

The site lies within the central Oxford conservation area and as such due consideration must be given to how the proposed scheme will impact on both the building and its setting.

The proposal has been formulated around guiding principles:

- Where change is required existing design cues should be deployed to inform the design;
- Where new openings are required they should be sympathetic to the language of the building;
- The building must provide an attractive useable environment fit for modern requirements to ensure its on-going viability.
- The design should enhance the security of the building without detracting from the original built form.

These design objectives can be broken down further in to considering:

- Whether there is evidence of the original design;
- The quality of the alterations relative to the significance of the original design;
- The magnitude of the impact of alternations on significance;

It is proposed to infill the covered walkway running along building 1, as has been argued previously, to retain the covered walkway would necessitate either fencing it off entirely or accepting its vulnerability to attracting anti-social behaviour.

Working from the eastern side, the first opening would be entirely filled with matching brickwork to complete the curved corner to the ground. The next opening would contain a glazed entrance and side lights and the next a dwarf wall with brick cill and large glazed window. A new pillar with filleted capital would be constructed in matching brick to allow for another dwarf wall and window. This arrangement would sympathetically resemble the existing language of the building, be constructed from visually matching materials and create a seamless frontage onto the street.

The large undercroft contains cycle storage and as cycle storage numbers will need to be retained it is proposed that the cycle store is enclosed to create a secure storage area. This will be by means of dark stained vertically arranged timber palisade supported by a metal framework.

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford



Image 6. Proposed image of timber palisade infill creating secure cycle store

This material and treatment has been chosen to create a visually semi-permeable boundary that follows the line of the building above, whilst being relatively simple allowing the existing building form to dominate. The secure cycle store will be accessible from a timber gate set in the southern end or via a door in the building. These entrances will also form a secondary means of escape.



Image 7. Proposed two tier cycle storage rack

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford



Cycle storage is proposed as two tier racks allowing the space to be used more efficiently.

A length of new matching brick finished wall will bracket the timber infill, this will also create an area where bins can be stored neatly between it and a small timber fence.

The main entrance into the buildings is currently set back 5.5m from the back of pavement, if the security railings were removed and this arrangement retained it would create an area with very poor natural surveillance, (especially out of hours). This was the very reason the security railings were installed in the first place. It is proposed to create a single storey lobby which effectively brings the building line forward to 3.5m from back of pavement.



Image 7. Proposed image of single storey extension

Although relatively modest in size, the addition of the single storey element would greatly enhance the natural surveillance in this area. The two following images demonstrate how the extension would bring forward sight lines. The construction of the extension would allow for the security fencing to be removed because the potential for anti-social behaviour would be greatly reduced, therefore opening up the building frontage to the street.

In order to accommodate the extension the existing window on the eastern flank wall will have to be resized. It is proposed that the new area of infill wall will be in matching brickwork with a filleted to corner to approximate the existing window form.

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford



Image 8. Approach from the west



Image 9. Approach from the east

The lobby extension will be a lightweight construction requiring minimal new footings fronted with aluminium framed glazing and doors with a metal fascia over. The roof will be a single ply system with a hidden gutter discharging into the existing stormwater drainage. This arrangement has been chosen to minimise works to the forecourt area in line with the findings in the Arboricultural report, which comes to the conclusion that the rooting system for the tree must be somewhat unusual and therefore keeping any digging in this area to a minimum would be the most suitable approach to ensuring that the tree is not damaged.



Image 10. Aerial view of the lobby extension

The new lobby will offer the opportunity to create a single access to all the buildings, this will be achieved by creating an opening in the curved brick wall to the right of the entrance. A technical note from a structural engineer accompanies this application.

The existing walls that form the eastern and southern extents of the undercroft are proposed to be demolished and new external walls constructed reducing the undercroft area. This will allow for a connecting corridor to be created between the lobby and building 1 and direct communication between the corridor and the southern extent of the ground floor of building 1. A structural inspection accompanies this application which concludes that the existing walls do not form a part of the concrete framed structural support of the building.

## Heating & Lighting

The single storey extension would not require heating and its inclusion into the building envelope would act as an airlock reducing heat loss thereby improving the thermal performance of the building. By providing a more obvious main entrance it is assumed that most occupants of the buildings would predominately use this entrance further improving the thermal performance by reducing the number of times that doors directly connecting the office spaces to the street were opened.

New lighting would be in the form of LED luminaires with minimal discreet down lighting in the forecourt space timed to activate at dusk with the potential for PIR activation during out of hours.

The secure cycle storage would be illuminated from soffit mounted LED luminaires on a timer system to only be lit when required.



Image 11. Discreet forecourt lighting

## 5. Heritage Appraisal

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 defines conservation areas as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’

Historic England Design Guidance (Extract)

- Evaluation of the area's defining characteristics (such as that developed through a conservation area appraisal)
- Respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials' (NPPF).

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford

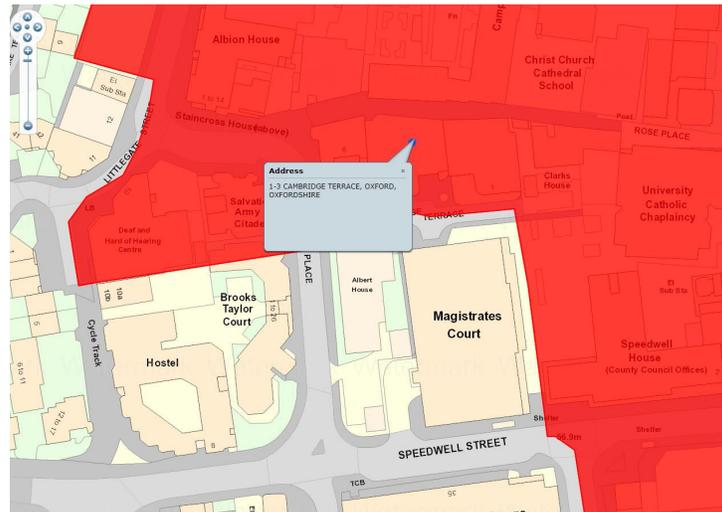


Image 12. Conservation area map with site identified

The built form running the northern length of Cambridge terrace is consistent in style, material finish and detailing. The proposal seeks to match materials, finishes and detailing such as the filleted corners of the windows and aluminium framed glazing.



Image 13. Northern side of Cambridge Terrace

Infilling of the covered walkway will match the character of 4-6 Cambridge terrace and not require a change in building language but rather a continuation of the language already established.

# Design and Access Statement

1-3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford



The new boundary treatment for the undercroft is a departure from the existing language, but its dark colouring, semi-permeability and simple form makes it subordinate to the primary building form and language and will retain a visual reference to the upper storeys over-sailing the ground floor.



Image 14. Undercroft

The extension to the ground floor lobby is proposed in matching dark colouring with a glazed entrance that closely resembles the colouring and design of the existing façade. It is designed to extend no further than the curved element to the east of the entrance thereby making it as visually unobtrusive as possible.

All of the proposed design has been carefully considered to cause minimal visual impact to the existing built form and also to minimise potential impact on the existing tree which is an important feature in the frontage of buildings 1-3.

The major enhancement to the overall street scene will be the removal of all the security railings and fencing. The result will better match the original design intent of the buildings to be open to the street along their length.

The removal of the railings will furthermore create a more welcoming entrance to buildings 1-3 not only enhancing the street scene but improving the commercial desirability of the offices, thereby improving their long term sustainable usage in line with modern requirements.



Image 15. Linking Facade

## 6. Access

Access to the building(s) will be greatly improved by the removal of the security fencing. The creation of a central point of access for all the buildings will have security benefits by making an active frontage at the entrance. Buildings 1 and 3 would still benefit from alternative entrances, but it would be expected that the new entrance would become the primary access for both staff and visitors. There will be opportunities to control access both into the lobby and into each building. Emergency exit from the buildings would also be improved by the removal of the security fencing.

## 7. Conclusion

The proposal has been designed with careful reference and respect for the context of the historic and architectural importance of the buildings within the Central Oxford Conservation Area, but with a clear acknowledgement of contemporary requirements.

The proposed works will combine to create a seamless urban frontage along the buildings southern elevation, removing the requirement for security fencing along the boundary whilst still maintaining a street frontage that deters anti-social behaviour by offering better natural surveillance and the removal of unauthorised access to temporary shelter.

The works will overall constitute an enhancement to the conservation area.