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SPECIALIST PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

Planning , Heritage, Design and Access Statement

The Head of the River, Folly Bridge,
Oxford, OX1 4LB

Internal refurbishments to both Wharf House and the former
warehouse, external air conditioning unit to front of former
warehouse, and new improved bin storage to rear of former
warehouse

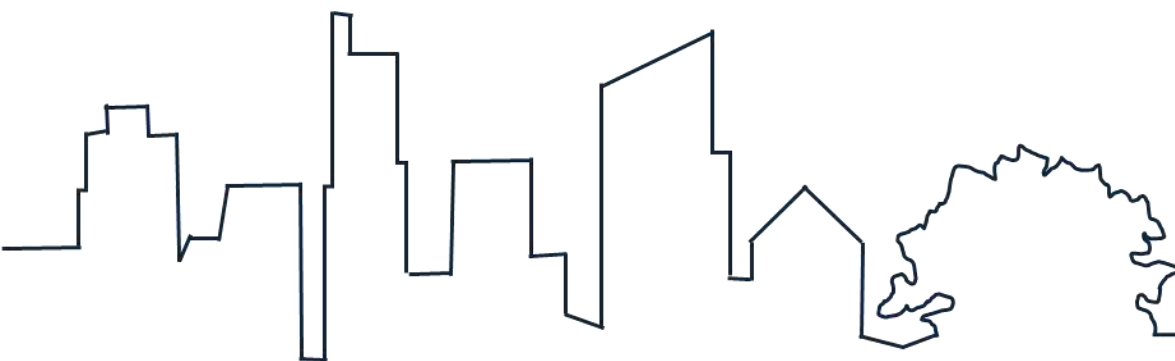
SEPTEMBER 2023

Walsingham Planning

Bourne House
Cores End Road
Bourne End
Buckinghamshire
SL8 5AR

Telephone

01628 532244



bourne.end@walsingplan.co.uk
www.walsinghamplanning.co.uk

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Walsingham Planning has been instructed by Fuller Smith and Turner PLC to submit these applications for planning permission and listed building consent at The Head of the River, Folly Bridge, St Aldates, Oxford.
- 1.2 This Planning, Heritage, Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of applications for planning permission and for listed building consent, which seek approval for refurbishments and air conditioning to guest rooms in Wharf House and the former warehouse, enclosed bin storage to the rear, and external air conditioning unit to the front of the former warehouse.
- 1.3 Whilst it is noted that listed building consent is not required for all works, all are included in this statement for completeness.
- 1.4 The proposed upgrade works will allow for the continued preservation of the listed building Wharf House, the curtilage listed former warehouse, and for this preservation to be completed in a sensitive manner appropriate to the buildings and their significance as heritage assets.
- 1.5 The proposed works will also improve the functionality and viability of the premises by providing a more comfortable temperature environment within the guest bedrooms which will be compatible with warm weather. This will assist the wider site in sustaining its use as a heritage asset, whilst preserving its significance as a heritage asset and also improving its viability as visitor and guest accommodation recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.6 This statement will describe the site and surroundings, will include a review of its planning history and relevant designations, and will describe the proposed development and assess the proposals against relevant planning policy in terms of heritage impacts and planning impacts.
- 1.7 These application submissions comprise a comprehensive set of plans, together with the following supporting documents which should be read alongside this Planning, Heritage, Design & Access Statement.

Application Form

Pro-map Site Location Plan 1:1250

Existing terrace block plan 1063-07 Rev B – The Jackdaw Company

Existing east elevation SB9220 - MBS – Survey Base Precision Digital Surveyors

Existing north elevation SB9220 – MBS - Survey Base Precision Digital Surveyors
Existing west elevation SB9220 – MBS - Survey Base Precision Digital Surveyors
Existing south1 elevation SB9220 - MBS - Survey Base Precision Digital Surveyors
Existing south 2 elevation SB9220 – MBS - Survey Base Precision Digital Surveyors
Existing ground floor plan bedrooms 1063-09 Rev A – The Jackdaw Company
Existing first floor plan bedrooms 1063-10 Rev A – The Jackdaw Company
Existing second floor plan bedrooms 1063-11 Rev A – The Jackdaw Company
Proposed ground floor plan 1063-04 Rev D – The Jackdaw Company
Proposed first floor plan 1063-05 Rev C – The Jackdaw Company
Proposed second floor plan 1063-06 Rev C – The Jackdaw Company
Existing and proposed condensers elevations 1063-PL.C01 Rev C – The Jackdaw Company
Existing and proposed bin enclosure elevations 1063-PLB02 Rev A – The Jackdaw Company
Bin enclosure details 1063-PLB03 – The Jackdaw Company
Toshiba Air Conditioning – VRF Data Sheet – Toshiba
Continuous Line Acoustic Louvres specification document – Caice
Noise Impact Assessment Revision 01 dated 11/09/2023 – Scotch Partners
CIL Form

- 1.8 It is concluded that the proposals would accord with the Development Plan such that planning permission and listed building consent, shall be granted.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site lies on the east side of St Aldates, in the built-up area of Oxford City Centre. The site is bound to the north by residential buildings and to the east by Hertford College halls of residence. The site is also located within the Oxford Central (University and City) Conservation Area.



Above – Google Earth Image of the site

- 2.2 The building of interest is the original Grade II Listed Wharf House which is located to the north of the site and is attached at first and second floor to the former warehouse. Both buildings form an L shape which runs at right angles to the river.

- 2.3 The Wharf House building is early 19th century in origin and is finished in brick ashlar with 3 storeys, and tripartite sash windows. The Historic England listing description and further assessment of significance of this building, is included in the heritage section of this report.



Above – Front and south elevation of existing buildings and adjacent crane

- 2.4 Both buildings are currently occupied by a public house and guest accommodation. The guest rooms are located on the first and second floors of the former warehouse with the public house at ground floor, and the original Wharf House building is entirely formed of guest rooms.



Above – Rear elevation of original Wharf House building and access to the public house from the private access side road which bounds the site to the north



Above – Front elevation of existing Wharf House building and existing beer garden

- 2.5 The existing beer garden is enhanced by planters which provide a visual break between the stepped levels. These planters located along the stepped level of the beer garden will be retained in the proposals which will continue to enhance the site's landscape value.

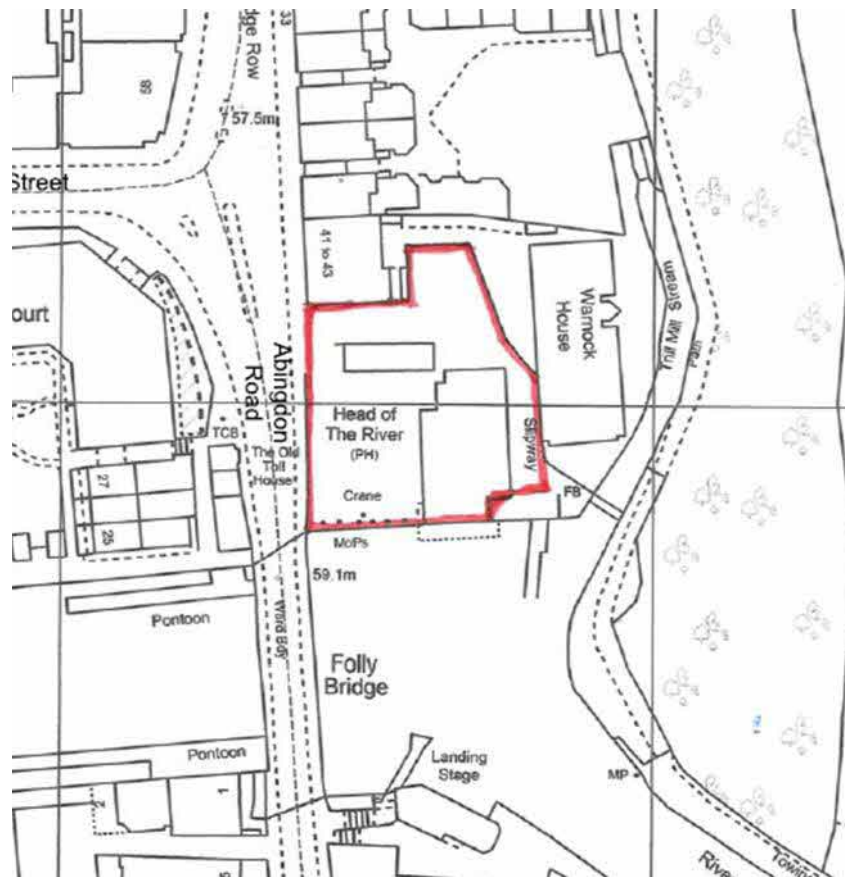


Above – Front beer garden of Head of the River public house

- 2.6 To the west of the site is the adjacent Grade II Listed Folly Bridge which runs north to south across the river.
- 2.7 To the rear of the former warehouse is a single storey extension with pitched roof which was built to accommodate the kitchen areas of the ground floor of the public house following planning permission as outlined in the planning history section of this report.



Above – Existing rear elevation of extended building and university halls of residence to left (east) of site, and original Wharf House to right (north) of site



Above – extract from Site Location Plan

Planning History

2.8 There is an extensive planning history on the Council's website relating to the site. The following planning permissions are relevant to this site:

22/02264/LBC – Listed building consent granted for internal redecoration of the toilets and bar area – 7 December 2022

20/01409/LBC – Listed building consent granted for restoration of pillar at Wharf House – 7 August 2020

16/03114/ADV – Advertisement consent partially granted for display of 2No. externally illuminated fascia signs, 1No. non-illuminated post mounted sign, 1No. externally-illuminated projecting sign, 1 non-illuminated wall mounted sign, 16No. external LED floodlights and 16No. external spotlights – 2 February 2017

16/02273 – Planning permission granted for formation of canopy to rear elevation – 21 October 2016

16/02274/LBC – Listed building consent granted for the formation of a canopy to rear elevation. Internal alterations including upgrading and reconfiguration of WC and kitchen facilities. Conversion of staff accommodation in listed building and first floor ancillary space of curtilage listed building to form additional 8No. hotel bedrooms – 21 October 2016

08/00078/ADV – Advertisement consent granted for 1x externally illuminated canopy sign; 7 x non-illuminated signs on replacement parasols; 2 x externally illuminated high level fascia signs; 2 x externally illuminated high level logo signs; 1 x externally illuminated archway entrance sign; 1 x externally illuminated 'A' board sign; 2 x non-illuminated corporate plaque signs; 1 x illuminated double-sided hanging sign – 6 March 2008

04/01239/ADV – Advertisement consent partially granted for high level non-illuminated signage.

03/00106/FUL – Planning permission granted for insertion of windows and doors to existing passageway to form extension to bar area – 18 March 2003

02/00223/FUL – Planning permission granted for part change of use of first and second floor from bar area and manager's flat to provide 9 additional guest bedroom (12 in total) – 21 March 2002

97/00719/NFH – Planning permission granted for change of use from snack bar to 2 rooms to let as visitor's accommodation – 2 July 1997

97/00718/L – Listed building consent granted for internal alterations to create 2 rooms to let – 2 July 1997

95/01813/NFH – Planning permission granted for single storey link corridor between Wharf House and Public House (Amended plans) – 22 March 1996

95/01812/L – Listed building consent granted for alteration of internal staircase to the Wharf House and single storey link corridor between Wharf House and single storey link corridor between Wharf House and public house – 22nd March 1996

95/01174/NFH – Planning permission granted for retention of kitchen extract duct and erection of timber cladding to kitchen extract duct at rear at Head of the River public house – 28 September 1995

95/00253/NFH – Planning permission granted for change of use of 2nd floor to managers flat & 3 letting rooms; alterations including new external staircase from 1st front patio & ramp to sitting out area; 1 storey extensions for kitchen at rear of Head of the River public house – 10 May 1995

89/00465/NFH – Planning permission granted for new entrance porch with balcony and railings above. Enclosure under existing canopy to form second entrance porch at Head of the River public house – 5 July 1989

85/00269/AH – Planning permission granted for signs comprising 2 No. 'Head of the River' gold letters, 2 Halls Brewer company logos on canvas awning 8 retractable canvas awnings and painted hanging sign at Head of the River public house (Amended plans) – 5 June 1985

84/00664/NFH – Planning permission granted for interior retrofit, with new balcony above entrance doors, new canopies above windows and other external alterations at Head of the River public house (Amended plans) – 15 April 1985

84/00421/L – Listed building consent granted for erection of canopy over main entrance, extraction louvre on north elevation, two timber pennants fixed to wall adjacent to entrance and advertisement on canvas canopy at Wharf House – 1 September 1983

83/00422/NFH – Planning permission granted for erection of a canopy over main entrance at Wharf House – 1 September 1983

83/00423/AH – Planning permission granted for two timber pennants fixed to wall adjacent to entrance and advertisement on canvas canopy at Wharf House – 1 September 1983

76/00363/AH – Planning permission granted for change of use and conversion from warehouse to Head of the River public house – 7 July 1976

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposals seek planning permission, and listed building consent for refurbishments and air conditioning to the guest rooms in Wharf House and the former warehouse, enclosed bin storage to the rear, and an external air conditioning unit housed within a louvred and timber surround, to the front of the former warehouse.
- 3.2 The proposed internal works will provide an upgraded, climate controlled, and modernised appearance to the guest bedrooms, so that the accommodation can regain its value and customer base and functionality as a welcoming and comfortable environment for its business and leisure visitors in all seasons.
- 3.3 The Head of the River public house is widely acknowledged as one of the best pubs and places to stay in Oxford. The proposed refurbishments and air conditioning within the guest bedrooms will retain and enhance the attraction of the guest accommodation for the purposes of leisure and for business use and will continue to attract new and existing visitors to the renowned historic core of Oxford City.
- 3.4 The proposed bin storage enclosures will ensure that the venue is upgraded in a way which does not detract from the overall design of the scheme or the surrounding area, and has been designed in a way which will be better integrated into development.

4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 This section of the statement sets out the relevant planning policies at national and local level, as well as any other documents which are material planning considerations.
- 4.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that “ *if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”. Any issue that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration.

Local Development Plan

- 4.3 The Oxford Local Plan was adopted 8 June 2020 and forms the Local Plan for the area. Policies and site allocations from the previous Core Strategy have been saved in the new Local Plan which forms the most up to date plan for the city.
- 4.4 Also of relevance is the Oxford Central (City and University) Conservation Area Draft Character study.
- 4.5 The Local Plan states that the wealth of historic and architectural assets in Oxford is a significant draw for investors, visitors and those looking to locate in the city. Beyond the world renowned historic core the city is made up of a series of communities with clear and distinct identities and character which binds all those who live there.
- 4.6 Policy S1 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions jointly which mean that applications for sustainable development can be approved where possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 4.7 Policy DH1 states that a planning permission will only be granted for development of high-quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness. Proposals must be designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development, set out in Appendix 6.1. Appendix 6.1 of the plan states that proposals should respond to local context by identifying features, opportunities and constraints of the site.

- 4.8 Policy DH3 states that planning permission will be granted for development which respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's unique historic environment (above and below ground), and which responds positively to the significant character of and distinctiveness of the heritage asset and locality. For all planning decisions for planning permission which affect the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight shall be given to the conservation of that asset where it contributes to the significance or appreciation of that significance.
- 4.9 The policy states that any application which may affect the significance of a heritage asset, either directly or indirectly where it might be within its setting, should be accompanied by a heritage assessment which describes the asset and its significance and also includes an assessment of the impact of the development proposed on that asset's significance, with full regard to the relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan where applicable. The policy goes on to confirm that the heritage assessment shall provide an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset including recognition for its contribution to the quality of life of current and future generations and the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits it may bring, ensuring that the development and design of the proposal has taken any harm to significance into account and accordingly minimised this harm, and where harm is identified this harm shall be properly and accurately assessed and understood and that measures are integrated into the proposal to minimise mitigate or reduce or compensate this harm.
- 4.10 Policy DH7 seeks to ensure that development including bin stores and external servicing should be considered from the start of the design process, and that it should be provided in a way which does not detract from the overall design of the scheme or the surrounding area. In addition, external servicing features should be integrated into development.

Relevant Legislation

- 4.11 Of relevance is Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which sets out the statutory duty of Local Authorities to ensure that in considering whether to grant listed building consent, regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special or architectural interest which it possesses. In addition, the Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance of Heritage Assets (2019), is of note and further explained in section 5 of this statement.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. A revised version of the NPPF was published in July 2021, and various updates have followed the latest of which was in September 2023, with minor amendments incorporated. The NPPF is supplemented by the (ever evolving) Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), first published in March 2014.
- 4.13 Chapter 2 of the NPPF: *Achieving Sustainable Development* indicates that the “*presumption in favour of sustainable development*” is at the heart of the NPPF. It also indicates that sustainable development has three interrelated objectives, economic, social, and environmental.
- 4.14 Chapter 6 of the NPPF: *Building a Strong, competitive economy* states (Paragraph 81) that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 4.15 Chapter 8 of the NPPF: *Promoting healthy and safe communities* (Paragraphs 92 and 93) state that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction including opportunities for meetings between people, and should ensure that established facilities are able to develop and modernise whilst being retained for the benefit of a community.
- 4.16 Chapter 12 of the NPPF: *Achieving well-designed places* (Paragraph 126) states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve..” and goes on to state (Paragraph 130) that “...*planning policies should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of development...*”. The same chapter also states (Paragraph 197) that in determining planning 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.

- 4.17 Chapter 16 of the NPPF: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (Paragraph 189), states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and 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.
- 4.18 Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The paragraph also states that the level of detail included should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Paragraph 199 of this chapter states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater this weight shall be. This is irrespective of whether there is any potential harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 4.19 The Framework (Paragraph 202) states that any harm to, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
- 4.20 The Framework (Paragraph 206) states that “*Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance*” and that “*Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably*”.
- 4.21 The Historic England Conservation Principles guidance note (April 2008), and the Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance of Heritage Assets (2019), states that significance is what conservation of an asset sustains, and where appropriate enhances, in managing change to a heritage asset. This guidance also states that understanding of significance must therefore stem from the interest of the asset itself, and that a description of the significance of the asset must be sufficient but no more than necessary for understanding the impact of the proposal upon this significance.

5 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The proposals are assessed in line with both National Policies and the Oxford City Council Local Plan Policies. In accordance with these policies and with Guidance Notes provided by Historic England, this section of the report describes the significance of the asset and provides an understanding of the impacts of the proposal on this significance.

Heritage Significance

- 5.2 Wharf House, is thought to be of early 19th century origin, and is Grade II listed. The building's listing description from Historic England's website records is as follows.

ST ALDATE'S STREET 1. 1485 (East Side) Wharf House (North-west wing only)
 SP 5105 NW 12/816 1.12.71. II 2. Early C19. Brick, ashlar fronted. 3 storeys, 5 bays, 4 windows and door, on the ground floor. 4-panelled door with semi-circular fanlight. Tripartite sash either side of the door, the rest are sashes with glazing bars. Hipped slate roof.

Above – Historic England's listing description for the main building Wharf House

- 5.3 The site was once known as St Aldates Yard, belonging to Isaac King, with origins dating back to the 17th century. In 1858 the site was taken over by Salter's Steamers, a family of boat makers and prominent citizens of Oxford.
- 5.4 The former warehouse which sits to the east of the site and is attached to Wharf House at first and second floor; is constructed of brick and faced with ashlar and whilst it is not included in the listing description; is thought to have been constructed around the same period.
- 5.5 The former warehouse, whilst not included in the above listing description, is thought to be of evidential, historic and aesthetic significance as part of the historic use of the site. The former warehouse is faced in the same stone as the statutory listed Wharf House and its matching architectural design is an expression of the original owner's wealth, culture and ethos at the time of the building's construction. A crane is located adjacent to the riverside which was once used to lift materials from the river.

- 5.6 The site including both Wharf House and the former warehouse are thought to provide an important gateway to the city and the former warehouse due to its aesthetic and architectural value is considered, to be curtilage listed.
- 5.7 The site has been occupied by the public house since 1977 when the former boatyard was converted to the pub's landscaped beer garden. The name 'Head of the River' by which the pub goes is taken from the rowing boat which is in front at the end of each day of the four-day University 'Summer Eights' races.
- 5.8 The site is also located within the Oxford Central (University and City) Conservation Area. Oxford City Council's record for the conservation area states that the historic centre of Oxford forms one of the masterpieces of European architectural heritage, with its infant University rising in the 12th century and growing into a major force of the city's life. The record also states that The Saxon's rigid street layout and the fixed line of the 13th century defensive walls, together with the floodable river valleys, largely determined the plan of the historic centre as it is today.
- 5.9 Heritage significance as defined by the Historic England Conservation Principles guidance note (April 2008), can be separated into the following values:

Evidential –the potential for a place to yield evidence about past human activity

Historical – the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place of interest

Aesthetic – how people may draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place

And communal value - the meaning of place for those who relate to it, and for whom it figures in their experiences or memories

Heritage Principle of Development

- 5.10 The use of the site as a public house and the wider St Aldates area which is well established by virtue of its location close to the University buildings and city centre, provides a well-known draw of visitors to this part of the city which will remain. The proposals will enhance the standard of the guest accommodation for business and leisure visitors alike and will foster an improved appreciation of the historic character of this part of St Aldates.

- 5.11 The use of the refurbished bedrooms and their more comfortable climate-controlled environment will promote tourism and engagement of local communities, attracting visitors and supporting the long-term viable use of the public house. The manner in which the air conditioning and upgrade works to the guest rooms has been evolved through its design approach, will avoid any intrusion into historic fabric and there will be no harm or loss of historic fabric as a result of these upgrade works.
- 5.12 The improved bin storage arrangement will allow the public house to operate in a streamlined and more practical manner and will tidy up the existing rear servicing area.
- 5.13 Furthermore, the air conditioning unit will be sited in the same position as the existing timber store and housed within a sound proofed louvred enclosure, which will thereby contribute to the building's presence along this part of St Aldates by respecting the character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings, including the setting of the former yard itself, along with the Grade II Listed Wharf House, the curtilage listed former warehouse, and the adjacent Grade II Listed Folly Bridge.
- 5.14 As such, the proposal would not harm or adversely impact upon the significance or special interest of the wider site as a heritage asset, nor the significance or special interest of the Oxford Central (City and University) Conservation Area, for the reasons outlined below.

Impact of the Proposal on Significance

- 5.15 In line with paragraph 194, and Paragraph 199 of the National Framework, it is noted that the level of detail included in this heritage assessment shall be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of these assets. The National Framework also states here 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 this weight shall be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to less than substantial, or total loss of its significance.

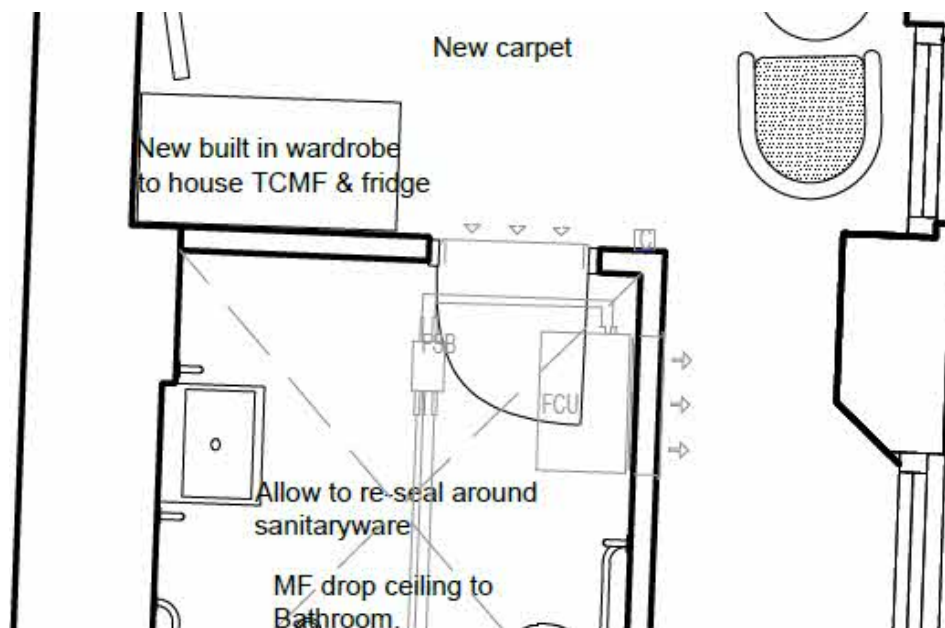
Refurbishments

- 5.16 The proposed refurbishments to Wharf House and the former warehouse will be aesthetically pleasing and will include the replacement of existing blinds and lighting to each of the guest bedrooms, in a manner which will have no impact on the historic fabric of the buildings, and will therefore ensure no harm to either building's historic fabric. Existing fittings will be used

in all instances, and there will be no intrusion into historic fabric as a result of the guest room upgrades. Furthermore, there will be no external alterations as a result of the refurbishments and therefore there will be no change to the external appearance of either building resulting from the internal refurbishments.

Air conditioning – Wharf House

- 5.17 The proposed air conditioning units will use flow selector boxes and ducted fan coils in the room voids above the ceiling, as demonstrated in the Drawings which support this Planning, Heritage, Design & Access Statement.



Above – Wharf House extract from bedroom 16 - proposed position of ducting and pipe runs at ground floor

- 5.18 The ceiling in room No 16 within Wharf House will be lowered to accommodate the fan coils within a void as indicated in the plan above, with fridge pipes running from the ceiling into the new void and air conditioning unit which will be placed at high level within the new suspended ceiling of the en-suite, as indicated in the example above.



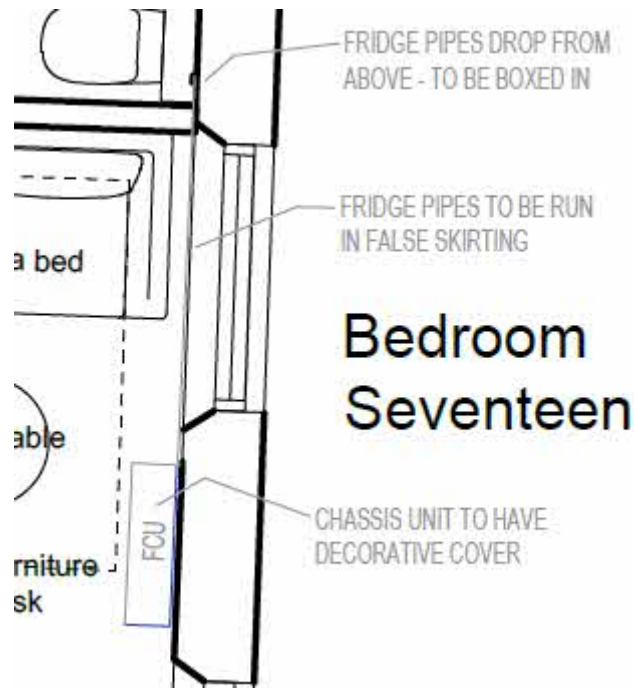
Above – Existing high ceiling within the guest room No 16 above dado on external wall of en-suite bathroom

- 5.19 For bedroom 15 of Wharf House also at ground floor, the same ceiling in the ensuite will be lowered to house the air conditioning, as is the approach for both rooms at ground floor in Wharf House.



Above – Existing ensuite ceiling and view from ensuite looking into guest room No 15

- 5.20 The evolution of the design and location of the pipe runs and cooling systems in these locations has been informed by the heritage context of the site, reducing the intrusion into existing fabric and utilising existing heights of guest rooms to avoid intrusion into original ceilings which has created the lowered ceiling approach as described above.
- 5.21 For bedroom 17 within Wharf House which is located at first floor, ducted fan coil units will be placed at low level with skirting boxed unit to cover the pipe runs to run along the outside wall.



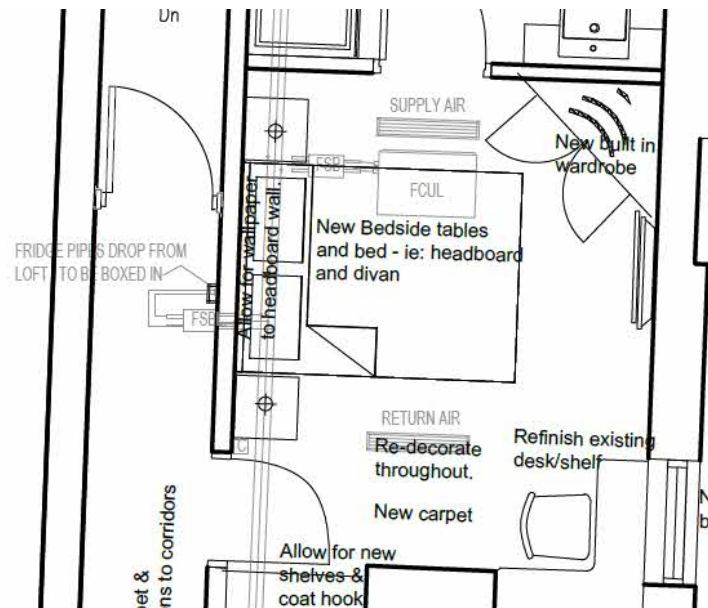
Above – Extract from proposed first floor plan of Wharf House - bedroom 17

5.22 For bedroom 18 within Wharf House also at first floor, the high level fan coil unit approach will be used and pipe run will be through a proposed false beam across the shared corridor space as shown in the plan extract below.



Above – Extract from proposed first floor plan of Wharf House and showing fan coil and pipe run positions of bedroom 18

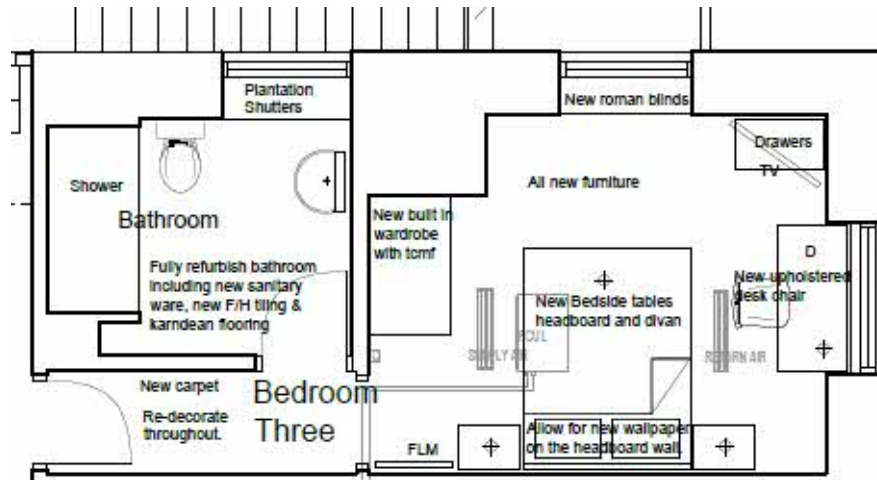
5.23 For bedroom 19 within Wharf House, a fan coil unit will be located at ceiling level in the centre of the bedroom with pipe runs through the proposed lowered ceiling which will apply to the approach used for bedrooms 20 and 21, also located at this level in Wharf House.



Above – Extract from Wharf House proposed first floor plan indicating dropped ceiling and fan coil units within proposed dropped ceiling, same approach used for all bedrooms at this level.

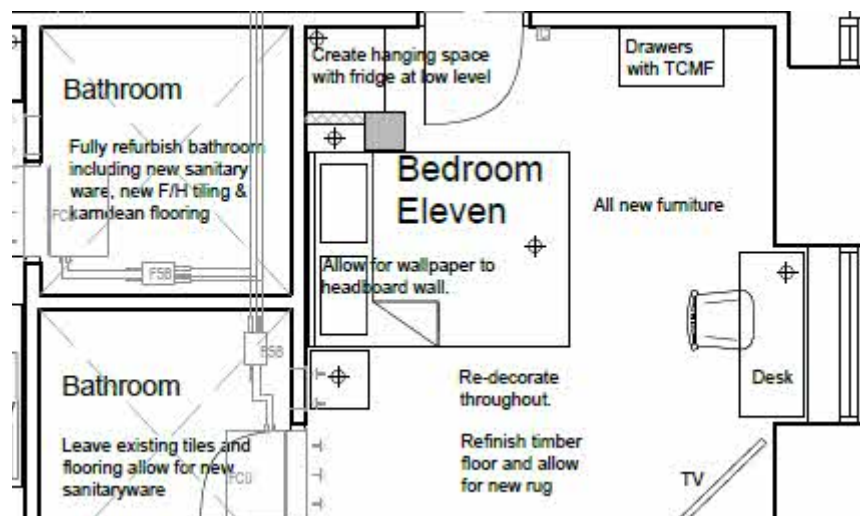
Air Conditioning – Former Warehouse

- 5.24 It is noted that the former warehouse is of historic significance and curtilage listed and therefore the design approach used for the air conditioning and refurbishments here has been carefully selected with attention to minimal intrusion into existing fabric.
- 5.25 For ease of reference, please note that bedrooms 1 – 6 are located at second floor within the former warehouse, and bedrooms 7 – 12 are located at first floor .
- 5.26 For bedrooms 1 - 6 at second floor, air conditioning pipe runs will come from the existing loft space with all air conditioning units attached to existing modern ceilings, as indicated in the example plan extract below.



Above – Second floor plan extract showing proposed location of fan coil and pipe runs for bedroom No 3

5.27 For bedrooms 7 – 12 at first floor, ceilings within the en-suite bathrooms will be lowered to accommodate the fan coils within room voids as indicated in the plan below, with fridge pipes running from the ceiling into the new void as is the approach at ground floor within Wharf House.



Above - First floor plan extract showing proposed location of fan coil and pipe runs for bedroom No 11

Proposed External Air Conditioning Unit

5.28 Since the proposals for the internal refurbishment upgrades have been evolved by our clients, work has been undertaken to ensure the air conditioning units and their housing can be

located in the most suitable and sustainable position and in a way in which does not detract from the significance of the site and its heritage value.

- 5.29 The area within which the external air conditioning unit will be located currently comprises a store room for the public house. The siting and scale of their housing will match the existing store and thereby will result in no adverse harm to the setting of the Wharf House, the former warehouse or the wider site.

Bin Store Improvements

- 5.30 The proposed bin store housings will be located to the rear of the existing single storey rear extension, and therefore with this and along with their sensitive scale and design, there would be no adverse impact on the setting of the Wharf House, the former warehouse or the wider site as a result of these improvements.

Summary

- 5.31 The proposed works will help sustain the viable use of the Head of the River public house and its ancillary guest accommodation, as an asset of tourism upgrading the existing guest accommodation for visitors to the city so that its evidential, historical, and aesthetic value can continue to be appreciated.
- 5.32 The proposal will also sustain the site's evidential and historic value, assisting the public house's ancillary accommodation and its viability and vitality during the summer months when the University 'Summer Eights' races take place.
- 5.33 The proposed refurbishments and air conditioning will assist in modernising the public house and the building's use would not be altered and will remain as a community and visitor facility with ancillary overnight accommodation which will continue to add value to the site and its buildings as assets of historical significance.
- 5.34 The proposed upgrade works will ensure that the guest accommodation can continue to operate and provide a favourable environment for visitors, and a make a positive contribution to its long-term vitality and sustainability as a heritage asset.
- 5.35 The proposal would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Wharf House and of the former warehouse and the elements of the site which make a positive contribution to their setting in line with Paragraphs 194, 197 and 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.36 The proposed external works will also contribute to the vitality and community of Oxford City and the wider community functions of Oxford as a town centre. The proposals will not harm the special interest of the listed building and would improve the facilities of the public house whilst preserving the special character of the building. Furthermore, the proposed works would not impact upon any areas of significance mentioned in the list description by Historic England.
- 5.37 The proposed works and these applications meet with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, The Council's Policies contained in the Local Plan, and the Guidance provided by Historic England.

6 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The proposals are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development, and states that plans and decisions should approve development proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan, without delay. There are three dimensions to sustainable development, performing an economic, social and environmental role.

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The proposal will promote sustainable development by supporting the building's continued use as a public house and increasing its customer offering so that it can start to recover its customer base and offer patrons and the community a comfortable environment to enjoy following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.2 The potential of the public house and guest accommodation is not currently being maximised and these improvements will assist the public house in promoting its use as a place where visitors can stay, attracting business and leisure visitors to this vibrant, renowned and historic core of the City.

Proposed External Air Conditioning Unit

- 6.1 The size and scale of the air conditioning unit, and its sound proofed louvred surround housing, has been informed by the site's context and careful design so that the approach delivers a development of a modest height and of a modest scale so as not to adversely impact upon the surrounding area and this part of the St Aldates street scene.
- 6.2 The proposed air conditioning unit would be sited in the position of the existing store and the height and scale of the louvred sound proofed housing would be modest therefore resulting in no harm to the visual amenities of the former warehouse or the wider Head of the River public house site.
- 6.3 There is an existing store housed in timber surround located within the existing recess of the former warehouse building which can be seen in the photo below. This store will be demolished and replaced with a louvred enclosure, which will respect the site contours and building line of the former warehouse, and which will be housed within an acoustic surround louvred material and screened with an additional timber boarding.

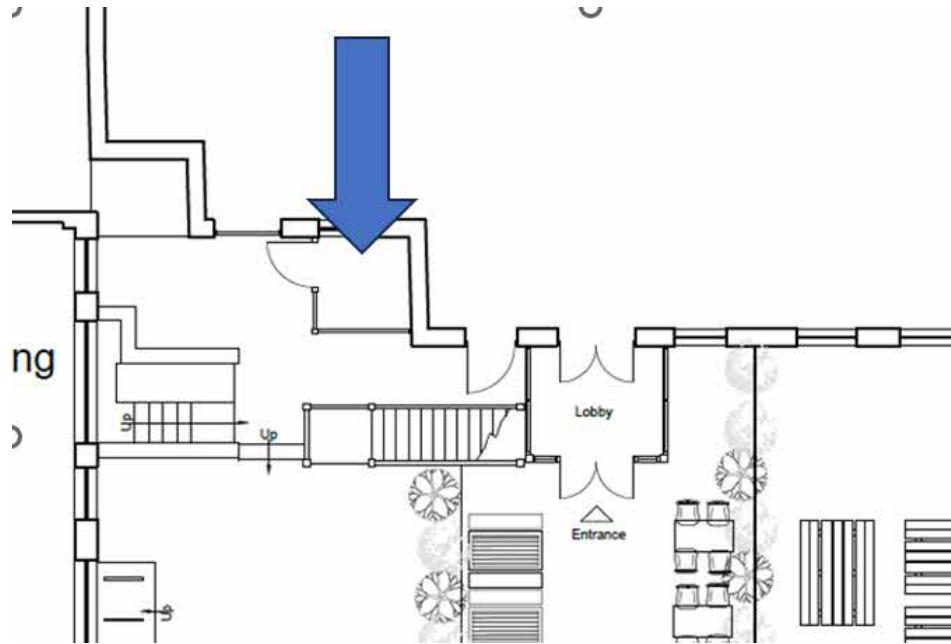


Above – Existing timber enclosure

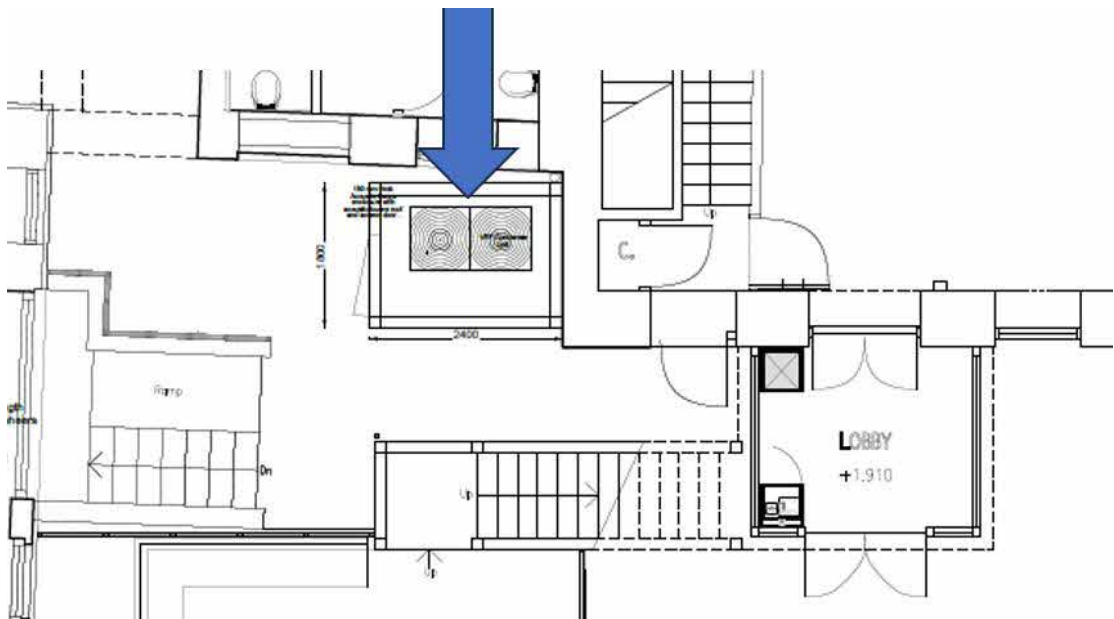


Above – Existing front wall of former warehouse and existing timber boxed enclosure within recess of front wall behind staircase

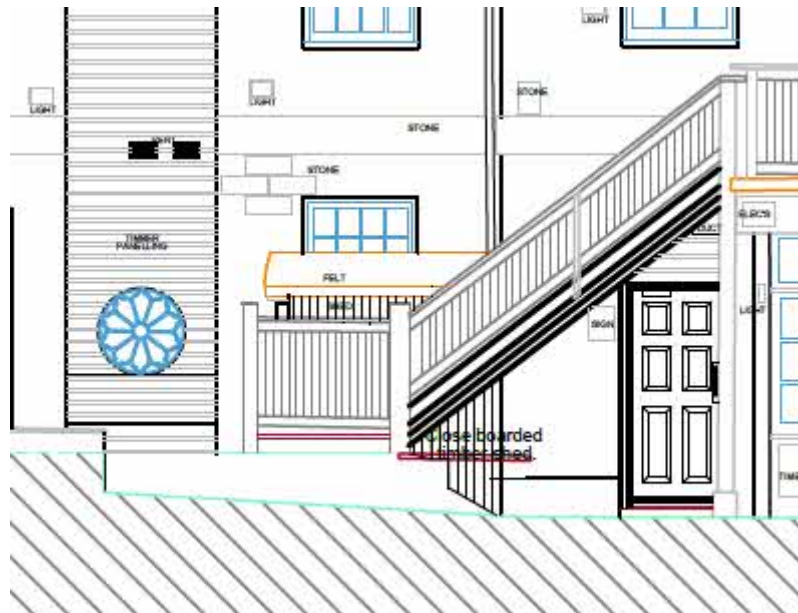
6.4 The proposed louvred enclosure will be modest in size and in height as shown in the plan extract below and will thereby present an in keeping form of development which will not harm the historic significance of the former warehouse or the wider site and the conservation area .



Above – Extract from existing site plan showing location of store in relation to the former warehouse and the front lobby of the Head of the River public house



Above – Extract from proposed ground floor plan showing the proposed louvred enclosure position in relation to the former warehouse and the front lobby of the Head of the River public house



Above – Extract from existing elevation plan showing position and scale of existing store



Above – Extract from proposed elevation plan showing position and scale of proposed louvred enclosure housing

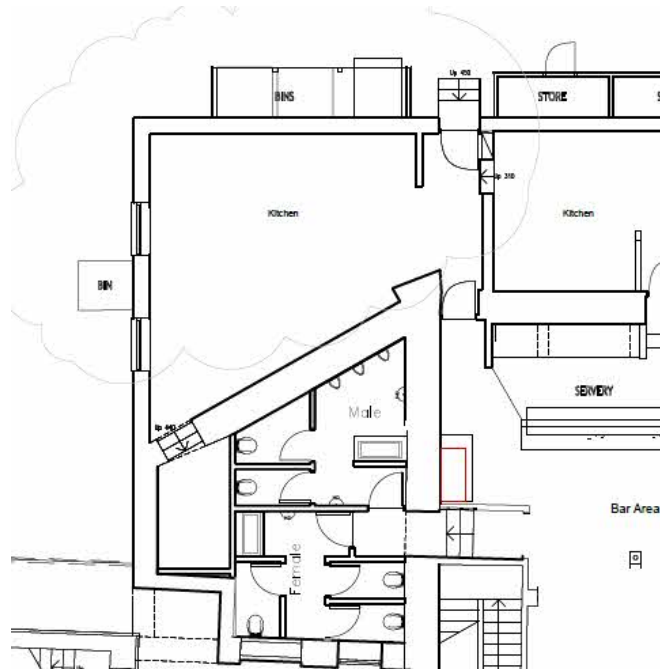
Bin Store Enclosures

- 6.5 There are three open fronted existing bin stores currently located to the rear of the public house, and one located to the side.



Above – Existing open bin store enclosures

- 6.6 The existing three would be demolished and replaced with four bin enclosures which would be fronted with timber hinged doors and boarded in timber to their roof to match the existing material of the existing single storey rear extension.



Above – Existing location of bins to the rear and the side of the existing single storey rear extension



Above – Proposed location of bin stores to the rear of the existing single storey rear extension

- 6.7 The new location of the bin stores and their enclosures will provide an improved layout and spacing from the existing, so that they will be condensed into the same position providing a neater appearance to this area.
- 6.8 Furthermore, the relocating of the bin which is sited to the side of the rear extension to the rear, will negate any inconveniences for users of the two car parking spaces located in this area.

Residential Amenity and Noise

- 6.9 These proposals are supported by a noise impact assessment which demonstrates the sound pressure measurements of the air conditioning unit in comparison to recordings of background noise levels taken at various noise sensitive receptor points around the site,

including the adjacent student accommodation to the east. The accompanying noise report details the acoustic enclosure details of the air conditioning unit and summarises that the noise produced by the unit will be of low impact when assessed in line with the British standards as described further in the report. As such the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the amenities of nearby occupiers.

Summary

- 6.10 The proposed air conditioning units, internal refurbishments, and improved bin stores, will help the venue provide a comfortable environment for its visitors, and ensure that the venue is able to develop and modernise in a sustainable way, whilst retaining its current use for, in line with the National Framework
- 6.11 The proposals would allow the public house to continue with a use consistent with its conservation, whilst making a positive contribution to the economic vitality of the community and contributing to local character and distinctiveness in line with Paragraph 197 of the National Framework.
- 6.12 The proposals would be of high-quality design, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance of Heritage Assets (2019) and would follow the aims of the Oxford City Local Plan.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for refurbishments and air conditioning units to guest rooms in Wharf House and the former warehouse, enclosed bin storage to the rear, and a new air conditioning unit to the front of the former warehouse, as shown in this statement and on the accompanying plans.
- 7.2 Design and sustainability have been considered at the forefront of these proposals and accordingly in line with the National Framework there are no reasons as to why planning and listed building consent, shall not be granted, taking into account the historic significance of the building, any impact on its setting, the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the impact of the proposal on neighbouring amenity.
- 7.3 The proposals have been carefully designed to ensure a high-quality result and would protect and enhance the character of the streetscene and the Oxford Central (University and City) Conservation Area. Furthermore, there would be no adverse impact or harm to the setting of the Grade II listed building by reason of the careful design and consideration of historic fabric and appreciation of the Wharf House itself as a Grade II listed heritage asset, appreciation of the former warehouse as a heritage asset, the former boat yard, and the wider conservation area.
- 7.4 In summary, the proposal would contribute to sustainable development, seek to ensure the viability of an important community facility, and would meet with the aims of the NPPF, and the Council's Development Plan Policies and Guidance.
- 7.5 These applications are therefore recommended to Oxford City Council for approval.