



**Kellogg College, 60-62 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PN**

## **Townscape Visual Impact Assessment**

**Dorian A. T. A. Crone BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC  
Daniel Cummins MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC  
of  
Heritage Information Ltd**

**November 2023**

Kellogg College, Oxford – Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (kitchen)

Issued November 2023

All Rights reserved.

Copyright © Heritage Information Ltd

While Copyright in this document report as a whole is vested in Dorian Crone and Daniel Cummins of Heritage Information Ltd, copyright to individual contributions regarding sections of referenced works belongs to their respective authors, and no part may be reproduced, transmitted stored in a retrieval system in any form or by any mean whether electronic, mechanical, via photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the previous consent from Dorian Crone and Daniel Cummins.

Contact details: Dorian Crone, [doriancrone@heritageinformation.co.uk](mailto:doriancrone@heritageinformation.co.uk)

## Contents

<b>1.0. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.4. Authorship	3
<b>2.0. Methodology</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0. Assessment of Context and Design</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. Summary of Townscape Context	7
3.2. Assessment of Design	8
<b>4.0. Townscape Visual Impact Assessment</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1. Viewpoint 01: Banbury Road (west side) looking South-East	10
4.2. Viewpoint 02: Banbury Road (east side) looking South East	12
<b>5.0. Conclusion</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Historic England Guidance (<i>The Setting of Heritage Assets</i>, December 2017)</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix 2: National Design Guide Characteristics (Excerpts)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix 3: The Building in Context Toolkit</b>	<b>23</b>

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The subject site is located at Kellogg College, 60-62 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PN. The site comprises a small piece of open ground laid to lawn and containing a bike shed adjacent to the west elevation of the Balfour Building – a 1980s extension added to the rear of the Grade II listed No. 60 Banbury Road. It is located within the rear garden plot of No. 58 and is separated from No. 60 by a brick boundary wall which dates from the same time as the Balfour Building. Both the Balfour Building and the brick boundary wall are not considered to be curtilage listed. The site is located within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.
- 1.2. The proposed development involves the provision of a single-storey extension to the kitchen facilities within the Balfour Building, together with access into the site from No. 60 involving an opening within the existing boundary wall. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (hereafter TVIA) should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement (October 2023 - also authored by Heritage Information) which sets out in detail the context of the site and the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the settings of nearby statutorily listed buildings.
- 1.3. The purpose of this document is to establish the visual impact of the proposed development on the surrounding townscape, on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and on the settings of nearby heritage assets. The document establishes a clear understanding of the Site and its townscape context. Key views towards the Site and the potential impacts on the townscape which would result as a consequence of the development proposals have been assessed. This assessment complies with the requirements of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021) and the online Planning Practice Guidance in respect of achieving good design and well-designed places.

### 1.4. Authorship

- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC - Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), ICOMOS UK and Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. He is a member of the City Conservation Area Advisory Committee. Dorian is also chairman and a trustee of the Drake and Dance Trusts, and a Scholar of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage/Historic England, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He has been a panel member of the John Betjeman Design Award and the City of London Heritage Award. He is a past chairman of the City Heritage Society and currently vice chairman,

and is a Design Review Panel member of the Design Council, Design: South West and Design: South East, and the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Lewisham and Wandsworth. Dorian has also been a member of the Islington Design Review Panel and has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award along with a number other public sector and commercial design awards.

- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oriel College, Oxford and a doctorate from the University of Reading. Daniel has a Master's degree in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and is a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has over 10 years' experience in providing independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients and local planning authorities. He has an excellent working knowledge of the legislative and policy framework relating to the historic environment. Daniel has extensive experience in projects involving interventions to listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, providing detailed assessments of significance and impact assessments required for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission, as well as expert witness statements for all types of appeal. He has also undertaken numerous detailed characterisation assessments in order to support and inform the design process for development projects, and which lead into producing full Townscape/Landscape Visual Impact Assessments. Daniel is also secretary and a trustee of the Drake Trust (a conservation education charity).

## 2.0. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) takes into account the good practice guidance outlined in ***Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 3rd Edition, 2013: (GLVIA3)***; this guidance pertains to urban townscape as much as landscape. The guidance does not provide a detailed universal methodology, but recognises that much of the assessment must rely on professional judgement.
- 2.2. This TVIA will also take into account relevant conservation guidance and principles, including ***The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)***, for adopting a broad approach to assessment (see Appendix 1 for an outline of the 5-Step approach described in the guidance), undertaken as a series of steps to assess the contribution of a view and landscape to the significance of heritage assets and the ability to appreciate that significance:
  - **Step 1:** Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
  - **Step 2:** Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
  - **Step 3:** Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
  - **Step 4:** Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm



- 2.3. Historic England's *Setting of Heritage Assets* observes that the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset (paragraph 10). The document also recommends that where complex issues involving views come into play in the assessment of setting – whether for the purposes of providing a baseline for plan-making or for development management – a formal views analysis may be merited.
- 2.4. Two viewpoints have been assessed in order to establish the likely visual impact of the proposed development on the local townscape (Figure 1). These specific viewpoints have been chosen where the proposed extensions from a height, bulk, scale and mass perspective might impact on the townscape and the settings of any heritage assets. Given the enclosure of the site by built form and existing boundary walls and the setting back of the subject site within the gap between Nos. 58 and 60 Banbury Road, these are the only locations where the site can be appreciated and understood within its townscape context. Consideration has been given to the historical development of the area, its physical fabric (building types and materials):
- Viewpoint 1: Banbury Road (west side) looking South East.
  - Viewpoint 2: Banbury Road (east side) looking South East.

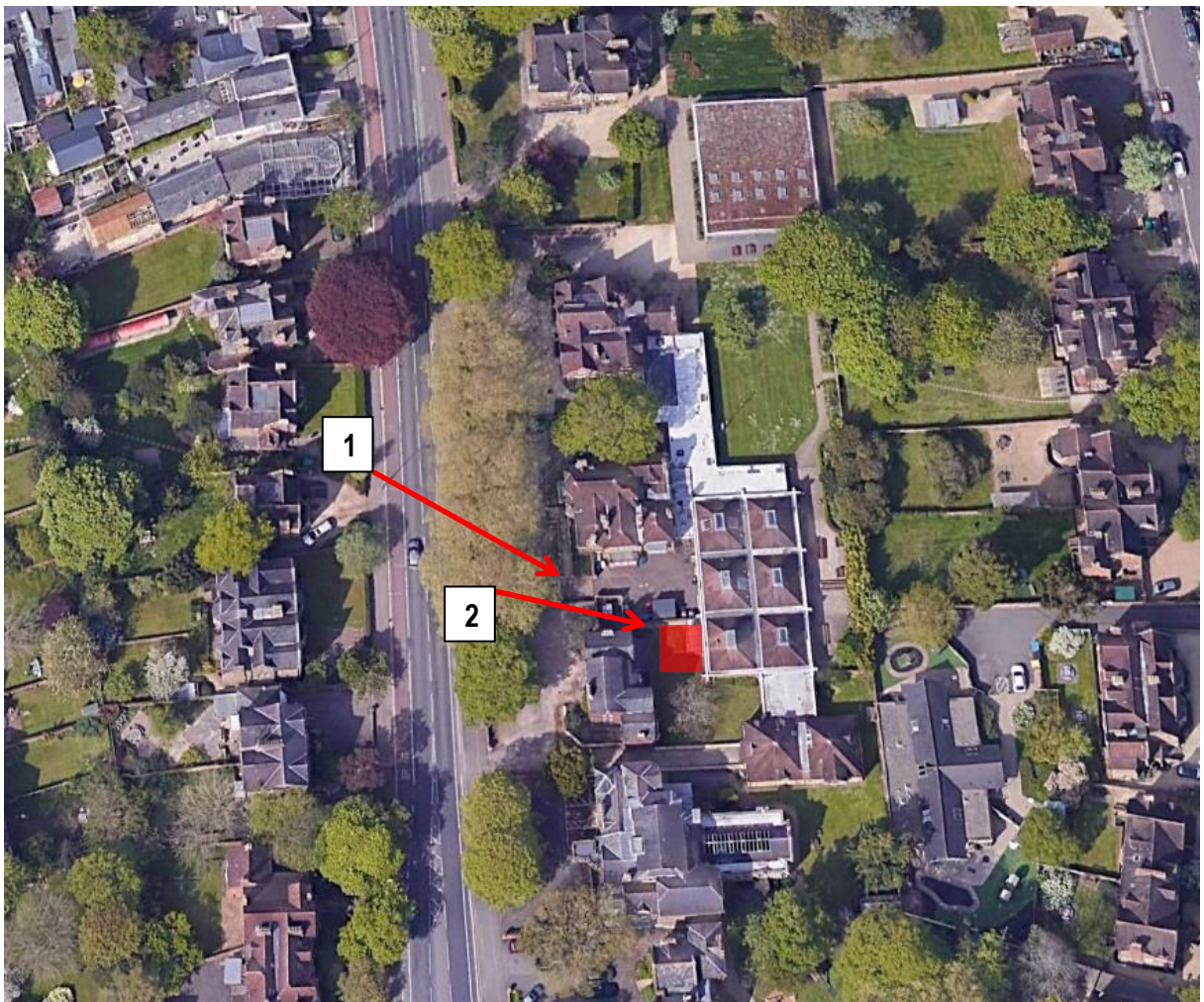


Figure 1: Plan of the views assessed in this report in relation to the Site (shaded in red).

2.5. The TVIA will firstly establish a baseline for each view against which to judge the impact of the proposed development upon the local townscape. The townscape in each view is described in terms of its constituent elements and character, including development patterns and scale (including use of materials, massing, density and enclosure), any heritage assets, green and open spaces, transport routes and uses; the way in which the townscape is experienced and by whom also forms part of the assessment. In accordance with **Steps 1 and 2** of the Historic England criteria outlined above, the baseline will identify the heritage assets and the degree to which the townscape in the view contributes to an understanding and appreciation of their setting/significance. The extent to which the proposed development has an impact on the existing townscape character is often related to the sensitivity of the townscape to change. Criteria for assessing townscape sensitivity have been based on a variety of factors and attributes which are generally agreed to influence the existing character and value of the townscape:

Sensitivity	Criteria
Very High	Strong townscape structure and a distinctive intact character exhibiting unity, richness and harmony, and a strong sense of place. Internationally or nationally recognised townscape, e.g. a World Heritage Site, extremely susceptible to minor levels of change.
High	Strong townscape structure, distinctive features and a strong sense of place with some detracting features. Nationally or regionally recognised townscape or high quality and distinctive character, e.g. a conservation area containing a high proportion of listed buildings, susceptible to change.
Medium	Recognisable (perhaps locally recognised) townscape structure with some distinctive characteristics and in a reasonable condition. May be capable of low levels of change without affecting key characteristics.
Low	Undesignated townscape of local value with few distinctive characteristics. May contain elements in a poor state of repair. Capable of moderate levels of change/enhancement.
Negligible	Weak or disjointed townscape structure, capable of high levels of change/enhancement.

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

2.6. Using the baseline, the impact of the proposed development on the views will be assessed by considering how the townscape and an appreciation and understanding of the setting and significance of identified heritage assets may be changed or affected by reason of the proposed design. For all views, aspects of townscape and design such as scale, height, mass, orientation, palette of materials and landscaping are particularly relevant. The assessment will illustrate how the proposed development might affect the elements that make up the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the townscape and its distinctive character, and how observers may be affected by any changes in the content and character of the views. The potential impacts have been categorised as:

Magnitude of Impact	Criteria
Negligible	Impacts considered to cause no material change to the visual quality of the view.
Minimal	Impacts considered to make a limited impact on a townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a minor component of the wider scene that may affect slightly the character and quality of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset.
Moderate	Impacts considered to make an appreciable difference or change the quality of the townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a recognisable new element within the scene that would noticeably have an impact on the quality and character of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset.
Substantial	Impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the townscape where there is a high sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would affect the quality and character of a valued view, the character and quality of a highly sensitive townscape, or the setting of a highly significance heritage asset.

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

- 2.7. Impacts are therefore assessed in terms of the sensitivity of the townscape affected and the magnitude of the impact or change, and whether the impact is considered to be positive, negative or neutral. If the proposed development will enhance the character and quality of the townscape, then the impact on heritage significance within the view will be deemed **positive**; however, if it fails to sustain the quality of the townscape in the view by the removal of characterising elements or add new intrusive or discordant features then the impact will be deemed **negative**. If the proposed development preserves the quality of the townscape in the view, or where positive and negative impacts are finely balanced then the impact will be deemed **neutral**.

## 3.0. ASSESSMENT OF CONTEXT AND DESIGN

### 3.1. Summary of Townscape Context

- 3.1.1. Kellogg College is located on the east side of Banbury Road, west of Bradmore Road and south of Norham Road on the historic Norham Manor Estate, North Oxford. The subject site is located on the south-west side of the Balfour Building (opened during the 1980s) which adjoins the rear elevation of no. 60 Banbury Road and continues south into the historic plot of no. 58 Banbury Road; the subject site forms part of a small enclosed garden area within the plot of no. 58. The heritage context of the site is set out in detail in the Heritage Statement (Heritage Information, October 2023).
- 3.1.2. The Site is located within the **North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area** (Character Area 6: Banbury Road). Banbury Road is one of the main gateway routes into Oxford from the north of the county. The wide tree-lined road is bounded on either side by large, mainly gothic inspired villas, which are well set back from the road behind low boundary walls. With few exceptions Banbury Road comprises large red and yellow brick villas with stone dressings and incorporating turrets, pointed arches, gables and very steep pitched slate roofs. The emphasis was on the vertical, creating large foreboding structures bearing down onto luxuriously planted gardens containing large trees. The long



rear gardens and the gaps between the buildings are important elements to the character of this area. The gaps enable views through to the planting in the gardens and the rear of adjacent properties, and are important in strengthening the sense of openness that prevails throughout the suburb. The attractive quality of North Oxford is due in large part to the trees, shrubs, ground cover and climbing plants that soften the architecture and add contrasting colours and textures

- 3.1.3. There are a number of heritage assets within the local townscape context. The **Grade II listed No. 60** is located to the north of the subject site and the south flank elevation provides a sense of enclosure to the site. A distinctive 3-light stone bay window addresses the subject site on the ground floor and a first-floor 3-light oriel window on stone brackets. To the south of the subject is the **Grade II listed No. 56 (Wykeham House)** – the rear and flank elevations addressing the subject site are plainer and somewhat irregular in coherence and composition comprising a number of later extensions. The **Grade II listed No. 62** to the north of the subject site is more visually remote from it. These three statutorily listed buildings were designed to address the wide leafy avenue of Banbury Road from where their distinctive architectural and historic interest is best appreciated and understood and more frequently experienced as a group at the gateway to North Oxford. Their rear and flank elevations are more altered with late 20<sup>th</sup> century extensions that have truncated the original garden settings, although some distinctive architectural elements that contribute positively to their significance can still be appreciated and understood. The **Grade II listed No. 59** to the north-west on the west side of Banbury Road forms part of the wider townscape setting; is particularly distinctive architecturally among the surrounding unlisted buildings on the west side of the street which comprise the primary aspect of the setting.

## 3.2. Assessment of Design

- 3.2.1. As part of the TVIA, the following analysis carries out a summary review of the proposed development in the spirit of Paragraph 133 of the NPPF using the accepted and established criteria of most Design Review Panels and in particular used by the Design Council (Dorian Crone is a Design Review Panel Member of the Design Council, Design South West, Design South East, and the London Boroughs of Richmond-upon-Thames, Lewisham and Wandsworth).
- 3.1.2. **The National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, January 2021)** sets out ten characteristics for good design and has been used for the development of the design and its assessment in this report. Of particular relevance here are **Context (1)**: understanding the history of the area, the settings of heritage assets and the context of the site (appropriate form, appearance, scale, details and materials) in order that the proposal relates well to its surroundings; **Identity (2)**: reinforcing a coherent and distinctive identity (appropriate scale, height, materials and consideration of views) that relates well to the history and context of the site; and **Built Form (3)**: designing an appropriate building type, form and scale to create coherent form of development which relates well the site and its context, and sits comfortably within the townscape (ref. Appendix 2 for details).
- 3.1.3. The proposed extension has been designed to the highest standard in order to integrate fully into the surrounding built environment by adopting a high-quality design which reflects the local context and sustains and enhances the character and quality of the townscape (C1, I1, B2). The proposed extension has been designed to be architecturally and visually integrated with the Balfour Building which it adjoins,

but also to remain subordinate to it. The extension will be single-storey in height with a flat roof, but the parapet line will be located below the cornice of the Balfour Building; likewise, the width has been limited to fall within the defined bay framed by the buttresses and pilasters at each end “bay”. This not only provides a visually subordinate appearance in terms of low massing and scale, but also sustains an appreciation of the distinctive pyramidal roof form of the Balfour Building (I1). The palette of materials will be red brickwork to match the Balfour Building and the materiality of No. 58. The detailing also reflects the language of the Balfour Building, but has been pared back in order to remain architecturally subordinate (C2, I2); it will include a soldier course of brickwork to the cornice, a course of rowlock brickwork to delineate the plinth, and dark metal capping to the parapet. Additional articulation and interest will be provided to the west and south elevations by the provision of recessed brick panels which reflect the proportions of the existing window openings on the west elevation of the Balfour Building. Additional screening and softening will be provided by the proposed new holly tree which will be located to the north side of the gap adjacent to No. 58 and will replace a tree which is understood to be in poor condition, thereby sustaining the green character of the forecourt area as experienced from Banbury Road (I1). The proposed extension therefore provides high-quality urban design which will sustain the character and quality of the townscape and built environment in this part of the Conservation Area, sustain the settings of identified nearby designated heritage assets, respond positively to existing buildings and the wider context, and respect traditional street patterns and street frontages (C2, I1).

- 3.1.4. **The Building in Context Toolkit (2001)** was formulated by English Heritage and CABI/Design Council to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts (ref. Appendix 3). It is considered that the proposed development has taken full account of the eight principles, particularly in assessing the heritage interest of the Site and its constituent parts (Principle 1), understanding the history of the place and lie of the land (Principle 2), ensuring the character and identity of the extension will be appropriate to its proposed use and context (Principle 3), designing an extension which will sit happily in the pattern of existing development (Principle 4), respecting the scale of the existing Balfour Building to remain subservient within the gap between the neighbouring buildings at Nos. 58 and 60 Banbury Road (Principle 6), and using high-quality materials to reflect those on the Balfour Building (Principle 7).

## 4.0. TOWNSCAPE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 4.1. Viewpoint 01: Banbury Road (west side) looking South-East

#### 4.1.1. Baseline View



Figure 2a: View 01 as existing looking south-east from the west side of Banbury Road.

The view is taken within Character Area 6 (Banbury Road) of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. It is usually experienced kinetically by motorists and pedestrians as one of the primary routes into the city, as well as the university uses of many of the nearby buildings on this part of Banbury Road. The view illustrates the distinctive character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, with substantial detached houses in the gothic style of architecture set within large plots behind low boundary walls, and with a verdancy provided by mature trees and landscaping around the buildings and in the background. In this case, the Grade II listed No. 60 forms the focus of the view in its distinctive yellow brickwork, stone dressings and gothic detailing. It forms a group with the neighbouring unlisted No. 58 which is in the Romanesque revival style in red brickwork. The gap between the two buildings has been infilled by the 1980s Balfour Building, although its setting back well behind the building lines of Nos. 58 and 60 and its design and detailing reflects the boundary walls that are characteristic of the area and this is how it appears at this distance; even with the distinctive pyramidal roof form, it sits comfortably and recessively within the gap without compromising the visual permeability of the townscape. The subject site is barely discernible, forming an open space in the foreground of the Balfour Building but without any distinctive qualities which contribute to the character and quality of the townscape in the view.



**The view has medium sensitivity** – there are a number of characteristics which define the character and appearance of the Conservation Area at one of the principal gateways into North Oxford, including a Grade II listed building, legible gaps between the buildings and extensive tree planting. There is some capacity for change and enhancement given the set back of the subject site and the comfortable backdrop which the west elevation of the Balfour Building makes between the buildings without compromising an appreciation of the gap.

#### 4.1.2. Proposed View



Figure 2b: View 01 as proposed.

The proposed view can be seen in Figure 2b above. Only the upper part of the north and west elevations of the proposed extension will be glimpsed in this view and such glimpses will be further softened by the addition of a new holly tree on the north side of the forecourt of No. 58. The height of the extension has been kept deliberately lower than the dentilled cornice of the Balfour Building which will still be legible in the view, whilst the use of brickwork also matches that of the Balfour Building to reflect its use on the surrounding boundary walls and on No. 58. Articulation and interest is provided by the soldier course to delineate the cornice. This contextual material palette, pared back detailing and subordinate height, scale and form enable the extension to form a comfortable backdrop that blends with the surrounding built form in the gap between Nos. 58 and 60. The architectural and visual subservience of the extension means it will not compete with the substantial gothic houses which characterise this part of the Conservation Area (particularly the Grade II listed No. 60), and there will be no further erosion of the gap between Nos. 58 and 60; indeed, an appreciation of the distinctive tiled pyramidal roof form of the Balfour Building will be unaffected, thereby sustaining the visual permeability of the townscape as experienced in this view. The perceived appearance of the west elevation of the Balfour Building as a boundary wall characteristic of the local area will be sustained.



The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be minimal to negligible and neutral, as the proposed extension will be barely discernible and cause no material change to the character and quality of this view from one of the primary routes into the city – particularly as it is most usually experienced kinetically.

## 4.2. Viewpoint 02: Banbury Road (east side) looking South East

### 4.2.1. Baseline View



Figure 3a: View 02 as existing looking south-east from the east side of Banbury Road.

The view is also taken within Character Area 6 (Banbury Road) of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. It is usually experienced kinetically by motorists and pedestrians as one of the primary routes into the city, as well as the university uses of many of the nearby buildings on this part of Banbury Road; it also forms one of the entry points into Kellogg College and the Grade II listed No. 60 (left). The distinctive architectural qualities of No. 60 can be appreciated and understood in this view, including the gothic architectural detailing and large stone bay window to the side (south) elevation. There is some group value with the Romanesque No. 58 (right) in illustrating the substantial gothic detached houses which characterise this part of the Conservation Area. A section of the original redbrick boundary wall with No. 58 survives to the right of the view, although the hard landscaping within the forecourt areas for use as car parking and a service yard has been identified in the Conservation Area as a negative feature of this character area.



The 1980s Balfour Building forms the endstop to the view, although the gap between Nos. 60 and 58 remains clearly legible despite the distinctive roof form – indeed, trees and the rear of buildings fronting Bradmore Road can be glimpsed between the tiled roofs and lead lanterns which sustains a key element of the character and appearance of the area. The west elevation of the building was likely designed to resemble a boundary wall with a strong horizontality that minimises the scale, reflecting the detailing found on walls within the local context, including dentilled cornice detailing and buttresses; these features also articulate the elevation and reinforce the subdivision into bays which align with the roof form. The cross walls enclosing the service yard space adjacent to No. 60 were likely built at the same time as the Balfour Building and provide visual screening of the subject site, which as a result is barely discernible, forming an open space in the foreground of the Balfour Building but without any distinctive qualities which contribute to the character and quality of the townscape in the view.

**The view has low to medium sensitivity** – there are a number of characteristics which define the character and appearance of the Conservation Area at one of the principal gateways into North Oxford, including a Grade II listed building, an original boundary wall with locally distinctive detailing, and legible gaps between the buildings with glimpses of trees and other buildings in the background. There is some capacity for change and enhancement given the set back and enclosure of the subject site and the comfortable backdrop which the west elevation of the Balfour Building makes between Nos. 58 and 60 without compromising an appreciation of the gap.

#### **4.2.2. Proposed View**



**Figure 3b: View 02 as proposed.**

The proposed view can be seen in Figure 2b above. The proposed extension will be sited adjoining the west elevation of the Balfour Building within the “bay” to the rear of No. 58 Banbury Road, which is visually enclosed behind the modern section of boundary wall and modern cross wall. Its immediate context is defined by late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings and boundary walls which altered the historic pattern of the plots and the open gap to the rear gardens. Only the upper part of the north and west elevations of the proposed extension will be glimpsed in this view and such glimpses will be further softened by the addition of a new holly tree on the north side of the forecourt of No. 58. The extension will be single-storey in height with a flat roof, but the parapet line will be located below the cornice of the Balfour Building which will remain clearly legible; likewise, the width of the extension has been limited to fall within the defined bay framed by the buttresses at each end of the “bay”. This not only provides a visually subordinate appearance in terms of low massing and scale, but also sustains an appreciation of the distinctive pyramidal roof form of the Balfour Building with glimpses of greenery in the background that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The palette of materials will be red brickwork to match the Balfour Building and the surrounding modern and historic boundary walls. Articulation and interest is provided by the soldier course to delineate the cornice. This contextual material palette, pared back detailing and subordinate height, scale and form enable the extension to form a comfortable backdrop that blends with the surrounding built form and boundary walls.

**The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be minimal to negligible and neutral**, as the proposed extension will be barely discernible and cause no material change to the character and quality of this view from one of the primary routes into the city – particularly as it is most usually experienced kinetically. The extension is not considered to detract from an appreciation of the distinctive architectural qualities of the Grade II listed No. 60 in the view and its group value with No. 58.

## 5.0. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment has reviewed the visual impact of the proposed extension on the local townscape and on the settings of nearby heritage assets. **The quality and sensitivity of the townscape in the two assessed views is medium, but capable of some change and enhancement** given the enclosed nature of the site, its historically altered state, and its substantial set back from the street. It is noteworthy that the proposals will only be partially visible or at most glimpsed in both of the assessed views.
- 5.2. **The National Design Guide (2021)** [Appendix 2] and **The Building in Context Toolkit (2001)** [Appendix 3] have both been used to inform the proposed development - the architectural quality of the proposed extension, as well as its sensitivity to the townscape context and the settings of nearby heritage assets. The NDG and Building in Context Toolkit have also been considered in this TVIA when evaluating the design of the proposal, and its impact on the surrounding townscape.
- 5.3. The proposed development has been based on a thorough understanding of the townscape context, the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and the settings of nearby statutorily listed buildings. The two views assessed in this report demonstrate that the subordinate contextual design, bulk, scale, mass and materiality of the proposed extension are considered to sustain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the settings of other nearby heritage assets. There will be virtually no discernible material change in the character and quality of the townscape in both views from Banbury Road (which are usually experienced kinetically).
- 5.4. The proposed development has therefore taken full account of Step 4 of the Historic England criteria **The Setting of Heritage Assets** (ref. Appendix 1) in order to avoid harm to the settings of all identified heritage assets, principally in the provision of visually and architecturally subordinate extension which will not detract from an appreciation and understanding of the settings of any heritage assets, but rather will complement and sustain those settings.
- 5.5. **It is considered that the proposed extension overall will have a minimal to negligible and neutral impact on the local townscape character, sustaining the character and quality of the townscape, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the settings of nearby heritage assets.**



## **APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC ENGLAND GUIDANCE (*THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS*, DECEMBER 2017)**

This note gives assistance concerning the assessment of the setting of heritage assets. Historic England recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to the complexity of the case, from straightforward to complex:

### **Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.**

The setting of a heritage asset is 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced'. Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset. The starting point of the analysis is to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the development proposal.

### **Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.**

This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting will provide the baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on significance. We recommend that this assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider:

- the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets
- the asset's intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use
- the contribution made by noises, smells, etc to significance, and
- the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated

### **Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.**

The wide range of circumstances in which setting may be affected and the range of heritage assets that may be involved precludes a single approach for assessing effects. Different approaches will be required for different circumstances. In general, however, the assessment should address the attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:

- location and siting
- form and appearance
- wider effects
- permanence

**Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.**

Enhancement may be achieved by actions including:

- removing or re-modelling an intrusive building or feature
- replacement of a detrimental feature by a new and more harmonious one
- restoring or revealing a lost historic feature or view
- introducing a wholly new feature that adds to the public appreciation of the asset
- introducing new views (including glimpses or better framed views) that add to the public experience of the asset, or
- improving public access to, or interpretation of, the asset including its setting

Options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the repositioning of a development or its elements, changes to its design, the creation of effective long-term visual or acoustic screening, or management measures secured by planning conditions or legal agreements. For some developments affecting setting, the design of a development may not be capable of sufficient adjustment to avoid or significantly reduce the harm, for example where impacts are caused by fundamental issues such as the proximity, location, scale, prominence or noisiness of a development. In other cases, good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement. Here the design quality may be an important consideration in determining the balance of harm and benefit.

**Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.**

It is good practice to document each stage of the decision-making process in a non-technical and proportionate way, accessible to non-specialists. This should set out clearly how the setting of each heritage asset affected contributes to its significance or to the appreciation of its significance, as well as what the anticipated effect of the development will be, including of any mitigation proposals.

### Assessment Step 2 Checklist

The starting point for this stage of the assessment is to consider the significance of the heritage asset itself and then establish the contribution made by its setting. The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. It may be the case that only a limited selection of the attributes listed is likely to be particularly important in terms of any single asset.

#### The asset's physical surroundings

- Topography
- Aspect
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design eg hierarchy, layout
- Orientation and aspect
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
- Functional relationships and communications
- History and degree of change over time

#### Experience of the asset

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Noise, vibration and other nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Scents and smells
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Land use
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- Rarity of comparable survivals of setting
- Cultural associations
- Celebrated artistic representations
- Traditions

### Assessment Step 3 Checklist

The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. It may be that only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development.

#### Location and siting of development

- Proximity to asset
- Position in relation to relevant topography and watercourses
- Position in relation to key views to, from and across
- Orientation
- Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset

#### Form and appearance of development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Competition with or distraction from the asset
- Dimensions, scale and massing
- Proportions
- Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through), reflectivity
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc)
- Architectural and landscape style and/or design
- Introduction of movement or activity
- Diurnal or seasonal change

#### Wider effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline, silhouette
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc
- Lighting effects and 'light spill'
- Change to general character (eg urbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to public access, use or amenity
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover
- Changes to communications/accessibility/permeability, including traffic, road junctions and car-parking, etc
- Changes to ownership arrangements (fragmentation/permitted development/etc)
- Economic viability

#### Permanence of the development

- Anticipated lifetime/temporariness
- Recurrence
- Reversibility



## APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE CHARACTERISTICS (EXCERPTS)

**1. Context** is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.

### **C1 Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context**

Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It enhances positive qualities and improves negative ones. Some features are physical, including:

- the existing built development, including layout, form, scale, appearance, details, and materials;
- local heritage – see below – and local character;
- landform, topography, geography and ground conditions;
- landscape character, drainage and flood risk, biodiversity and ecology;
- access, movement and accessibility;
- environment – including landscape and visual impact, microclimate, flood risk, noise, air and water quality;
- views inwards and outwards;
- the pattern of uses and activities, including community facilities and local services; and
- how it functions.

Well-designed new development is integrated into its wider surroundings, physically, socially and visually. It is carefully sited and designed, and is demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing situation, including:

- the landscape character and how places or developments sit within the landscape, to influence the siting of new development and how natural features are retained or incorporated into it;
- patterns of built form, including local precedents for routes and spaces and the built form around them, to inform the layout, form and scale;
- the architecture prevalent in the area, including the local vernacular and other precedents that contribute to local character, to inform the form, scale, appearance, details and materials of new development.

### **C2 Value heritage, local history and culture**

When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.

Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by:

- the history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences;
- the significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing;
- the local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details

**2. The identity** or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses.

### **I1 Respond to existing local character and identity**

Well-designed new development is influenced by:

- an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents;
- the characteristics of the existing built form;
- the elements of a place or local places that make it distinctive; and
- other features of the context that are particular to the area – see Context .

This includes considering:

- the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements;
- the height, scale, massing and relationships between buildings;
- views, vistas and landmarks;
- the scale and proportions of buildings;
- façade design, such as the degree of symmetry, variety, the pattern and proportions of windows and doors, and their details;
- the scale and proportions of streets and spaces;
- hard landscape and street furniture;
- soft landscape, landscape setting and backdrop;
- nature and wildlife, including water;
- light, shade, sunshine and shadows; and
- colours, textures, shapes and patterns.

### **I2 Well-designed, high quality and attractive**

Well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include:

- adopting typical building forms, features, materials and details of an area;
- drawing upon the architectural precedents that are prevalent in the local area, including the proportions of buildings and their openings;
- using local building, landscape or topographical features, materials or planting types;
- introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places;
- creating a positive and coherent identity that residents and local communities can identify with.

### **I3 Create character and identity**

Design decisions at all levels and scales shape the character of a new place or building. Character starts to be determined by the siting of development in the wider landscape, then by the layout – the pattern of streets, landscape and spaces, the movement network and the arrangement of development blocks. It continues to be created by the form, scale, design, materials and details of buildings and landscape. In this way, it creates a coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including all residents and local communities.

**3. Built Form** is the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces. It is the interrelationship between all these elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics.

#### **B1 Compact form of development**

Compact forms of development bring people together to support local public transport, facilities and local services. They make destinations easily accessible by walking or cycling wherever this is practical. This helps to reduce dependency upon the private car.

Well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open space that optimises density. It also relates well to and enhances the existing character and context.

Built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context. The appropriate density will result from the context, accessibility, the proposed building types, form and character of the development.

#### **B2 Appropriate building types and forms**

Well-designed places also use the right mix of building types, forms and scale of buildings and public spaces to create a coherent form of development that people enjoy. They also adopt strategies for parking and amenity that support the overall quality of the place.

The built form of well-designed places relates well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;
- the lifestyles of occupants and other users; and
- resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Built form defines a pattern of streets and development blocks. Streets are places for people as well as for movement. Street types will depend on:

- their width, relating to their use;
- the height of buildings around them, the relationship with street width, and the sense of enclosure that results;
- how built up they are along their length, and the structure of blocks and routes that this creates;
- the relationship between building fronts and backs, with successful streets characterised by buildings facing the street to provide interest, overlooking and active frontages at ground level; and
- establishing an appropriate relationship with the pattern, sizes and proportions of existing streets in the local area.

## APPENDIX 3: THE BUILDING IN CONTEXT TOOLKIT

The Building in Context Toolkit grew out of the publication **Building in Context**™ published by English Heritage and CABE in 2001. The purpose of that publication was to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts. The founding and enduring principle is that all successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and character appraisal to fully understand context.

**The eight Building in Context principles are:**

### Principle 1

A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.

### Principle 2

A successful project will relate to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land.

### Principle 3

A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.

### Principle 4

A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it.

### Principle 5

A successful project will respect important views.

### Principle 6

A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings.

### Principle 7

A successful project will use materials and building methods which are as high quality as those used in existing buildings.

### Principle 8

A successful project will create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.