

New Gates at 13 Beaumont Street

Design, Access & Heritage Statement



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Submitted Documents:

This Design, Access & Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

2315_P001 Location Plan
2315_P002 Existing & Proposed Plans and Elevations

1.0 | Overview

1.1 | Introduction & Site Description

The applicant seeks permission for a new gate to close off the rear parking area behind Beaumont Street Mews, 13 Beaumont Street. 13 Beaumont Street is a grade II* listed building, and the proposed site is located within the curtilage of this building. In addition, Beaumont Street is situated within the Nineteenth-century Residential Quarter of Oxford Central (City & University) Conservation Area.

The rear of Beaumont Street Mews is a courtyard, which is currently occupied by a carpark. To the north and west sides of the courtyard is the rear elevation of 13 Beaumont Street and the associated mews, this building is currently used as commercial offices. The east side of the courtyard is occupied by the rear of the Oxford Playhouse & the southern elevation by the Burton Taylor wing of the theatre.

The courtyard has an ancillary character with the elevations of the existing buildings being of poor-quality design and construction. The rear of the Playhouse Theatre comprises of modern brick, there is a metal clad fire-escape corridor which provides egress from the main theatre complex. The theatre has two additional ground floor egress doors one on the north elevation and another on the side elevation of the Burton Taylor wing of the theatre.

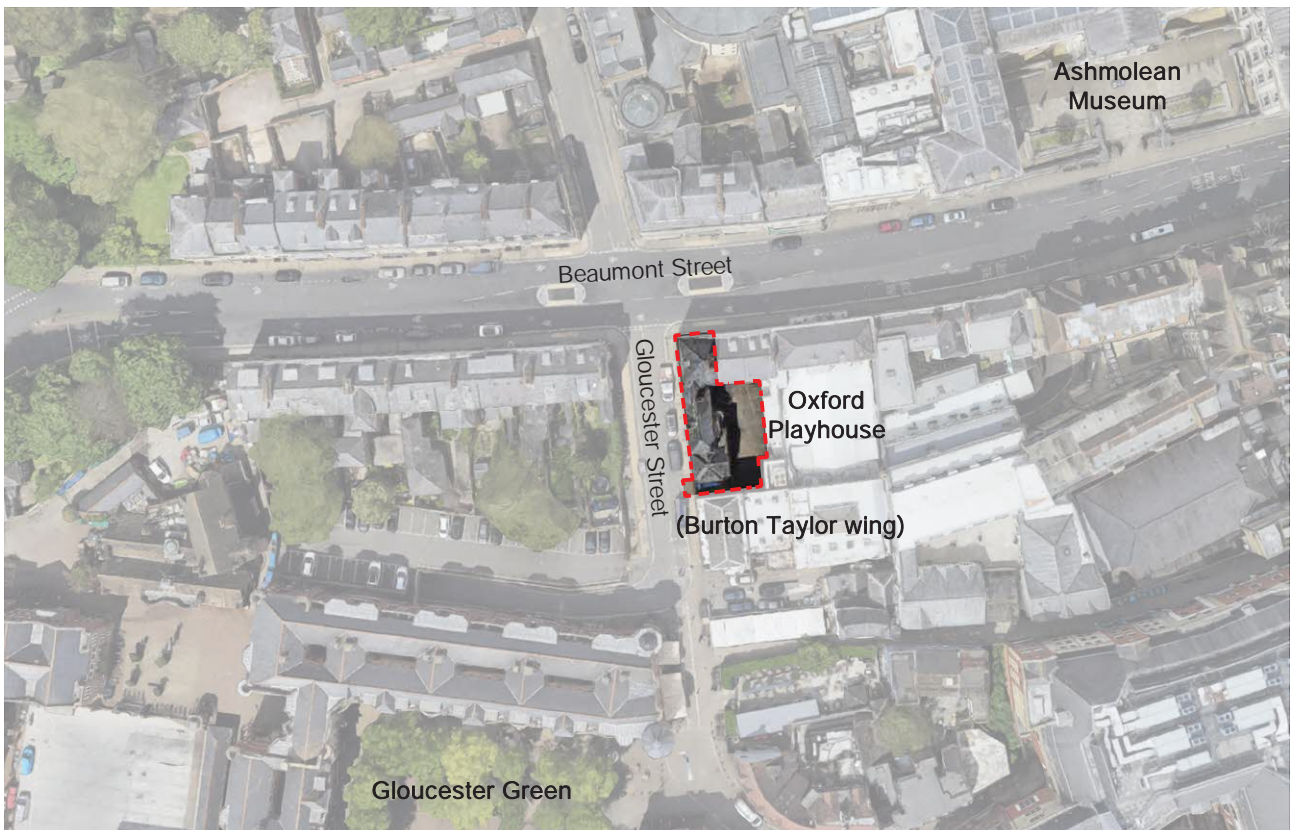



Fig.1 - Location Plan (Google Map 2023)

Key: area affected by application 

1.0 | Overview

1.2 | Applicant's Brief & Objectives

The courtyard is in a state of poor disrepair, with graffiti tags on the walls and is subject to littering. In addition, due to the enclosed nature of the space and lack of “eyes on the street”, the area is frequently used for rough sleepers and unregulated parking and blocking the fire escape route (refer to Fig. 4). The applicant would like to install gates in the opening between Beaumont Mews and the Taylor Burton wing of the Playhouse theatre in order to discourage the anti-social behaviour and improve the safety and ambience of the courtyard.



Fig. 2 - Littering



Fig. 3 - Graffiti on the wall



Fig. 4 - Unregulated parking

2.0 | Proposals

2.1 | Design & Appearance

The proposal is for a set of automated double gates that will open into the courtyard. It is proposed that the gates are solid so as not to allow views through to the courtyard beyond which will hide the “back of house” spaces of the theatre. The solid gates will improve the security and privacy in the courtyard and will be hard to climb, in addition it will be easier to integrate the mechanics into a timber gate to ensure the gate appears simple and uncluttered. The gates are set back 1.2m from the front elevation of the Mews Building which ensures that cars can no longer be park in front of the gates and also ensures the gates feel subservient to the adjacent buildings and will not dominate the streetscene.

It is proposed that the gates will be constructed from hardwood which will be painted to match the external joinery of the mews buildings. The used of painted timber gates reflects the design of other gates that are found in the locality and serve more ancillary spaces and yards (refer to Fig. 5 and Fig. 6).

It is proposed that the gate posts will be on a 300mm footing so as to minimise disturbance of any below ground archaeology and avoid fixing to the wall of the listed buildings.

2.2 | Accessibility

Accessibility to the ground floor of the adjacent buildings will not be altered as a part of this application. However, the proposed gates will require approval from building control, as the gates will be used as a fire escape exit. The gates must not worsen the existing fire escape strategy. Fire Officer has been consulted on this proposal and is supportive of the strategy.

The gates will be automated and operated via wireless remotes. The gate automation will also be connected to the theatre alarm system so that they automatically open in the event the fire alarm is triggered in the theatre. They will also have redundancy via both a battery backup and a manual override lever.



Fig. 5 - Solid gate of Worcester College on Walton Street



Fig. 6 - Solid gate opposite to the site

2.0 | Proposals

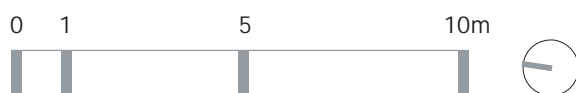
2.3 | Existing & Proposed Elevations



Fig. 7 - Existing Street Elevation



Fig. 8 - Proposed Street Elevation



2.0 | Proposals

2.4 | Existing & Proposed Plans

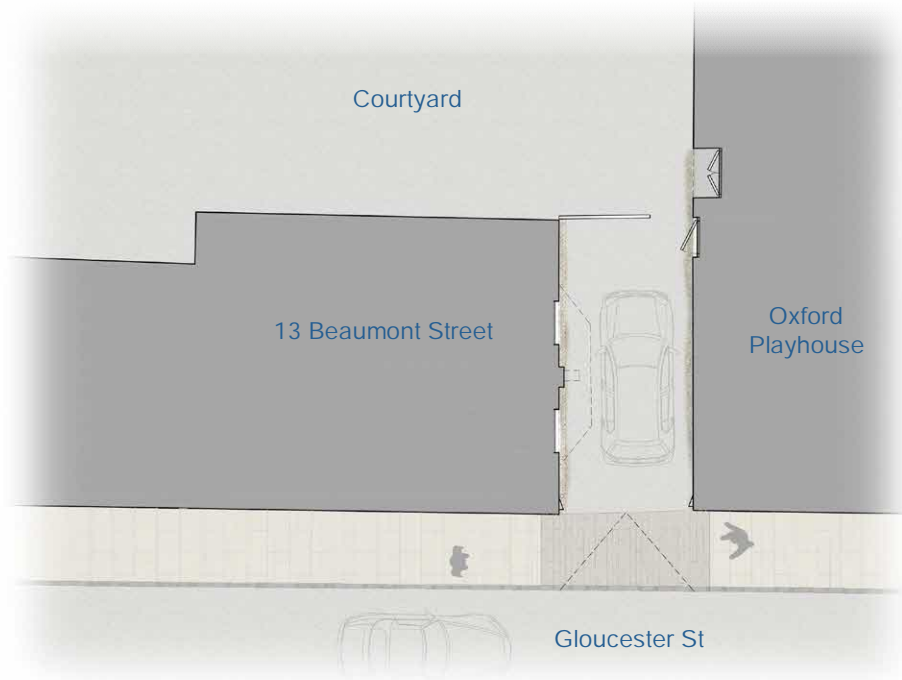


Fig. 9 - Existing Site Plan

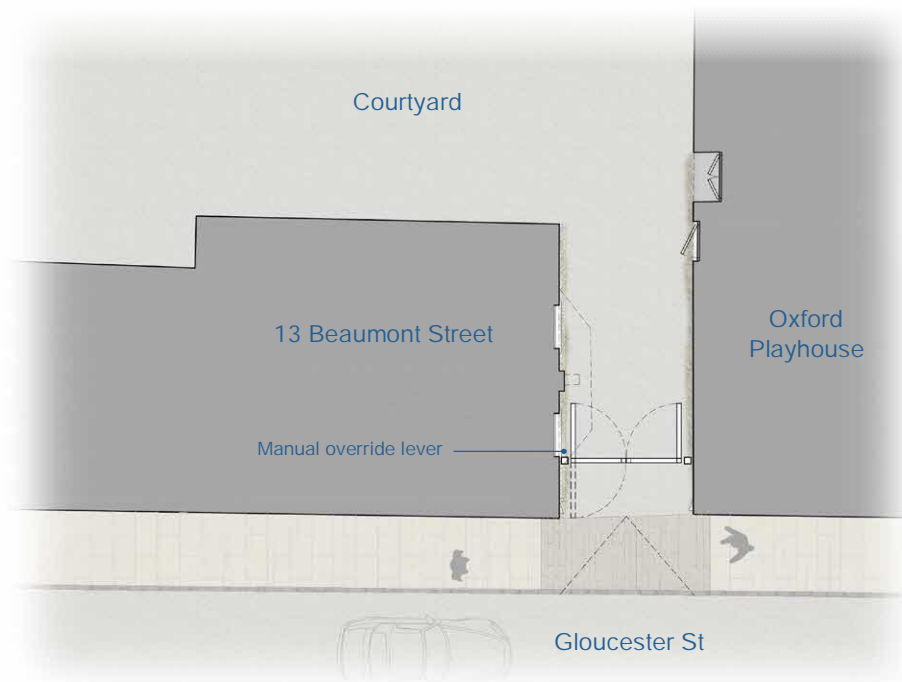
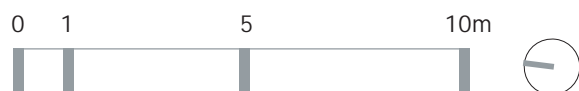


Fig. 10 - Proposed Site Plan



3.0 | Heritage

3.1 | Listing Description

The listed building description for “13 Beaumont Street” and the “Playhouse” is as follows:

Heritage Category: Grade II* Listed Building

List Entry Number: 1185150

Date First Listed: 12-Jan-1954

Statutory Address 1: 11-23, BEAUMONT STREET

Statutory Address 2: 5-7, BEAUMONT STREET

Statutory Address 3: THE PLAYHOUSE, BEAUMONT STREET

BEAUMONT STREET 1. 1485 (South Side) Nos 5 to 7 (consec). The Playhouse. Nos 11 to 23 (consec). SP 5106 NW 5/134 12.1.54. SP 5106 SW 8/134 II GV 2. Laid out, with St John Street, as a unified terrace-type scheme in 1828-37 on the site of the ancient palace of Beaumont. 5-storeyed Bath stone fronts on brick, with cellars, a moulded cornice and a small parapet. Some have a mansard roof to an attic floor. There are 2 to 3 sash windows with glazing bars in each floor and most have iron balconies at the 1st floor while some (eg Nos 34 and 35) have good verandah balconies. The doorways, have semi-circular heads and some, mostly on the South side have stone door frames with engaged columns and split pediments. The Playhouse (on site of Nos 8, 9 and 10) was built in 1938 in harmony with the rest in Clipsham ashlar. The interiors show that the fireplaces are placed at the sidewalls, the central chimney-stack having disappeared. For plan of No 15 (a typical house), see *Antiq Jnl XXVII* (1947), p 132 and Fig 8 G. Playhouse altered 1964.*

All the listed buildings in Beaumont Street form a group.

Listing NGR: SP5107406499



Fig. 11 - Oxford Playhouse



Fig. 12 - No.11 - 13 Beaumont Street



Fig. 13 - No.13 Beaumont Street Mews

3.0 | Heritage

3.2 | The Architectural Character of Beaumont Street

The elegant townhouses of Beaumont Street were laid out in the Regency Style in 1828-1837. Beaumont Street was described by the eminent architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner as “the finest street ensemble of Oxford”. The *DRAFT Character Zone Assessment volume 7, 19th Century Residential* describes the character of the streets around Beaumont Street: “The terraces in Beaumont Street, St John’s Street, Walton Street and Wellington Square are unusual for the Conservation Area because they were mostly designed to have a uniform appearance, with roofs punctuated by a regular rhythm of party walls and chimneystacks”

The buildings on Beaumont Street are constructed from brick with high quality Bath Stone frontages and display a host of well-preserved Regency details (external shutters, balconies, street grilles, historic joinery). The backs of these former townhouses are more utilitarian in character as they were typically reserved for private gardens and mews buildings for horses and carriages. During the c20th some of the mews buildings were demolished to make way for new development, including those along the north elevation of Gloucester Green market and the stables and mews that were located on the site which is now occupied by the Randolph Hotel.

The application site is shown as gardens and ancillary buildings for no.13 in the first edition OS maps. However, development in the early c20th including the construction of the Playhouse Theatre in 1938, changed the character and grain of this area. The theatre was built on the full width and depth of three of the plots formerly occupied by town houses, this created a sense of enclosure to the rear of 13 Beaumont Street. The area was further enclosed in the mid c20th by the construction of the Taylor Burton wing to the south of the courtyard.

There is a range of buildings to the rear of no.13 that front Gloucester Street and are likely to be former mews buildings; these are more utilitarian in architectural character, reflecting the hierarchy of the buildings, as the mews would have been reserved for the serving and lower classes. The buildings have brick frontages with narrow window openings under slate hipped roofs. There contain a number of significant architectural details including a projecting brick bay with a decorative carved stone corbel, and window openings with high quality stone sills with shallow-arched headers constructed from soldier-coursed bricks. The buildings have been altered over time with a more modern shop front added at some point, likely in the c20th. The projecting bay window to the south elevation appears to have been added in the 1930s, possibly when the theatre was constructed.



Fig. 14 - OS Map 25” 1st ed. (1840s - 1880s)



Fig. 15 - OS Map 25” 2nd ed. (1892 - 1914)

3.0 | Heritage

3.3 | Significance & Contribution of 13 Beaumont Street Mews to the Conservation Area

13 Beaumont Street Mews is a high quality building which makes a **positive** contribution to the conservation area and forms a pleasant backdrop to Gloucester Street, reflecting the hierarchy in status of the buildings, and transition from the polite frontages facing Beaumont Street to the lower status utilitarian buildings to the rear.

The Taylor Burton wing has a **lower** architectural quality than the surrounding buildings. It is constructed from 5 modern brick bays with horizontal openings with basic detailing and joinery. The building has a utilitarian quality and makes a **neutral** contribution to the conservation area.

The rear of the Playhouse Theatre is lower quality and is in a poor state of repair than the adjacent buildings. Modern interventions, such as the metal cladding and cantilevered fire escape stair, are features which detract from the conservation area and have an impact on the setting of the listed buildings. Other alterations such as the introduction of services, poor quality materials and surfaces have further eroded the character of the courtyard.

The north elevation and character of the courtyard have **low** significance due to their poor architectural quality and condition. The courtyard has moderate significance in terms of its grain and plan form as it reflects the change in character and evolution of the rear of Beaumont Street from the regency gardens and mews to an urban courtyard and carpark.

3.4 | Heritage Impact on the Conservation Area & Setting of the Listed Building

The gates have been designed to have a low key and ancillary appearance which reflects the utilitarian nature of this entrance and the hierarchy of the historic spaces. The Mews buildings would have been reserved for the serving and lower classes, they have a lower status, it would be expected that they would have more utilitarian gates as opposed to iron gates that you might find at the main entrances of such buildings. Therefore, the gates **neutral** impact on the listed building and wider conservation area.

4.0 | Conclusion

The design and location of the gates has been carefully considered to reflect the sensitive historic context of the listed buildings and wider conservation area. The design has been informed by an understanding of the significance and phases of development of the area.

There are a number of benefits of the scheme:

- The solidity of the gates provides screening to the unattractive courtyard which will enhance the street scene & wider conservation area.
- The gates will deter rough sleepers and improve the overall safety of the area.
- The gates have been designed to be reversible and therefore will have a minimum impact on the adjacent listed building.
- The design of the gates is appropriate for this sensitive context.

The proposals have a neutral impact on the conservation area and listed buildings, and there are a number of wider public benefits of the scheme. Considering the above, the works completed will not cause harm to the special interest of the Grade II listed 13 Beaumont Street. In addition, the heritage asset and the wider conservation area will benefit from the proposed works.



Fig. 16 - Proposed Gates, street elevation view