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Date: 22/02/2024

Planning Services
Oxford City Council
St Aldate's Chambers
109-113 St Aldate's
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OX1 1DS

Dear Sir/Madam,

INSTALLATION OF 1. NO EDUCATIONAL BUILDING (CLASS F1) FOR ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS AT OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY (HEADINGTON CAMPUS, OXFORD OX3 0BP)

On behalf of Oxford Brookes University (hereafter 'the Applicant') we hereby submit this Covering Letter in support of a full planning application to Oxford City Council (as Local Planning Authority).

The proposals seek temporary planning permission for the erection of a new structure (to be operational for a two year period) which will provide an architectural project for students at the University's Headington Campus.

This Covering Letter sets out the background to the proposed development, site and surrounding area and demonstrates compliance with the relevant planning policy.

Alongside this Covering Letter, this full planning application is accompanied by the following drawings and documentation:

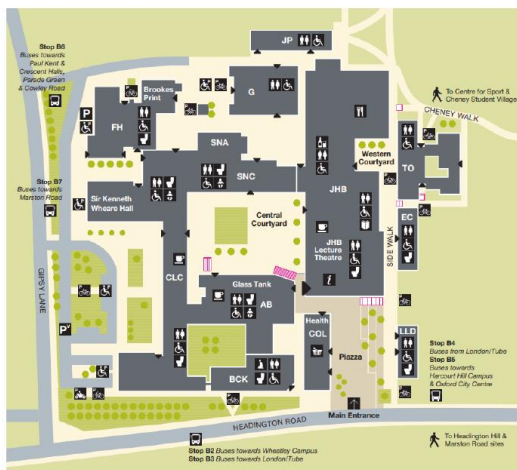
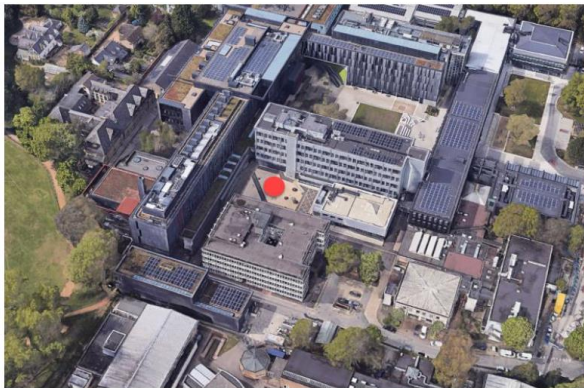
- Design and Access Statement (dated 2024-01-02)
- Site Location Plan (L101)
- Existing Site Plan (P102)
- Proposed Site and Roof Plan (PL05 C)
- Proposed Structures Plan (PL06 C)
- Proposed Elevations 1 + 2 (P112 D)
- Proposed Elevations 3 +4 (P113 D)

The relevant planning application fee of £578 + Portal Admin Charge of £64 has been paid via BACS transfer to the Planning Portal. This fee has been calculated based on the total Gross External Area (GEA) of the temporary structures at 65 sqm.

Site Context and Background

The application site is located at Oxford Brookes University's Headington Campus on the University's Gipsy Lane site. The proposal is to be sited within the courtyard space between the Gibbs, Sinclair and John Henry Brookes Buildings. This is an underutilised part of the University Campus currently used as a courtyard area with moveable raised planters and seating spaces which can comfortably be relocated within the courtyard. The approximate site location is marked below in Figure 1 alongside the wider campus layout for context.

Figure 1 – Site of Proposed Development (marked approximately by a red dot) (top), and map of buildings on the Headington Campus, Gipsy Lane (bottom)



Proposed Development

The proposed development relates to the provision of a new building (with a gross external area of approximately 65 square metres). It is intended that the proposed building will function as an architectural project for students at Oxford Brookes University.

The architectural school is a vibrant community of staff and students hosted in the Abercrombie Building on the Headington Campus. Staff and students are actively involved in shaping the national and international architecture agenda through live projects, research and field trips.

Students at the university are involved in a long-term project to focus on sustainable design through the re-use of materials. As part of the strategy to enable students to learn through making, the University are seeking to construct a 'living lab' type structure on campus, adjacent to the existing facilities. Students have been involved in the co-design of a modular, demountable, sustainable structure to be situated in one of the under-utilised spaces on campus.

The building would have an educational use, allowing students to test different clad panels to be mounted to the test frame to test different aspects of their performance.

Figure 2 – Indicative building massing



Indicative massing in context



Indicative massing in context

Planning Assessment

The statutory development plan comprises the Oxford Plan 2036 (adopted June 2020). The application site does not have any site specific designations and although located with the Headington Conservation Area, is well screened from public vantage points seen within the context of the existing university site.

Principle of Development

Planning permission is sought for the proposed structure on a temporary basis, to be operational for a two-year period, after which the impact of the structures and its continued need will be clear. The structures do not have foundations, therefore reinstatement of the land will be straightforward.

There is a demonstrable need for the proposals to meet the teaching and educational needs of the architectural department at Oxford Brookes University. The project is conceived as a medium to long term project to focus on sustainable design through re-use of materials.

In this regard, Policy E2 (Teaching and Research) provides significant policy support for the principle of development and states that “planning permission will be granted to support the growth of Oxford Brookes

University through the redevelopment and intensification of academic and administrative floorspace on their existing sites at Headington Hill”.

The use of the site for the proposed temporary structure is considered an appropriate interim measure for what is currently a vacant previously developed site. The site is considered an ideal location for a temporary teaching building sited in an underutilised part of the campus whilst meeting needs of architectural students at the University.

As set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement, student learning and student engagement are important to this proposal because the design, construction and use of the structure itself all function as a means to engage and educate students and the wider community about sustainability.

Sustainable Design

Policy RE1: (Sustainable design and construction) outlines that planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that sustainable design and construction principles have been incorporated including maximising energy and water efficiency, using recycled and recyclable materials and minimising waste during construction and operation

The proposals fully support the aspirations of policy RE1 being premised on sustainable design principles. The new structure will feature varied clad panel installations made from recycled and repurposed materials in support of learning objectives for architecture students at the University. This is considered a planning benefit of significant weight.

Policy DH1 (High quality design and placemaking) requires all developments to achieve high quality design that enhances or creates local distinctiveness.

The proposed development has carefully evolved to achieve exemplary and distinctive design that aligns well with materials seen elsewhere on the University campus. The proposed timber frame construction will sit well alongside other educational buildings in this part of the campus. The timber structure takes its precedent in scale and material from ancillary shelter structures common to university campuses generally and varied wall panels for the proposed building will be made as far as practicable from reclaimed or repurposed materials including from excess material from construction activity on the Headington Hill Hall site. Please refer to the Design and Access Statement for a full design rationale.

Heritage

Policy DH3 (Designated heritage assets) requires developments to respond positively to the significance of heritage assets and their locality. Great weight is to be given to the conservation of that asset and to the assets setting where it contributes to that significance or appreciation of that significance

In terms of heritage impact, whilst the University campus is within the Headington Conservation Area, the application site is inward looking towards the buildings surrounding the main courtyard and due to its very modest scale will not be seen from wider public views. The site is not within an area of identified archaeological potential and excavation will be very limited to create a level platform for the proposed plinth base. Materials are nonetheless appropriate to the Conservation Area and align with the material palette of the wider university site.

Other Considerations

Policy M2 (Assessing and management development) requires the submission of a Transport Assessment for development likely to generate significant amounts of movement. In terms of transport, the proposed building is to be sited within the main courtyard of the campus, located away from the public highway. There will be no loss of cycle or car parking to facilitate the proposed development and existing access arrangements will be maintained. It is not considered there is any scope for highways impact.

Policy G7: Protection of existing Green Infrastructure features seeks to protect from development green infrastructure features such as hedgerows and trees where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity. Where retention is not possible, the Local Plan states that the possible loss must be mitigated. The proposals will require the re-siting of existing raised planters however these are moveable

not fixed and can easily be accommodated with the residual courtyard space. There will be no net loss of green infrastructure features.

Conclusions

In light of the above planning assessment, the installation of the temporary structures for an initial two year period on this previously developed site is considered acceptable and that planning permission should be granted by the LPA.

If you have any queries related to this application please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Oliver Fountain
Senior Planner

Bidwells LLP