



**Old Boys' High School
Conservation Plan**

Building No. 237
July 2013

Estates Services
University of Oxford
July 2013

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/conservation/conservationmanagementplans>

Abbreviations:

ESA – Estates Services Archives

OCA – Oxford County Archives

OS – Ordnance Survey

OUA – Oxford University Archives

NPPF - *National Planning Policy Framework, 2012*

RCHM – *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Oxford* (London, 1939)

OLD BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, OXFORD
CONSERVATION PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Old Boys High School was constructed as the Oxford High School for Boys in 1880-1 to a design by Thomas Graham Jackson. It was acquired by the University of Oxford on a 99-year lease from the City of Oxford in 1977. It has served as various University departments since this point and now houses the History Faculty offices.

1.1 Purpose of the Conservation Plan

The University has an unrivalled portfolio of historic buildings, of which it is rightly proud. It has traditionally taken a thorough, holistic approach to building conservation, seeking to understand all the varied factors that make historic buildings significant to their diverse stakeholders, and using this to inform necessary change. It has become clear that this approach is vital to the conservation culture of an institution where so many of its historic buildings that are valued for their function also have extensive historical or architectural significance. This Conservation Plan represents the continuation of this tradition of seeking to understand what makes the University's buildings cherished assets, and of seeking ways to conserve these most important features for the enjoyment of future generations.

The success of this approach is such that it has now become codified in government policy: First in March 2010's *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historical Environment* then in its replacement, March 2012's *National Planning Policy Framework* (hereafter: NPPF). NPPF provides useful guidance on approaching the conservation of heritage assets, and postdates the University's existing literature. NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'

This designation clearly applies to the Old Boys' High School.

The purpose of this Conservation Plan is to update the Old Boys' High School's conservation policy to take into account the new guidance provided by NPPF. It will be of use both for informing responsible regular maintenance and in the preparation of future planning applications, as specified in NPPF paragraph 128.

The Conservation Plan should form the basis for the Old Boys' High School's Conservation Policy and exists as part of an ongoing process. It will be renewed and updated at least every five years or following any major alterations or legislative changes.



Figure 1. Satellite image of the Old Boys' High School and the surrounding area. The original 1880-1 Jackson building is highlighted in red. His 1892-5 extension is highlighted in blue. The 1915 extension is highlighted in green. The 1935 extension is highlighted in yellow and the 1977-8 toilet extension is highlighted in orange

1.2 Scope of the Conservation Plan

The plan will cover the interior and exterior of the Old Boys' High School, a Grade-II-listed building on George Street in central Oxford. This consists of a core building constructed by Thomas Graham Jackson in 1880-1 and several extensions dating from 1892-5, 1915, 1935, and 1977-8. The city wall bastion in the rear garden is a Grade-I-listed structure but is owned and maintained by the City Council, so will not be covered by this document.

The plan is not a catalogue and to facilitate its practical use will concentrate only on the most vulnerable aspects of the building's significance, suggesting how they should be approached and conserved in the future. A brief list of the most significant architectural features can be found in **Appendix 4** and should be referred to when planning any repair or alteration work.

1.3 Existing Information

The Old Boys' High School is a building of substantial interest by Victorian Oxford's premier architect, T.G. Jackson. A conservation plan has not previously been produced for the building but there is extensive useful information available regarding it:

There are several published books and articles which discuss the work of Thomas Graham Jackson and the development of late 19th-century architecture in Oxford. The Old Boys' School was among his more important commissions and does feature in these books, which also provide valuable contextual information.

The Oxford University Archives and the Estates Services archives contain useful plans and documents and these have kindly been made available for the composition of this document. Documents were also kindly made available from the County and City Council Archives.

The original 1972 list description (**Appendix 1**) is characteristically brief for a listing of its age but does give some indication of the features that were thought to make up the particular character for which the building was originally listed.

Planning and listed building consent applications have been made during the building's recent history and these provide a fragmentary indication of the changes that have occurred in the building over time.

This document draws on statutory guidance from NPPF prepared by HM's Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012.

1.4 Methodology

The Conservation Plan is a document that assesses the current and predicted conservation needs of the Old Boys' High School and attempts to address them with a view towards maintaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset. Its formulation to supersede any existing literature is a response to the requirements of NPPF, and it is prepared in accordance with the policies contained therein.

1.5 Constraints

The Old Boys' High School and its environs are subject to various constraints imposed by Oxford City Council:

- CP.3: – Limiting the Need to Travel: New development will be limited to accessible locations on previously developed sites.
- CS.1 – Hierarchy of Centres – City Centre Commercial Area: The city centre will be the main location for developments attracting a large number of people. In particular, planning permission will be granted for development that supports its role as a Centre for Significant Change, such as major retail, leisure, cultural and office development. Most major development will be focused in the West End of the city centre.
- CS.5 – West End: The West End is allocated as a strategic location which will deliver a mixed-use development. Planning permission will be granted for development that includes housing, retail spaces, office spaces, leisure and tourism, primary education, and streets or public spaces.

- HE.2 – Archaeology Area: Where archaeological deposits that are potentially significant to the historical environment of Oxford are known or suspected to exist anywhere in Oxford but in particular the City Centre Archaeological Area, planning applications should incorporate sufficient information to define the character and extent of such deposits as far as reasonably practicable.
- HE.7 – Conservation Area: The Central (City and University) Conservation Area: Planning permission will only be granted for development that preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the conservation areas or their setting.
- HE.9 – High Building Area: Planning permission will not be granted for any development within a 1,200-metre radius of Carfax which exceeds 18.2m in height, except for minor elements of no bulk.
- The City of Oxford Smoke Control Order No.4: It is an offence to emit smoke from the chimney of a building.
- TR.3, TR.11, and TR.12 – Car Parking Standards: The City Council will not allow any significant increase in the overall number of car-parking spaces in the transport Central Area or development that provides an inappropriate level of car-parking spaces. It will attempt to reduce the level of non-residential car parking.



2

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

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2 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

2.1 History of the Site¹

The site of Oxford has had sporadic settlement since the Neolithic period. Bronze Age barrows have been found in the University Parks (linear barrow cemetery), in the Science Area (double-ditched barrow), and on St. Michael's Street. Oxford has had a continuous history of occupation since at least the 8th Century AD. The University of Oxford itself has a long-standing tradition of exceptional education: Able to trace its roots to the 11th Century, it is the oldest university in the English-speaking world.



Figure 2. Logan's 1675 plan of Oxford. South is at the top of the image. For orientation, the Church of St. Michael at the North Gate can be seen on the bottom left-hand side of the image and Bulwark's Lane can be seen at the top right-hand side with the city wall running between them. The furthest-right wall bastion is the extant bastion in the garden of the Old Boys' High School and the approximate location of the Old Boys' High School is highlighted in red

Historically the Old Boys' High School was located in an extramural district, lying just to the north of the western stretch of Oxford's mediaeval city walls. A stretch of the wall and the remains of a bastion can still be seen at the rear of the garden, just to the south of the building. The earliest parts of the wall can be dated from documentary evidence to shortly after 1226.² The bastion was apparently uncovered during the digging of the foundations for

¹ A short chronology of the Old Boys' High School can be found in **Appendix 3**.

² Durham, B., Halpin, C., and Palmer, N., 'Oxford's Northern Defences: Archaeological Studies: 1971-82' in *Oxoniensia* 48 (1983) 19.

the nearby Wesley Memorial Church in 1870.³ The bastion and stretch of wall is mediaeval at its base but has been rebuilt since, with the blocked windows probably dating from the 17th century.⁴ A thick layer of loam containing 12-13th-century pottery found to the north of the wall in 1977-8 suggests that a mediaeval city ditch predated the wall in this location.⁵ The ditch was approximately 12-metres wide and may have run through part of the location of the Old Boys High School itself.

This area remained extramural into the early-modern period, with Agas' 1578 map showing the area immediately south of the wall (now the Wesley Memorial Church) dominated by open land or orchards, and the area north of the wall as clear fields. Oxford's 16th-century decline was followed by a period of substantial growth into the 17th century, with its population rising from c.3,000 in the mid-16th century to c.10,000 by the 1660s.⁶ Loggan's plan of Oxford was produced in 1675 and by this point the northern extra-mural district had been substantially developed. In this plan, the site of the Old Boys' School is shown mostly covered by gardens and outbuildings, with a row of tenements at the front of the site (**Figure 2**).

Oxford's early modern development peaked in the late 17th century, with a moderate decline in population occurring during the 18th century. The city saw historic growth in the 19th century, with its population increasing fivefold between 1801 and 1901.⁷

This area immediately north of the city underwent development in the first half of the 19th Century. Beaumont Street was the first major Victorian suburban housing development in Oxford. It was constructed on a strip of land owned by St. John's College, and located between the college and Worcester College. The land was first advertised for lease in 1820, and the construction conducted between 1822 and 1833 as leases were taken up.⁸ St. John Street, running north from Beaumont Street, was similarly developed in the 1830s and 1840s. Magdalen Street, between George Street and Beaumont Street, was also developed during this period, and the department store Elliston and Cavell (now Debenhams) was opened there in 1835.

The increasing importance of this then-extramural district was emphasised in 1839 by the decision to site the University Galleries (the Ashmolean Museum since 1908) and the Taylor Institution itself at the eastern end of Beaumont Street, on land owned by Worcester College. A young George Gilbert Scott won the competition to construct the Martyr's Memorial in the same year, and this was raised in 1841-43 at the junction of St. Giles's and Magdalen Street.

³ http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/city_wall/01_george_street.html, accessed 22nd July 2013.

⁴ RCHM, 159.

⁵ Durham, B., *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 19.

⁶ Tyack, G., *Oxford: an Architectural Guide* (Oxford, 1998) 116-17.

⁷ *Ibid*, 204.

⁸ *Ibid*.

By 1879, when the corporation decided to build the High School on the George Street plot, the site housed a blacksmith and a public house called the Black Swan Inn. The Black Swan Inn had been there since at least 1803, when it is mentioned in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*.⁹ As **Figure 3** shows, the eastern wing of the original phase of the Old Boys' High School overlays the site of the rear buildings of the Black Swan. The Wesley Memorial Church had been constructed directly to the south of the site in the 1870s, opening in 1878.



Figure 3. 1878 OS map with the approximate location of the Old Boys' High School superimposed in red. Orientated with north at the top of the image. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2013). All rights reserved. (2013)

Until 1872, New Inn Hall Street stretched only as far as St. Michael's Street, where it swung eastwards to Cornmarket, following the line of the old city walls. In 1872 it was extended northwards to connect with George Street, bringing this into better contact with the urban centre. This precipitated the revitalisation of George Street in the following decades, with the Old Fire Station and the adjacent Corn Exchange being built in 1894-6 to designs by H.W. Moore, with a row of four shops being constructed directly to the west of the Corn Exchange as part of the same development.¹⁰ The extension of New Inn Hall Street developed a circuit

⁹ http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/george_street/pubs.html, accessed 22nd July 2013.

¹⁰ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 12th October 1895.

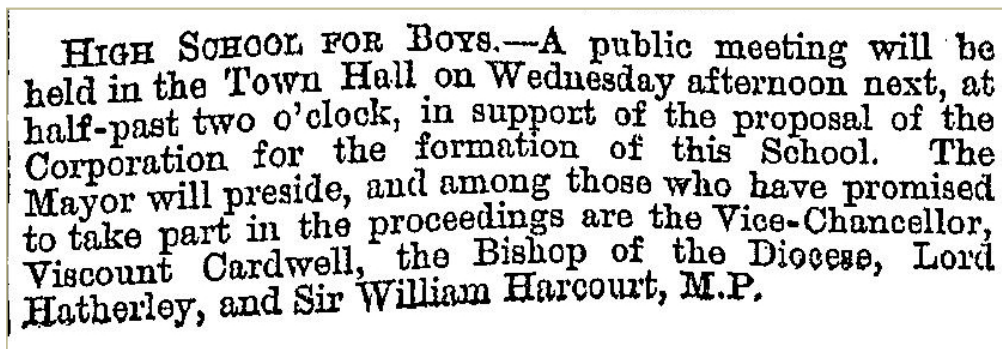
of shopping streets consisting of Queen Street, New Inn Hall Street, George Street, and Cornmarket, much to the commercial benefit of George Street.¹¹

The commercial development of this part of Oxford continued into the 20th century, with the construction of the New Theatre in 1934 (replacing an 1886 building, which itself replaced the 1836 Victoria Theatre to the rear) and the Cinema (now the Odeon) in 1935 (on the site of the 1850 chapel of St. George-the-Martyr). The large brick commercial building at 63-69 George Street was constructed on the site of the old Oxford Co-operative and Industrial Society building in 1908. Nuffield College was constructed to the west of the Old Boys' High School, between Worcester Street and Bulwarks Lane, in 1949-60.

In the final quarter of the 20th century George Street increasingly became a focus for restaurants and public houses, with numbers increasing threefold from 7 in 1973 to 21 in 2008.¹² Gloucester Green, previously the site of the city gaol, had served as a car park since the relocation of the cattle market in 1935, but in 1987 was redeveloped to provide a public square.

The commercial development of George Street throughout the 20th century means that much of its 19th-century character has now been lost. The Corn Exchange/Old Fire Station, the YMCA building at the eastern end of the street (constructed in 1891, though all but the façade is currently undergoing redevelopment), and the Grapes Public house (rebuilt in 1879), along with Old Boys' High School, represent the oldest remaining buildings on the street.

2.2 Construction and subsequent history of the Old Boys' High School



HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS.—A public meeting will be held in the Town Hall on Wednesday afternoon next, at half-past two o'clock, in support of the proposal of the Corporation for the formation of this School. The Mayor will preside, and among those who have promised to take part in the proceedings are the Vice-Chancellor, Viscount Cardwell, the Bishop of the Diocese, Lord Hatherley, and Sir William Harcourt, M.P.

Figure 4. Extract from *Jackson's Oxford Journal* for 26th January 1878

The construction of the City of Oxford High School for Boys was the result of a scheme proposed by T.H. Green (1836-82), an educational reformer and the first senior member of the University to be elected to the City Council. The scheme was designed to link Town and Gown by providing a means by which local children could enter the University 'without reference to social conditions or religious belief.'¹³ A meeting was held to discuss this

¹¹ http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/george_street/1861_census.html, accessed 23rd July 2013.

¹² http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/george_street/shops_1973_2008.html, accessed 23rd July 2013.

¹³ Whyte, W., *Oxford Jackson: Architecture, Education, Status, and Style, 1835-1924* (Oxford, 2005) 145.

thoroughly progressive proposal at the town hall on 30th January 1878. This was attended by, among others, the Vice-Chancellor, the Lord Mayor, and the Bishop of Oxford.¹⁴ Over the following year subscriptions were collected for the new school, which included £200 from Green himself, as well as donations from most of the major figures within the city and university.¹⁵

The scheme formed one of a series of progressive projects conceived by the “the party of progress”, the liberal movement within the University. These included the Examination Schools, the competition for which was held in 1876 and won by Thomas Graham Jackson. This had precipitated an incredibly busy period in Jackson’s career, as he quickly became the architect of choice for the University of Oxford and its colleges, undertaking several projects whilst work continued on the Examination Schools.¹⁶ A competition was held for the City of Oxford High School for Boys in 1879 and Jackson’s plan beat gothic designs by William Wilkinson and Frederick Codd. Codd accused Jackson of plagiarism in his design but the accusation was never borne out. Whyte has noted that Jackson’s design for the High School is often compared to that for the Examination Schools and that this comparison harmonised well with the school’s position as the first rung on the “ladder of learning”, which would ideally culminate in the University examinations.

Jackson’s original plan included several additional classrooms at the west of the site (**Figure 5**) but it was decided, in the interests of bringing costs within budget, to postpone these for future extensions. 14 tenders were received in September 1879 for the construction. They ranged from £7,480 to £14,000, though all but one came in under £8,500. Charles Claridge won with the lowest tender. The city gaol at Gloucester Green had recently been demolished and all the tenders included a reduction in material costs for the reuse of stone reclaimed from this demolition site.¹⁷ The school site was provided free-of-charge by the corporation and site clearance, which must have included the demolition of the Black Swan Inn and other buildings, began in November 1879. Jackson was still recovering from a near-fatal fall from the cliffs at Whitby and was not present for these early stages.¹⁸

Jackson postponed his honeymoon in order to attend the laying of the building’s foundation stone on April 13th 1880. This was a grand affair attended by the Lord Mayor of Oxford and followed by a religious service. The stone itself was laid by Prince Leopold, the Duke of Albany, who had been an undergraduate at Christchurch.¹⁹

There was a clear desire to extend the building as soon as funds became available, as in November 1880 it was decided, at Jackson’s suggestion, to construct a few feet of the

¹⁴ Jackson’s *Oxford Journal*, 26th January 1878.

¹⁵ *Supra*. n.13.

¹⁶ Jackson, T.G., *Recollections: The Life and Travels of a Victorian Architect* (Jackson, N., ed.; London, 2003) 137, 144.

¹⁷ OCA, T/S Misc 9.

¹⁸ Jackson, T.G., *op. cit.*, 140-3.

¹⁹ *Oxford Chronicle and Berks. and Bucks. Gazette: Oxford*, 17th April 1880.

southern wall of the future corridor as part of the construction of the western staircase.²⁰ Construction was complete by 15th April 1881, when the school was formally opened.

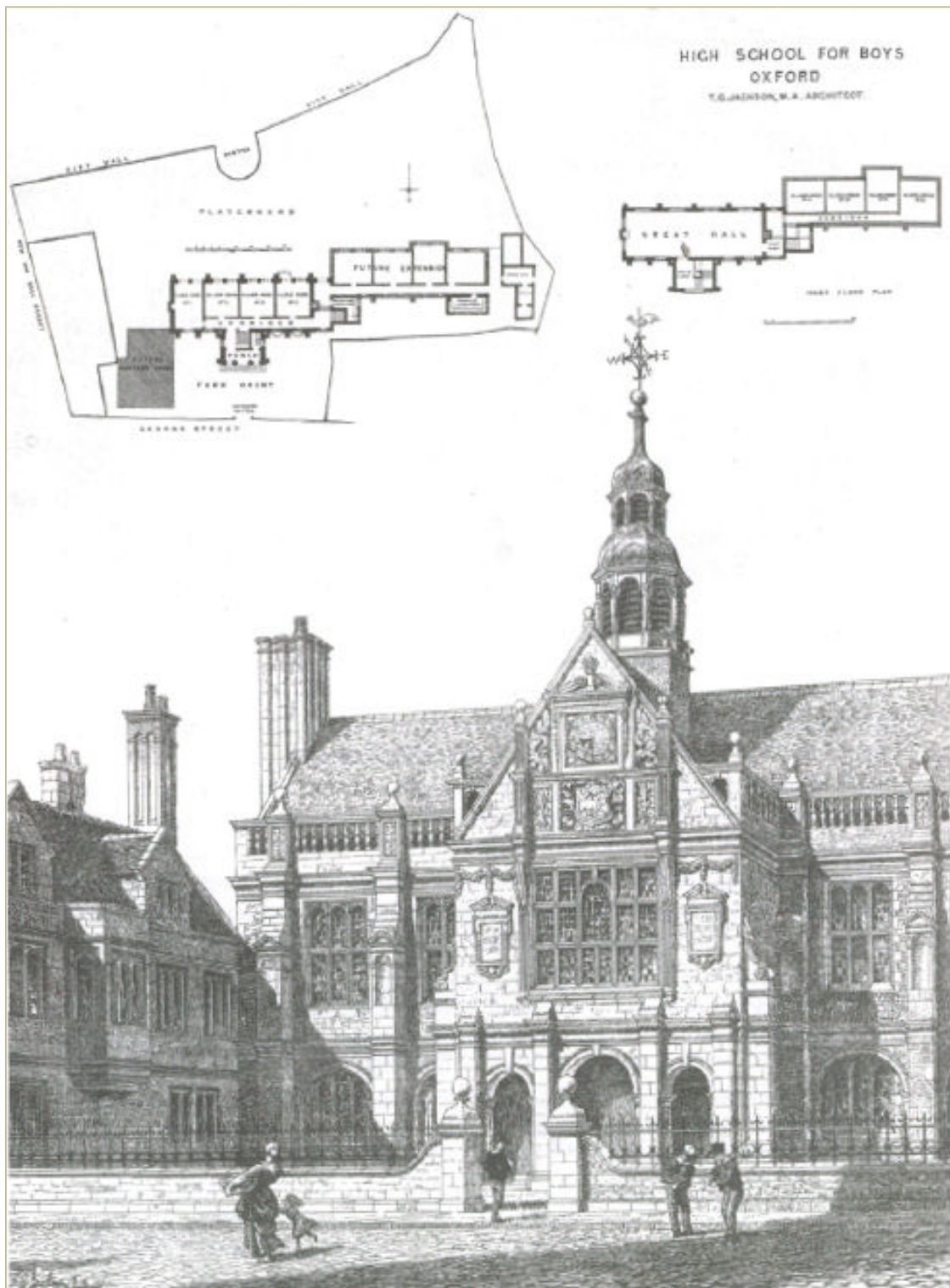


Figure 5. Jackson's scheme for the Old Boys' High School, from *Building News* 28 (1880). The extension on the left-hand side of the image represents the proposed Master's house, which was never constructed

²⁰ OCA, T/S Misc 37.

The school opened with 47 pupils and was a success, though it faced constant financial difficulties in its early decades. Jackson returned in 1892 to extend the building. This did not consist of the 8 classrooms originally planned (visible on the right-hand side of the plans at the top of **Figure 5**), presumably for budgetary reasons, but instead consisted of a single classroom on each floor. This first extension opened in October 1895.²¹ Jackson's work also consisted of a single-storey laboratory block along the wall to Bulwarks Lane, which appears on the 1900 and 1921 OS. From archive photography, this may have been converted to a lavatory at some point before 1976 and is probably the extant plant room.

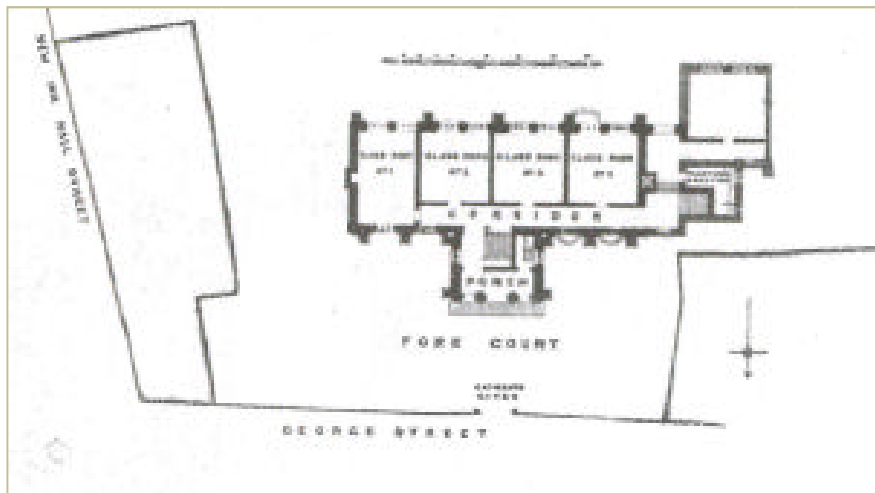


Figure 6. Projection of the extent of the ground floor of the Old Boys' School in 1895, based on Figure 5 and relevant OS maps



Figure 7. Extract from the 1921 OS map for Oxford with the 1915 extension highlighted in red. Orientated with north at the top of the image. ©Crown Copyright

The success of the school meant that it soon outgrew its buildings and by 1915 a large extension was required. This was constructed by Benfield and Loxley to the west of Jackson's extension.²² This extended out from Jackson's 1892-5 addition and included the majority of the existing western wing of the building and incorporated a lecture theatre and common room. It required the demolition of the original toilet block to the west of the main building and either the construction of a new block to the south or the conversion of Jackson's laboratory extension.

It was realised as early as the 1920s that the school's city centre location was too restrictive, allowing

²¹ Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, 12th October 1895.

²² OCA, T/S Misc 37.

little scope for further growth and alternative sites were sought from 1926.²³ Some limited extension on the original site was undertaken in 1935.²⁴ This involved a small, single-storey extension to the west of the 1915 extension, and another single-storey extension immediately to the east of the Jackson building. The flat-roofed, brick, first-floor extension on top of the eastern part of the 1915 extension was presumably constructed at this point, as it was certainly in place prior to the 1976 renovations.²⁵

The local authority continued to seek alternative sites for the increasingly-cramped school and 2 sites had been purchased by 1958. In 1966 a merger was finally arranged with Southfield School on Glanville Road. The combined institution was based at the Glanville Road site and opened in the same year.²⁶ The local authority retained the George Street site, which served as the College for Further Education.

By 1974, St. Peter's College were in negotiations to acquire the building from the City Council and made a successful planning application for changing the building's use from educational to educational and general cultural activities, including a theatre.²⁷ By 1975, St. Peter's College had withdrawn from the negotiations due to the high projected costs of acquiring the site, and the City approached the University.²⁸ The University was interested in the site for the formation of a combined Social Studies centre, something which had been in discussion since the 1960s and had at one point been planned as part of the Wellington Square redevelopment. A long period of negotiation ensued. The University originally offered the Council a property exchange for several houses on Banbury Road, but the weak state of the recently-reorganised Council's finances meant that they could only entertain cash offers rather than taking on further commitments. St. Peter's College returned to the negotiations when the District Valuer valued the premium for the lease of the property at £63,000, far below the sum of £133,000 that had been reached during their earlier negotiations. St. Peter's College asked the University to withdraw from the negotiations but they deemed the importance of the Social Studies centre too great to consider this. Following protracted negotiations, the University was able to obtain the site on a 99-year lease in October 1977, paying a premium of £70,000 and an annual rent of £100.

The building was in a state of substantial disrepair when the University took over occupation and it subsequently underwent its greatest alteration since the 1915 extension. A single-storeyed toilet extension was constructed along the northern elevation, between the western staircase and northern outcropping of the 1915 extension. Internally, several new partitions and openings were created in the ground floor of the original Jackson building, subdividing several of the original classrooms and creating a new corridor with a suspended ceiling

²³ Selwyn, N., 'Education' in Crossley, A., and Elrington, C.R., (eds.), *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4: The City of Oxford* (1979) 442-62.

²⁴ 1935 is the date generally given for this extension (which OS maps show certainly occurs between 1921 and 1939) since as early as the 1970s, though no firm evidence for the date has been cited in any source consulted by the author.

²⁵ ESA photography.

²⁶ *Supra.*, n.23.

²⁷ ESA and planning application 74/00206/A_H.

²⁸ ESA.

(**Figure 8.1**). Similar changes in partitioning were undertaken on the first floor (creating several small spaces from the first-floor corridor and a new corridor from the northern parts of the classrooms) and Jackson’s original, double-height school hall was converted into a library with the introduction of a new mezzanine across the majority of the space. A stage was removed from the western end of the hall and the original, north-western doorway was narrowed, whilst the non-original, south-western stage door (now the main entrance to this space) was enlarged, lowered, and fitted with the elaborate doorcase taken from the north-western doorway (visible to the right of the stage in **Figure 9.2**). The top landing in the western stairwell was raised (from two steps to five), bringing it up to the level of the hall. The non-original stage entrance to the hall from this side previously relied on a narrow wooden staircase from the landing (**Figures 10.1, 10.2, and 10.5**). Additionally, a new staircase was constructed in the northern stairwell, connecting the mezzanine level to the staircase-proper. Otherwise, the building was extensively refurbished internally and three internal disabled ramps were installed.

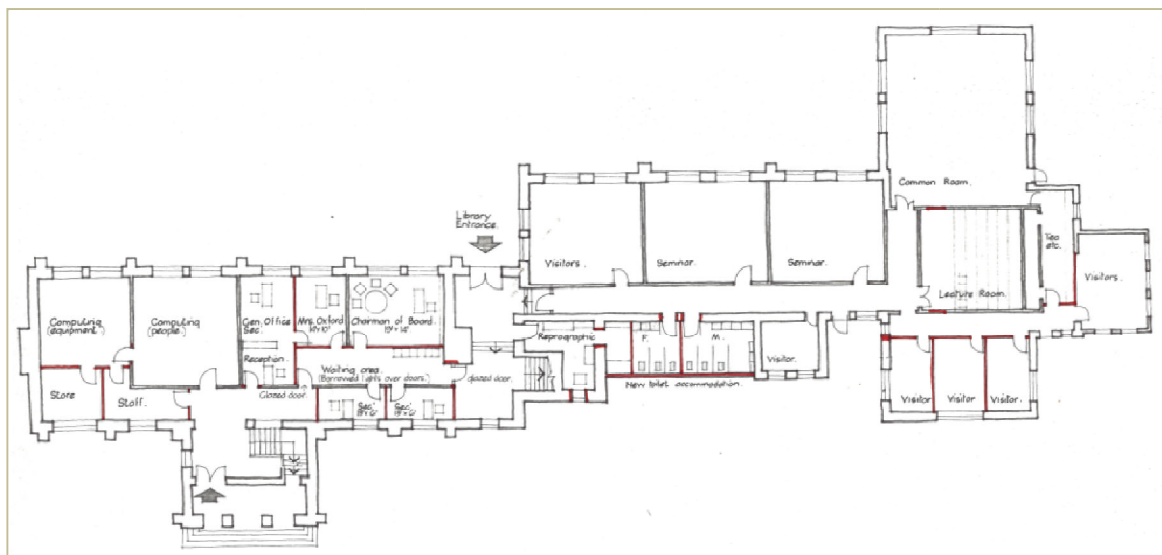


Figure 8.1. A ground-floor plan showing the alterations as proposed in 1977. Proposed alterations are highlighted in red. Orientated with north at the bottom of the image

One of the 1935 extensions, immediately to the east of the Jackson building, was demolished, as was another large building close to the city wall, at the southern edge of the site. Another low-quality, single-storey extension was also removed from in front of the western part of the northern elevation of the original Jackson building (**Figure 8.2**). The main building itself was in need of widespread external repair. The invitation to tender, written in January 1977 in anticipation of the University’s occupation of the building, summarised the required works as:

‘...it is obvious that several stones require refacing in natural stone on the chimney stack on the west elevation [of the] main building. Coping stones on this elevation are also badly eroded as is the stone mullion to the window on the same elevation. Much pointing is

required here too. A number of balusters on the front elevation are also damaged through erosion. Several stones to the buttresses on the south elevation are in need of replacement.²⁹

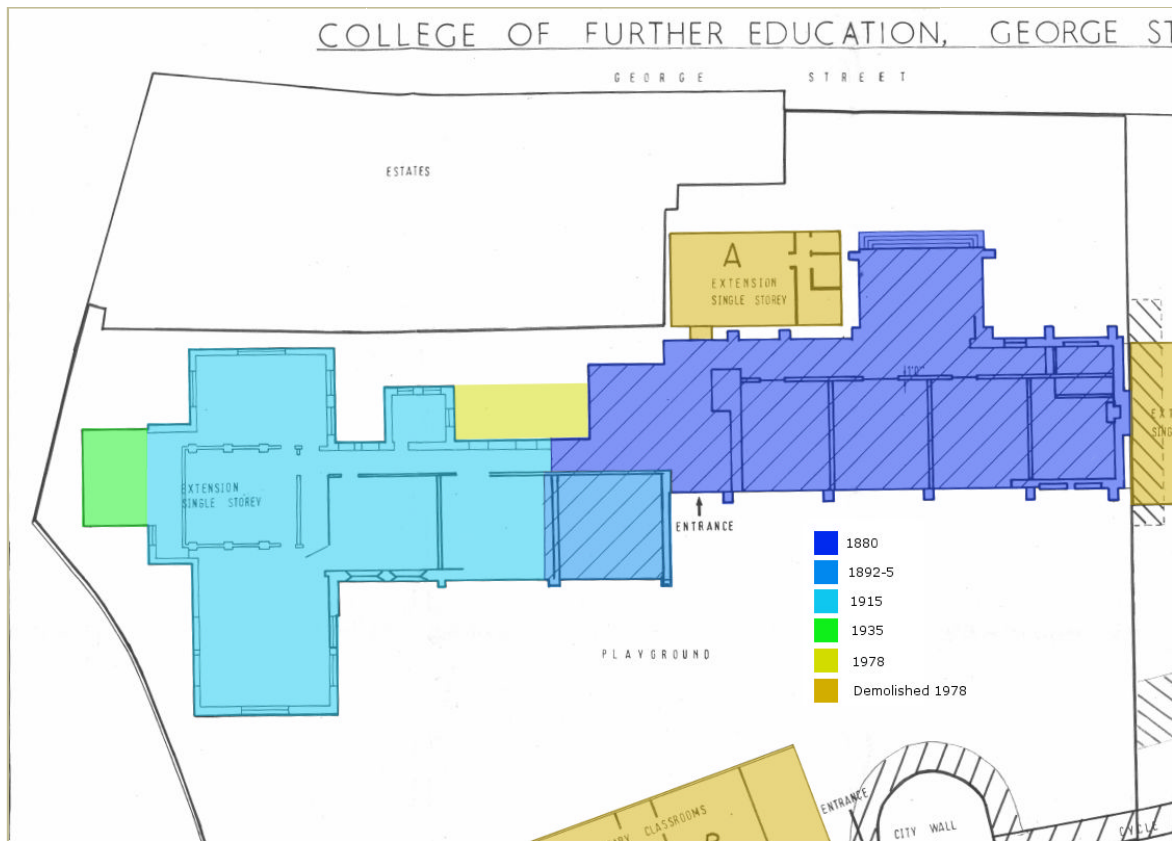


Figure 8.2. 1977 ground-floor plan showing the construction dates of the various elements of the building. Orientated with north at the top of the image

The work also included thoroughly cleaning the external stonework and relaying the flagstones in front of the main entrance. The windows of the flat-roofed, probably 1935, addition on top of the 1915 extension were replaced with mullioned windows to match those elsewhere (**Figure 9.3** and **9.4**). The building was also reroofed at this point. A new, fibreglass face was fitted to the clock on the main façade, which matched the design of the original but replaced the yellow paint with gold leaf, and an electric movement was also fitted.

Following these widespread alterations and renovations, the building was occupied by the Social Studies Faculty Centre, elements of which remained resident until 2004. No major alterations were carried out during their tenure. In 1992 a satellite dish was fitted to the flat-roofed, first-floor extension. Similarly, listed building consent was granted for fitting security cameras in 1995.³⁰ In the same year, a new boiler room was fitted in the basement and the basement escape hatch was replaced and raised. It was also in 1995 that several defective iron rooflights were removed, with the affected areas retiled. It is not clear where these were located but it unlikely to have been on the original Jackson phase of the building, which

²⁹ ESA.

³⁰ Listed building consent applications 92/00369/L and 95/00427/L.

shows no evidence of rooflights.³¹ A 1992 roof plan only shows rooflights on the single-storey extension but this area is flat roofed and not tiled, so cannot be the affected area. With this in mind, this work may have been to the 1895 or 1915 outbuilding, now a plant room, which is tiled and does not feature on the roof plan.

In 1996, the single-storeyed, 1978 toilet extension was reroofed. A damaged quoin at the ground-floor rear of the building was replaced in 1998. In 1999, a new disabled access ramp was fitted to the entrance on the western elevation of the 1915 extension.³² A timber stud partition was fitted in the ground-floor print room, behind the western staircase, in 2001.

By the late 1990s, the Old Boys' High School was occupied by a constituent department of the Social Sciences Faculty (the successor to the Social Studies Faculty), the Department of Politics and International Relations. Plans were formulated to move the department to the Manor Road site in 1998 but this was not possible and they did not relocate until July 2004. The building did not remain empty for long, with the Faculty of Classics occupying the building from August 2004, during the redevelopment of the Classics Centre at 66 St. Giles'. As the Old Boys' High School's status as the Classics Centre was only temporary, little alteration occurred during this period. The Faculty of Classics moved into the redeveloped Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies in late 2006, before it was formally opened in April 2007.

There was a short period between Classics moving out of the Old Boys' High School and its new occupants, the Faculty of History, moving in during which the building was rewired and redecorated. A new disabled access ramp was fitted to the rear entrance, which had served as the main entrance since at least 2004, but possibly since 1978. The building continues to serve as the History Faculty to this day.

In 2009, repairs and cleaning were carried out to the external stonework on the primary, northern façade, plus the boundary wall and piers on George Street. In 1936 a plaque commemorating the City of Oxford High School's most famous alumnus, T.E. Lawrence, was unveiled by Winston Churchill. This travelled with the school to Glanville Road during its merger in 1966 and, following conservation work, was returned to Old Boys' High School in 2010, being displayed since in the northern stairwell.

³¹ ESA.

³² Ibid.

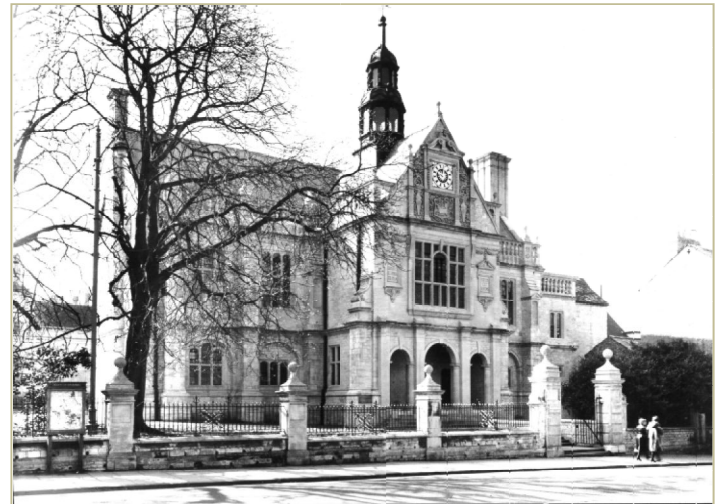


Figure 9. 9.1, top left, the base of the northern staircase in 1977, looking eastwards. 9.2, top right, the first-floor hall in 1977, looking westwards. 9.3, middle left, the western part of the southern elevation, looking northwards, in 1977. 9.4, middle right, the same area in 1978. 9.5, bottom left, the northern elevation of the Jackson phase of the building in 1977. 9.6, bottom right, the same area in 1978



Figure 10. 10.1, top left, the main landing in 1977 showing the steps and stage door to the main hall. 10.2, top right, the same space in 2013. The doorway on the right-hand side equates to the location of the coat hooks in 10.1. Note the raised landing and the introduction of the doorcase to this doorway. 10.3, bottom left, the doorcase visible in 10.2 in its original position to the north. 10.4, bottom right, the main hall looking westwards in 1978, following the introduction of the mezzanine, the removal of the stage, and the relocation of the doorcase. Compare to the same view in Figure 9.2

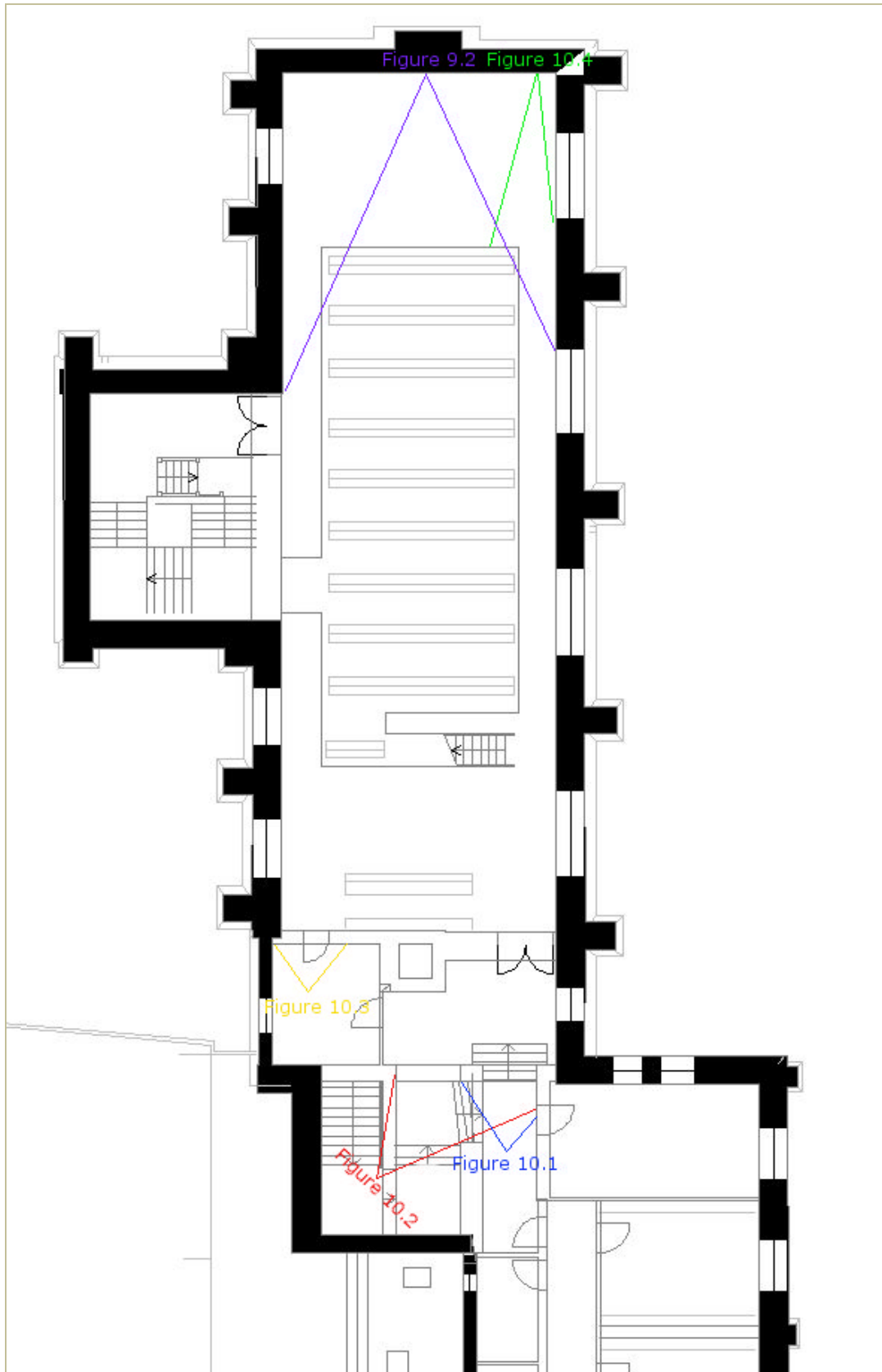


Figure 10.5. Modern first-floor floor plan showing for the purposes of clarity the locations of Figures 9.2, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4



SIGNIFICANCE

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3 SIGNIFICANCE

NPPF paragraph 128 specifies that in assessing planning applications:

‘Local planning authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting.’

The significance of the Old Boys’ High School was publically recognised by its designation as a Grade-II-listed building in 1972 (see **Appendix 1**) and by its inclusion in the Central (City and University) Conservation Area (see **Appendix 2**).

3.1 Significance as part of George Street and the Central (City and University) Conservation Area

The Old Boys’ High School is an important contributory factor in the character of George Street. George Street is a busy commercial street, which since 1872 has formed part of a circuit of shopping streets with Cornmarket, Queen Street, and New Inn Hall Street. Apart from the Old Fire Station/Corn Exchange, the four associated shops, and the YMCA building at the eastern end of the street, the Old Boys’ High School is the only Victorian building remaining on George Street.

Jackson set the building back slightly from the street in order to give it ‘a certain picturesqueness.’³³ The Old Boys’ High School is surrounded by neighbouring buildings on the east and west, which, combined with being set back from the street, means that it is not



Figure 11. 11.1, top, the piers and screen approached from the west. 11.2, centre, the northern elevation revealed behind the screening buildings. 11.3, bottom, the northern elevation from across the street

³³ OCA, Report from Jackson to the Governing Body, 29th April 1879.

very visible from the street except for in a narrow cone exactly opposite, outside the Odeon cinema (**Figure 11.3**). The result of this is that Jackson's original northern elevation has quite a striking impact on this part of the street, coming as something of a surprise as one passes the screening buildings and the set-back frontage is revealed (**Figures 11.1 and 11.2**). The aesthetic value of this effect is significant and a defining factor in the character of this part of the street. The piers and iron screen along Broad Street are also of aesthetic value and, combined with the building itself and the cycle racks outside, forms (following the Saïd Business School and Nuffield College) one of the first conspicuous indications of academic Oxford for visitors coming from the west of the city.

3.2 Architectural Significance

3.2.1 External Elevations

The external elevations of the building are amongst its most significant features. The building consists of several distinct phases: the 1880-1 Jackson building; the 1892-5 Jackson extension; the 1915 extension; the small 1935 extensions; and the 1978 lavatory extension (**Figure 1**). The Jackson portions of the building are by far the most significant. The easternmost portion of the 1915 extension blends seamlessly with Jackson's 1892-5 extension (**Figure 14**), presumably following his plans, which had called for a larger extension than the one he constructed.³⁴



Figure 12. The George Street frontage

³⁴ There is no indication that Jackson was involved with the 1915 extension, though, despite being in his early 80s, he was still practising at the time.

The main, northern façade of Jackson’s building is the single most significant element of the building. This possesses substantial illustrative value: it has been compared to the Examination Schools, with the use of the “Anglo-Jackson” “architecture of progress” marking this building as a progressive project, linked to the University party which included the likes of Benjamin Jowett and T.H. Green.³⁵ The cupola in particular stands as a less elaborate version of the same feature at the Examination Schools. The building also represents Jackson’s first use of course rubble walling combined with Clipsham dressing, a technique he utilised on one of his most lauded designs, the High Street frontage of Brasenose College.³⁶ Interestingly enough, much of the building stone for the original elements of the building came from the demolition of Gloucester Green Gaol.



Figure 13. The rear garden, formerly the playground, looking north-westwards with the city wall bastion at the left of the image

The building also has illustrative value regarding gender disparities in 19th-century educational aspirations, bearing comparison with Jackson’s exactly contemporary High School for Girls at 21 Banbury Road. Jackson’s use at Banbury Road of Queen Anne with domestic overtones, completed on a modest scale, contrasts starkly with the imposing, Jacobean grandiosity of the Old Boys’ High School.³⁷ The High School for Girls certainly does not evoke the Examination Schools in the same way as the Old Boys’ High School. Despite Jackson’s involvement in the early construction at Lady Margaret Hall (1878) and Somerville College (1879), the High School for Girls seems, architecturally, to have been placed on a different “ladder of learning” to the High School for Boys.

The building is also of high aesthetic significance and, as mentioned above, an integral element to the character of Broad Street. The recent cleaning of the external stonework has greatly enhanced the aesthetic value of the building, which benefits from Jackson’s usual skill of composition:

‘Where Mr. Jackson finds himself with an exterior wall space of any extent to be filled with design, he generally manages to achieve an eminently pictorial result. For this reason his porches, his gate-houses, and such prominent motives for decoration as the east and west ends of Churches and Chapels, have been treated by him with a richness and a fertility of

³⁵ Whyte, W., *op. cit.*, 145.

³⁶ Howell, P. ‘Oxford Architecture, 1800-1914’ in Brock, M.G., and Curthoys, M.C., (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2* (Oxford, 2000) 752.

³⁷ Tyack, G., *op. cit.*, 254-55.

resource that ensure remark from both the artist and the wayfarer who knows nothing of such things.’³⁸

Jackson had intended the front yard of the building to form something of a quadrangle, with this bounded by the school on the south, the neighbouring building to the west, the screen to the north, and the Master’s House to the east (**Figure 5**). The Master’s House was never constructed but the yard now provides a pleasant, green space, with its path leading around the building to the rear entrance.

The rear elevations are of less significance than the northern elevation but remain of aesthetic value, especially when taken in conjunction with their landscaped setting and the mediaeval city wall to the south (**Figure 14**). The rear entrance (now the main entrance) is located in a narrow, balustraded range which must have seemed incongruous when first constructed, as it was clearly designed to bridge the space between the original building and Jackson’s planned extension. The 1915 extension is perfectly pleasant and does not detract from the Jackson building; however, the first-floor, flat-roofed extension (probably dating from 1935) is intrusive.



Figure 14. The rear elevation looking north-westwards. The original Jackson building, which includes the entrance, is on the right of the image. The first bay immediately to the left of the entrance is Jackson’s 1892-5 extension. The next bay onwards represents the 1915 extension, apart from the flat-roofed first-floor section, which probably dates from 1935.

³⁸ ‘T.G. Jackson RA and his work: I: collegiate works’ in *Architecture* (January, 1897) 21.

3.2.2 Interior Spaces

The interior spaces in the original Jackson building have been the subject of extensive partitioning, with none of the original classrooms retaining their original proportions. In the northern part of the ground floor and in the first-floor portions of the extensions, corridors have been subdivided to create small rooms, with previously-larger rooms being subdivided to create corridors and smaller rooms (see phased plans in **Appendix 6**). Apart from its northern arm, the 1915 extension retains the original proportions of its rooms. The first-floor classrooms, once subdivided as library stacks are now subdivided as offices and a corridor. Despite the loss of the original, generous proportions in these spaces, there are significant and attractive items throughout the building, including doorcases and exposed stone quoins, window settings, and archways in the Jackson portion of the building.

Fortunately, subdivision has only affected the less significant spaces in the building, with the northern staircase, the first-floor hall, and the western staircase and landing remaining largely unaffected.

3.2.2.1 The northern staircase

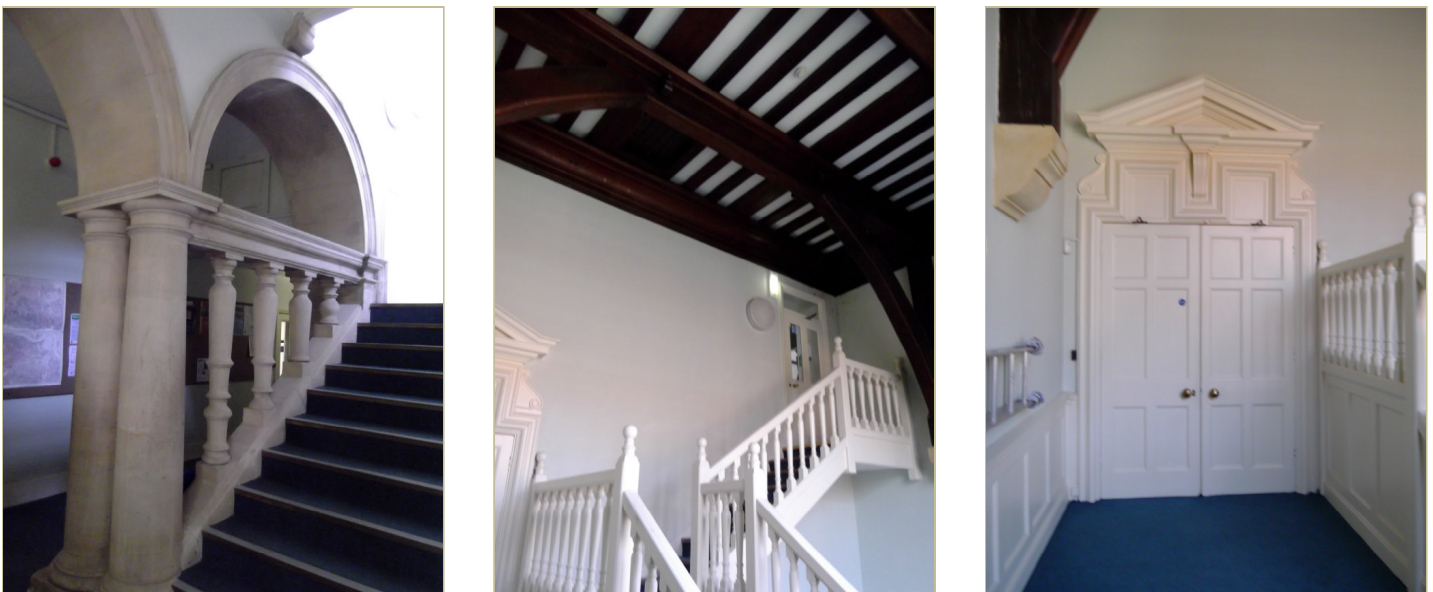


Figure 15. 15.1, left, the screen from the hall. 15.2, centre, the 1978 staircase to the mezzanine level and the tie-beam ceiling. 15.3, right, the doorcase to the Hall

The northern staircase was originally the main staircase of the building, leading from the original front entrance to the hall on the first-floor. It has a stone arch supported by Doric columns with a balustraded screen, separating the stairs from the hall (**Figure 15.1**). A similar scheme can be seen in other Jackson buildings including the Examination Schools and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. T.E. Lawrence's plaque has been displayed on the staircase since it returned to the building in 2010 and there is a commemorative plaque for pupils killed in the Great War and the Second World War. There is a moulded stone handrail of substantial aesthetic significance. The space contains some fine joinery, including a panelled dado, a pedimented doorcase to the Hall (**Figure 15.3**), which bears comparison

with doorcases at the Examination Schools, and an attractive tie-beam ceiling. The major alteration that has occurred in this space was the introduction in 1978 of an additional staircase from the first-floor landing to a new door at the level of the mezzanine in the Hall (Figure 3).

3.2.2.2 The first-floor Hall

The Hall on the first floor was originally the main school hall. It has since served as a library and is now a research space for the History Faculty. This is an attractive space characterised by copious natural light from generous stone-mullioned, leaded windows. The tie-beam ceiling, with its elaborate crown posts, dominates the space and is nearly identical to Jackson's contemporary ceiling at the High School for Girls at 21 Banbury Road. The room has wooden panelling to cornice level and this is fitted with iron heating grilles at skirting level, utilising a scheme Jackson also employed at the Examination Schools and the Oxford Military College in Cowley.³⁹ At the eastern end of the Hall is an attractive stone fireplace with an elaborate overmantel. This would always have been primarily for show as the room, being too large to heat with a fire, was artificially heated from the start.

The original paint scheme in this area was a reddish-brown, suggesting an attempt to disguise the pine panelling as oak. This was later painted a similar gloss green to that applied to the Examination Schools during the Second World War.⁴⁰

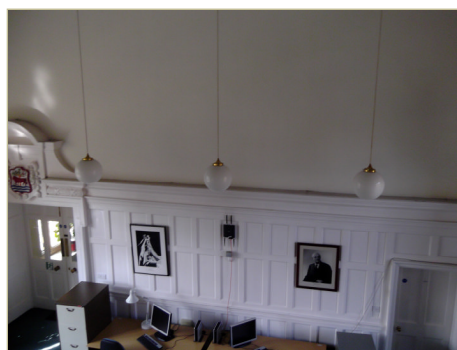


Figure 16. 16.1, left, the Hall looking north-eastwards, showing the mezzanine and ceiling. 16.2, centre, the swapped doors at the western end of the Hall, looking down from the mezzanine. 16.3, right, the fireplace and overmantel at the eastern end of the Hall

³⁹ OCA, Report from Jackson to the Governing Body, 29th April 1879.

⁴⁰ **Annexe 1** shows a report on the building's original paint scheme from ESA.

There have been two major alterations in this space. The first is the mezzanine which now dominates the centre of the room. This is executed as unobtrusively as possible but ultimately detracts greatly from the character of the space. That being said, it is a more elegant solution than the horizontal partitioning employed in the equivalent space in the High School for Girls, at least allowing the ceiling and windows to retain their contexts.

The other major alteration was to the doorways at the western end of the room. Only the northernmost of these two doorways is original and until 1978 this possessed the doorcase now on the southern of the two (**Figure 10**). At this point the northern doorway was reduced in size and made into a narrow staff door to the issue desk of the Social Studies Library. The southern doorway had been a stage door, installed alongside a non-original stage at the western end of the Hall at some point between 1881 and 1978. In 1978 this door was widened, fitted with the doorcase from the original door, and made into the main doorway of the Hall, which it remains to this day.

3.2.2.3 The Western Staircase and Landing

Entry to the building is no longer via the front porch leading to the grand north staircase but rather at the rear of the building. The rear doorway leads onto a modest hallway but the experience is improved somewhat if one moves northwards onto the western staircase. Charmingly, a window cill here is marked with the impression of the school bell which once rested there, with this space marked by a plaque. The staircase is a grand piece, wide and shallow with a moulded stone handrail. It is well lit and topped by an elaborate archway, reaching outwards in four directions, and a balustraded screen. The landing has been altered, as mentioned above (**Section 3.2.2.2**) with the swapping of the doorcases on the doors leading into the Hall, and by its raising by two steps in 1978 in order to accommodate these changes.



Figure 17. 17.1, left, arches at the top of the staircase. 17.2, right, the staircase and handrail. Please also see Figure 10.1 and 10.2 above

3.2.2.4 Significant spaces in the 1915 extension

The Common Room in the 1915 extension is an attractive space. It is certainly less significant than the Jackson portions of the building but is of aesthetic and illustrative value. It has an attractive barrel-vaulted wooden ceiling, with quatrefoil decorations around the light settings. The leaded windows in this area are designed to match, on a less elaborate scale, the windows of the original portions of the building.

The raked lecture theatre is a pleasant, functional space.

3.2.2.5 The basement

The basement is a utilitarian space which has not been converted for occupation and contains plant. It does, however, have a simple groin vault, similar to that employed by Jackson in the basement of the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art.

3.3 Historical Significance

The Old Boys' High School possesses extensive historical significance. The City of Oxford High School, which occupied the site from 1881 to 1966, has an impressive roster of alumni, which imparts great association value to the building. The most famous amongst these alumni are T.E. Lawrence, of "Lawrence of Arabia" fame, and the poet John Drinkwater. Lawrence is commemorated with a plaque in the building. Alumni also include famous media personalities, such as comedian Ronnie Barker (the nearby pub "The Four Candles" being named, in recognition of his attendance at the school, for his most famous sketch) and popular scientist Professor Heinz Wolff (who is also of academic significance, having coined the term "bioengineering"). Famous academics include Professor Lord John Krebs (Principal of Jesus College) and A.W. Lawrence (T.E. Lawrence's youngest brother and Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge University, 1944-51).

The building also has extensive social value. The City of Oxford High School has a lively and active old boys' network, called the City of Oxford School Association (COSA). This was formed in 2005 and covers alumni who attended up to the school's merger in 1966. COSA was instrumental in arranging the return of the T.E. Lawrence plaque and the war memorials to the building in 2010.⁴¹ The association regularly visit the building as part of their gatherings.

As an institution, the school continued to flourish at the Glanville Road site after its merger with Southfields School, and since 2011 has been known as the Oxford Spires Academy.

The building also has illustrative and association value as an important project of the progressive movement within the 19th-century University and as one of the larger projects of Oxford's most important 19th-century architect, Thomas Graham Jackson.

⁴¹ <http://cosa.webplus.net/page6.html>, accessed 21st July 2013.

3.4 Archaeological Significance

The Old Boys' High School is located in Oxford City Council's Archaeology Area. As suggested by the city wall bastion in the rear yard, the building is situated in an area of some archaeological significance. When the yard was landscaped during its conversion from a playground in 1977-8, three trenches were dug by the Oxford University Archaeological Society. These revealed evidence for the 12th-13th-century city ditch which ran through the site, as well as for post-mediaeval settlement in the area.⁴² Prior to the construction of the High School in 1880-1, the site was occupied by the Black Swan Inn, as well as a blacksmith and cottages. The clearance of the site in 1879 uncovered some finds related to Roman occupation, including a patera and a quern.⁴³

It is likely that there is archaeological material of some significance preserved on this site.

3.5 Significance as a functioning University building

The Old Boys' High School has served an educational purpose since its original construction and since 1978 it has been occupied by various departments of the University of Oxford. It currently forms the primary office, administrative, and research space for the Faculty of History, the top such department in the country.⁴⁴ It also has several teaching rooms, including the 1915 lecture theatre, and a common room. The building's institutional link to the University of Oxford is relatively modern but its usage in an educational capacity is linked closely to its history and is of some significance.

⁴² Durham, B., *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 19.

⁴³ Manning, P. and Leeds, E.T., *An Archaeological Survey of Oxfordshire* (Oxford, 1921) 253.

⁴⁴ 'In the 2008 Research Assessment exercise, the Oxford History Faculty was rated as the best in the country, according to the widely-used "power index": <http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/alumni/history-at-oxford.html>, accessed 31st July 2013.

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VULNERABILITIES

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4 VULNERABILITIES

The ability of the Old Boys' High School to fulfil a contemporary function

The Old Boys' High School was constructed as a school building in several phases. This function has not been maintained and the original phase of construction has been subject to extensive internal alteration, most notably in the subdivision of the ground-floor classrooms and the construction of a mezzanine in the Hall. The 1915 portion of the building has been subject to less alteration. Some of the alterations in the original portion of the building could feasibly be reversed if so desired, for instance the mezzanine only touches the walls of the Hall at one point and if removed would return the space to a state close to the original.

The use of the building in an educational function is central to its history and character, although, whilst members of the University were instrumental in its initial construction, its institutional relationship with the University of Oxford is a relatively recent development. The current use of the building, as the History Faculty offices, is a sustainable usage and does not threaten the significance of the building. Despite the alterations mentioned above, the University's occupation of the building has enhanced its significance, leaving it in a far better state than when they obtained the lease for the building in 1977.

The current function is not the only potential sustainable function for the building but it does fund the upkeep and conservation of the heritage asset and ensures its continued existence and significance. The usage does not threaten the significant features and the heritage asset's Grade-II listing ensures that any future alterations operate within the constraints of an accepted understanding of the building's significance as a heritage asset. Whilst some limited change into the future may be inevitable in order to maintain the active use of the listed buildings, its unique character should be respected in any future plans.

4.1 Accessibility

The ability of the Old Boys' High School to be accessed and enjoyed by anyone who has a legitimate right to use the building is central to its significance. The significance of the building is lessened if any person who wishes to legitimately use and enjoy the building is hampered in doing so by inadequate access provision. The accessibility of the building is hampered by its original design but has been improved somewhat in recent decades.

The primary access from George Street is via 7 steps without a



Figure 18. Ramped access to the main, rear entrance

handrail, though there is sloped access from New Inn Hall Street. From here access to the building for all users is via the rear entrance, which has a wheelchair ramp and an automatic card-operated doorway. The ground-floor is on several levels but there are 3 ramps, providing wheelchair access throughout this floor. There is also an external ramp to the emergency exit from the Common Room. There is a disabled lavatory located in the 1978 extension on the ground floor. Unfortunately there is no lift or wheelchair access to the first floor or mezzanine.

It is positive that all users are able to enter the building through the same point but it is unfortunate that there is no level access to the upper areas. The upper parts of the Jackson portion of the building are all of high significance and it unlikely that a lift could be fitted in these areas without affecting the character of the heritage asset. It is conceivable that a lift could be fitted in the 1915 portion of the building without affecting its significance. This would, however, leave the problem of negotiating the level change on the western landing.

4.2 Maintenance

4.2.1 Exterior Elevations and Landscape Setting

The elevations of the Old Boys' High School, especially the northern elevation, are amongst its most significant features, possessing extensive illustrative value and being defining features in the character of George Street. The elevations have been partially refaced, notably in 1977-8, and have been cleaned on several occasions. The face and movement of the clock were replaced in 1977-8 and an access ramp was fitted to the rear in 2007 but otherwise there has been, excepting the extensions to the west, little alteration to the primary elevations. Poor quality single-storey extensions were fitted to the north-western and eastern elevations of the Jackson building at some point in the 20th century but these were demolished in 1977-8.

The extant extensions remain in a clean and attractive state as do the original, Jackson portions of the building. This state has been achieved through regular cleaning and repair, with limited refacing; however, the elevations remain open to weathering and erosion, potential vandalism, and pollution; damage which could detract from the significance of the heritage asset.

The landscape setting of the building is an attractive state. The front garden benefits from some tree cover, with a large tree that had obscured the main porch having been removed in 1977-8. The rear garden was landscaped at the same time and is a pleasant space, peaceful despite its city-centre location. It benefits from the city wall and bastion (maintained separately by the City Council as part of the 1977 lease agreement), which serves as a folly. The plant building along the western boundary of the site is possibly Jackson's 1892-5 laboratory, which was then later converted to lavatories. It has been largely altered and its windows blocked. There was some suggestion in 1976 that, rather than being a conversion of Jackson's laboratory, this was in fact a lavatory block built in 1915 to replace that demolished by the western extension. In either case it remains curtilage listed.

4.2.2 Internal Spaces

The interior spaces of the building are of illustrative and aesthetic value. Significant elements of historic joinery, such as doorcases and panelling, are present throughout. The Hall and staircases are areas of particular significance. The mezzanine detracts from the significance of the Hall and could conceivably be removed without greatly harming the space; however, this would not be feasible in light of the current operational demands of the building. Exposed services in the building are relatively restrained, with limited visible trunking, pipes, or cable trays. The modern partitioning in the former classrooms on the ground floor and the first-floor extensions does detract from the character of the building, cutting across coving and other details, but these are largely reversible changes.

The building retains various internal features of aesthetic and illustrative value (**Section 3.2.2**). As the interior features are in regular use and of less permanent construction than the external structure of the building, they are vulnerable to vandalism, accidents, and general wear and tear. Some of these issues should be mitigated assuming adequate security and maintenance regimes are in place but ultimately these significant elements will have limited lifespans. These lives can be lengthened as much as possible through regular, adequate monitoring and maintenance.

As a Grade-II-listed building, any alterations, or repairs made with non-original materials, will require listed building consent.

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CONSERVATION
POLICY

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5 CONSERVATION POLICY

Having established the significance of the Old Boys' High School as a heritage asset, and having identified ways in which the significance of the Old Boys' High School is vulnerable to harm, it is necessary to recommend policies to reduce the probability of such harm occurring, and thereby to conserve the significance of the site. In essence, these policies set parameters for managing the fabric of the site.

The Conservation Plan is intended to be an active tool for the regular maintenance and long-term management of the Old Boys' High School. It needs to be reviewed regularly, and revised as appropriate to take account of additional knowledge and changing priorities.

5.1 **The Old Boys' High School continued use in a contemporary, educational function is important to its continued significance. Permit, in line with NPPF paragraphs 131, 132, 133, and 134, alterations intended to facilitate its continued use in this way**

Its institutional relationship with the University of Oxford is relatively recent but the continued use of the Old Boys' High School in a contemporary and educational function is important to its continued significance. Limited alterations will inevitably be required to allow it to retain this significance in line with modern standards and requirements. If alteration is required in the future it should be permitted with the following provisos:

- Any alterations must be sympathetic to the Old Boys' High School significance as a heritage asset and, in line with NPPF paragraph 134, any proposals that involve 'less than substantial harm to the significance' should deliver 'substantial public benefits.' In line with NPPF paragraph 132, any proposals that involve 'substantial harm or loss' should be 'wholly exceptional.'
- Any changes should: '...preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset' (NPPF paragraph 137).

5.1.1 **In order to ensure that the Old Boys' High School can operate to modern standards, and that its significance can be maintained by making access as wide as possible, special concern should be applied to ensuring that disabled access is adequate**

Ensuring that the heritage asset can be enjoyed as widely as possible will have a major positive impact on its significance. As noted in **Section 4.1**, some improvements in access have been made in the last few decades but there are still substantial issues, primarily around access to the first floor. Access will remain a concern in any plans developed for the site; a vigorous effort should be made to improve access to the site in any future plans, with the University seeking to exceed its statutory obligations and always viewing this as part of an ongoing process.

5.2 Note that the Old Boys' High School is a Grade-II-listed building and ensure that appropriate consents are obtained for works to the interior and exterior of the building

In order to ensure the heritage asset's significance, alterations may be required in the future, and due to the listed status of the building, even minor routine repairs may need consent. Caution should be applied in order to ensure that any statutory duties are fulfilled. In cases of doubt **Estates Services should be contacted in the first instance**, and if necessary they will refer queries on to Oxford City Council.

5.3 Ensure proper consultation in advance of any work to the building with the Local Authority conservation officer (through Estates Services) and any other interested parties

It is important to guarantee that the best advice is obtained at an early stage of any proposal to alter any part of the building in order to ensure that the significance of the building is respected.

5.4 Refer to this Conservation Plan when considering repairs or alterations in any space

The Conservation Plan gives an overview of which aspects of the building are significant or vulnerable. Where original or significant material is extant, repairs should be carried out using the same materials and techniques and should not affect the significance of the asset without providing substantial public benefits in line with NPPF paragraph 134.

5.5 Any alteration or redevelopment must respect the contribution that the Old Boys' High School makes to the character of George Street and the surrounding area

The Old Boys' High School is the finest building on George Street and makes a substantial contribution to the character of the area. The piers and screen onto George Street are also significant. Any plans for alteration must take this contribution into account and not diminish the important rôle the heritage plays in this vicinity.

The city wall and bastion to the rear of the Old Boys' High School remain the responsibility of Oxford City Council but any plans regarding the Old Boys' High School should not detract from their character or significance.

5.6 Conservation of specific factors contributing to overall significance

The Old Boys' High School possesses various internal and external features of some significance (**Sections 3.1, 3.2, and 4.2**). An effort should be made to identify and conserve original or significant architectural features and keep these in use where possible in line with **Section 5.1**; however, it is accepted that all materials have a natural lifespan and some degree of change must be permitted to keep the building safe, usable, and generally fit for function. Some material will have a very long life expectancy if given routine maintenance; others are impermanent and may need periodic replacement. Within the framework of understanding and valuing what is present in the building a degree of ongoing change is inevitable.

5.6.1 Any alterations to be made to the external elevations, including the cupola, roofs, and chimneys, will respect their significance and the contribution they make to their setting

The external elevations are the most significant elements of the building. In particular, the character of the northern elevation, porch, clock, and cupola, facing onto George Street, should be maintained. The external elevations of the Jackson portions of the building are of higher significance than the other portions. The 1915 extension is attractive and its windows in particular should be retained. The probably-1935, flat-roofed first-floor extension is an unattractive and intrusive element, detracting from the character of the building. Equally, the single-storey 1978 toilet extension is operationally vital but of no special significance.

If alterations are considered these should be undertaken only in the context of a thorough understanding of the heritage asset's significance and in line with **Section 5.1** and **5.1.1**.

5.6.2 Any alterations to be made to the interior spaces will respect the significance of both the individual elements and the building as a whole

The interior spaces of the building contain various significant elements, such as historic joinery, arches, and windows. In particular, the first-floor Hall and the western and northern staircases are spaces of high aesthetic value which incorporate characteristic features of Jackson's design. The other spaces in the Jackson portions of the building have been heavily subdivided but retain significant features. The 1915 extension is of less significance, though the Common Room, and to a less extent the Lecture Theatre, are attractive spaces.

If alterations are considered these should be undertaken only in the context of a thorough understanding of the heritage asset's significance and in line with **Section 5.1** and **5.1.1**.

5.7 In conformity with NPPF paragraph 110, efforts should be made to ensure that the Old Boys' High School contribution to climate change is as minimal as is feasible for a building of its age, size, materials, and use. Any proposals for alterations should assess the feasibility of incorporating low and zero carbon technologies

Ensuring that the building is sustainable will be crucial to its long-term survival and significance. As stated in NPPF paragraph 110, development should seek to 'minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment.'

5.8 If during any subsequent renovations or alterations any excavation work is carried out beneath the Old Boys' High School or the surrounding area, an archaeological assessment will be made of the potential for significant finds, and if appropriate an archaeologist will be given a watching brief as excavation takes place

There is a high probability of significant archaeological material being preserved on this site (see **Section 3.4**). Should any excavation work be carried out in this area, an assessment of the archaeological potential should be made. This should include at least a desk-based assessment, but possibly geophysics and trial trenching. A watching brief will almost certainly be required for any excavation.

5.9 A good practice of routine recording, investigation, and maintenance will be enacted and sustained. Such an approach will minimise the need for larger repairs or other interventions and will usually represent the most economical way of maintaining an asset

5.9.1 Estates Services (or its agents) will ensure that a senior member of staff has responsibility for the administration and recording of a routine maintenance programme for the building

All buildings need to routinely be maintained if they are to stay in good condition. This requires a detailed maintenance programme and, critically, someone who is responsible for ensuring that routine operations are carried out. A proper record of the repair and maintenance work in a maintenance log is a useful management tool. Such information will be recorded in the estates management software package *Planon*.

5.9.2 The Conservation Plan will be circulated to all senior staff who work in the Old Boys' High School and to all other members of the University who have responsibility for the building

The value of the heritage asset needs to be appreciated by all senior staff managing or working in the building. Only in this way will the heritage asset be properly treated, repaired, and maintained.

5.9.3 The Conservation Plan will be made available to Oxford City Council, English Heritage, and any other party with legitimate interest in the building

The Conservation Plan is intended to be a useful document to inform all parties with a legitimate interest in the building.

5.10 The Conservation Plan will be reviewed and updated from time to time as work is carried out on the building or as circumstances change. The recommendations should be reviewed at least at five-yearly intervals

Policy changes, building alterations, or other changes of circumstance, will affect the conservation duties and requirements of the building. The policy recommendations in the Conservation Plan will inform the future of the building and should be a useful tool for people carrying out maintenance work or where more significant alterations are being considered. The recommendations need to be kept up to date if they are to remain relevant.



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6.5 Other Documents

- Historical plans, documents, photographs, and correspondence courtesy of Estates Services Archives, ref. 237.
- Historical plans, documents, photographs, and correspondence courtesy of Oxford University Archives, refs. ET 1/9B/330, ET 4/5/1-6, LA 2/64/1, and UR 6/BH/33.
- Historical plans and correspondence courtesy of Oxford History Centre, refs. T/S Misc 9, T/S Misc 37, and City Engineer's Plans for 1894.
- Listed building description courtesy of English Heritage (see **Section 6.6**).

6.6 Websites

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6.7 Image Credits

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- Figure 3: Adapted by author from 1878 OS map. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2013). All rights reserved. (2013).
- Figure 4: From *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 26th January 1878.
- Figure 5: From *Building News* 28 (1880).
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- Figure 8.1: 1977 plan from ESA.
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APPENDICES

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7 APPENDICES

7.1 Listed Building Descriptions

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: COLLEGE FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

List Entry Number: 1047304

Location

COLLEGE FOR FURTHER EDUCATION, GEORGE STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Oxford

District Type: District Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 28-Jun-1972

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 245444

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

GEORGE STREET

1.

1485

College for Further
Education

SP 5106 SW 8/260

II

2.

Formerly shown as **City of Oxford High School for Boys**. Built 1880 to designs of Sir Thomas Jackson in Bladon stone with Clipsham dressings, There were additions in 1895, 1915 and 1935. The north front is in 2-storeyed Ashlar with a centrepiece, porch steps and a gable, there is a balustraded parapet and a brown tiled roof. The 3-light stone mullioned and transomed windows have elliptical heads. Clock in the gable.

Listing NGR: SP5107606330

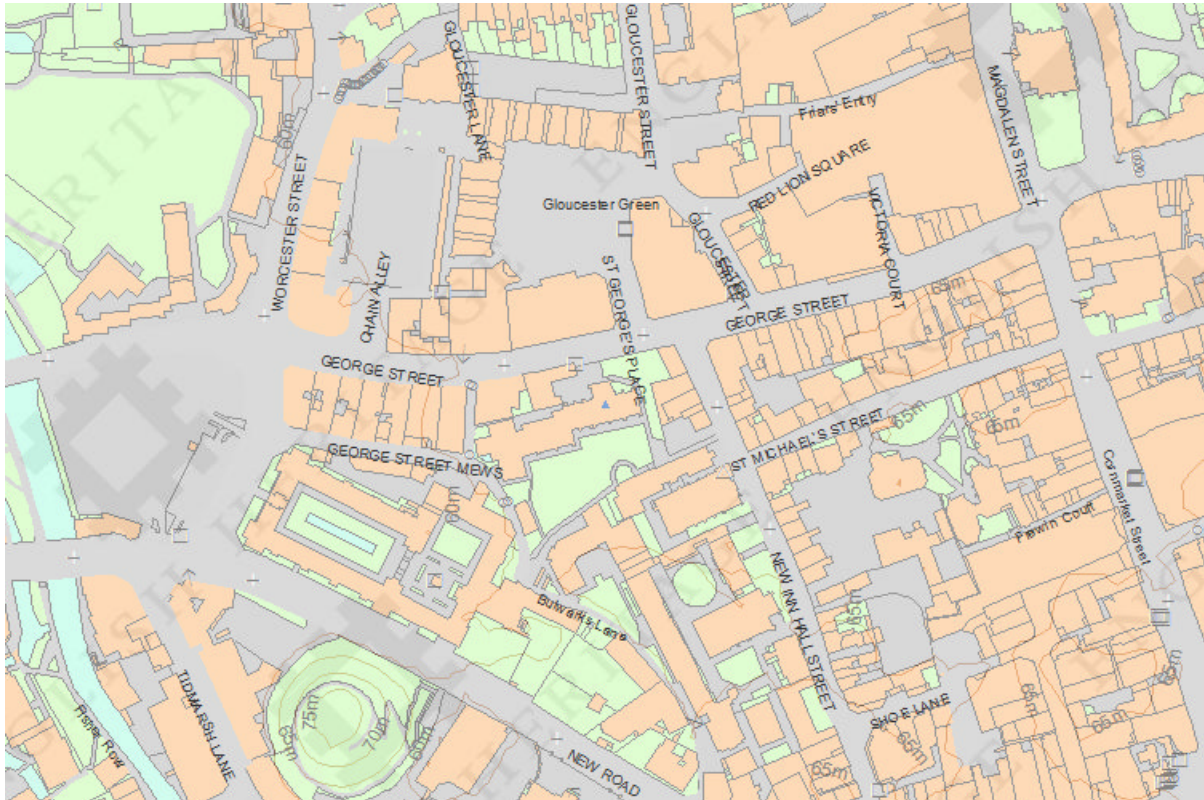
Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Map

National Grid Reference: SP 51076 06330

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1047304.pdf](#)



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This copy shows the entry on 22-Jul-2013 at 10:22:58.

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: **WALL, WEST OF BASTION I**

List Entry Number: 1046609

Location

WALL, WEST OF BASTION I, BULWARK LANE
WALL, WEST OF BASTION I, NEW INN HALL STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire
District: Oxford
District Type: District Authority
Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: I

Date first listed: 28-Jun-1972

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 245216

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

CITY WALL

1.

1485

Between Bulwark Lane
and New Inn Hall Street
Wall, West of Bastion I
SP 5106 SW 8/428

I

2.

Partly reconstructed.

Listing NGR: SP5105906281

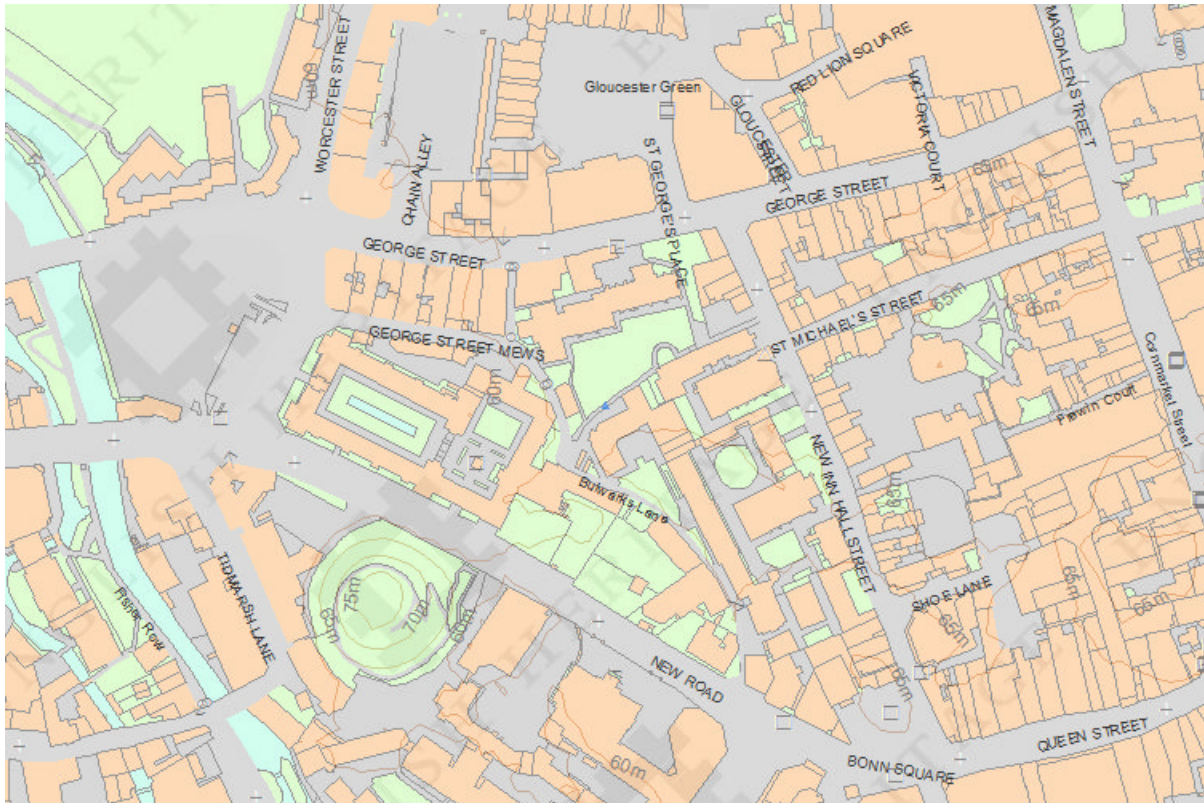
Selected Sources

1. **Article Reference** - *Date:* 1886 - *Journal Title:* Proceedings of Oxford Architecture and History Society - *Volume:* 5 - *Page References:* 21 31
2. **Article Reference** - *Date:* 1886 - *Journal Title:* Proceedings of Oxford Architecture and History Society - *Volume:* 5 - *Page References:* 191 196
3. **Article Reference** - *Date:* 1939 - *Journal Title:* Oxoniensia - *Volume:* 4 - *Page References:* 153-161

Map

National Grid Reference: SP 51059 06281

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1046609.pdf](#)

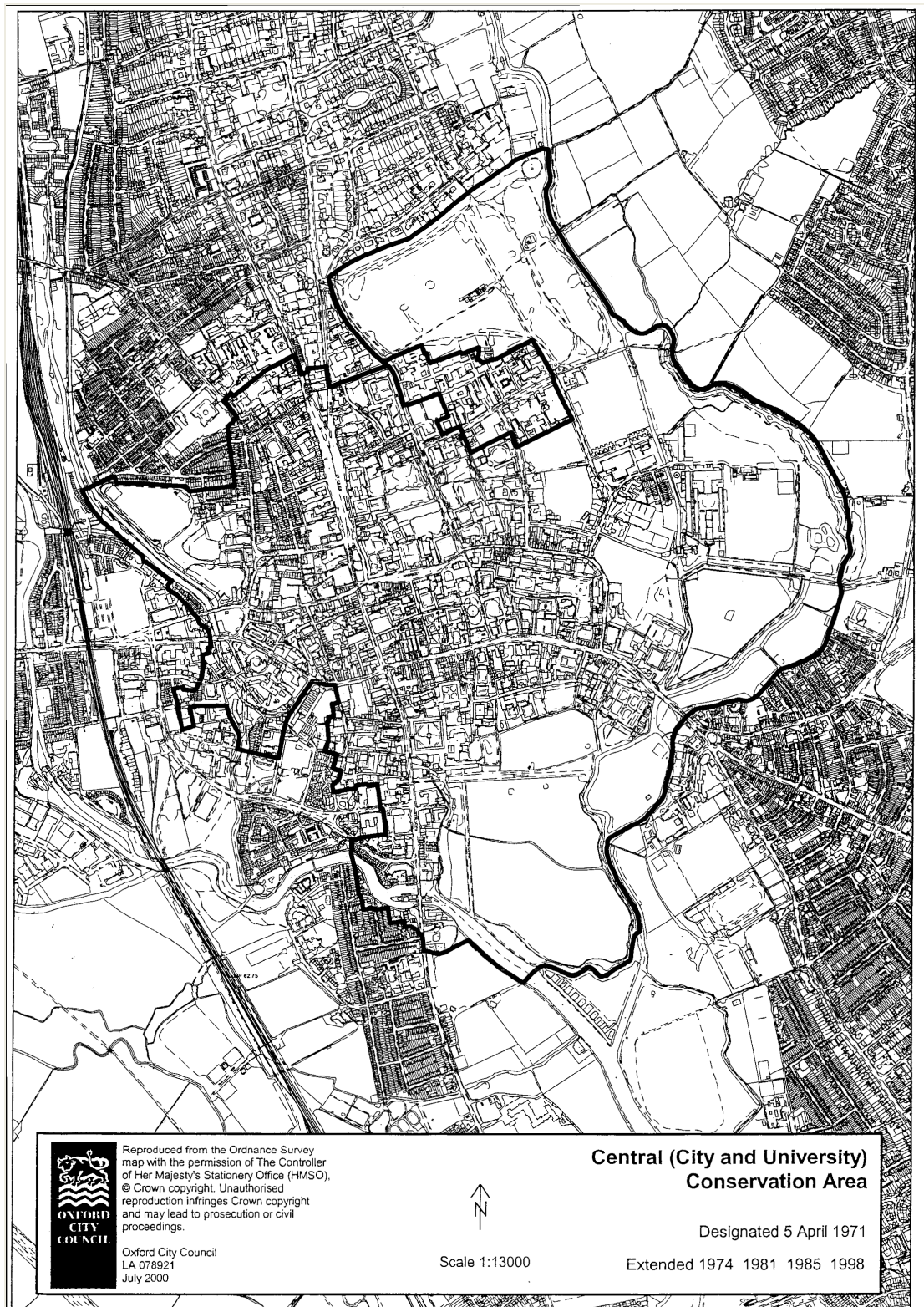


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7.2 Conservation Area Description



Central Conservation Area, No. 5

The historic centre of Oxford forms one of the masterpieces of European architectural heritage. It is also a major regional commercial centre. Many of its historic buildings still function for the purpose for which they were built, and provide accommodation for the University of Oxford and its colleges.

From small beginnings as a settlement in the Saxon period, Oxford grew by the 11th century into one of the largest towns in England and a major trade centre. The Norman conquest brought the construction of the Castle and the establishment of major religious houses. The infant University arose in the 12th century and gradually grew into a major force in the city's life. The Saxons' 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. The gentle curve of the High Street, the great market place of St Giles and the older churches, together with the post-medieval timber-framed houses, belong to the town rather than the gown.

The University as it expanded, colonised the eastern half of the town with colleges and halls, building quadrangles of medieval and post-medieval gothic buildings, both within and without the walled town. The growth of the University's central institutions is well shown by the magnificent group of buildings situated between Broad Street and St Mary's Church. This group began in the 15th century with the building of the Divinity School and the Duke Humfrey's Library, a nucleus which expanded in the 17th century with the addition of the Schools' Quadrangle, Convocation House and Sheldonian Theatre. The group was further extended in the 18th century by the addition of the Old Clarendon Building and Radcliffe Camera to form a sequence of buildings and spaces of the highest architectural and historic interest, that today form the visual heart of the conservation area. Aspects of Oxford's 19th and 20th century change and growth may be illustrated by the considerable additions made to University and College buildings in Victorian and recent times, by the vigorous commercial and shopping centre, and by the welcome fact that the presence of the University ensures that many upper floors of buildings in the conservation area are in use for residential purposes, rather than unoccupied as in some historic towns.

Thomas Sharp, in his report to the City Council, published in 1948 as *Oxford Replanned*, set out and defined Oxford's special physical and architectural character and stressed its virtues and problems in a 20th century context. The Council, in its Review of the Development Plan, approved in 1967, approved much of the central area as an area of great historic value, and since 1962 the Council has protected the prospect of the city's unique skyline with its high buildings policy. The complementary views out of the city to its open country background have been similarly protected by the Green Belt and other policies.

The Council designated a large part of the central area as a conservation area in 1971. An extension taking in the Folly Bridge riverside was designated on 28th May 1974, a second extension covering part of Walton Street, Fisher Row and lower St

Aldate's was designated on 23rd February 1981, while a third covering Cornmarket and Queen Street was designated on 29th April 1985. On 9th December 1998, a fourth extension was made to the conservation area taking in part of the St Thomas' area, the University Observatory adjacent to University Parks and Magdalen College School playing field.

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7.3 Chronology of the Old Boys' High School

Date	Event	Reference
30 th January 1878	A meeting is held in Oxford Town Hall in support of the creation of a High School for Boys. The meeting includes the Vice-Chancellor, the Lord Mayor, and the Bishop of Oxford,	<i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i> 26 th January 1878
1878	Oxford's City Gaol at Gloucester Green is closed and subsequently demolished. Much of the stone is reused in the construction of the Old Boys' School	<i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i> 11 th October 1879
1879	Thomas Graham Jackson is commissioned through competition to design the High School for Boys	Jackson (2003) 144
September 1879	Tenders are received for the building work. They range from £7,480 to £14,000, with the lowest tender, Charles Claridge, winning	County Archives, T/S Misc 9
13 th April 1880	Prince Leopold (previously an undergraduate at Christ Church), the Duke of Albany, lays the foundation stone	Jackson (2003) 144
November 1880	It is decided to add a few feet of the southern wall of the corridor of the projected extension to the west staircase	County Archives, T/S Misc 37
15 th April 1881	The High School for Boys is formally opened	Jackson (2003) 144
1892-5	Jackson adds an extension to the High School for Boys. This consists of two additional classrooms at the rear and opens in October 1895	Jackson (2003) 270; <i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i> 12 th October 1895
1896-1907	T.E. Lawrence attends the City of Oxford High School for Boys	History Faculty Website
1915	The building is extended to the west by the builders Benfield and Loxley. This is the large cruciform extension which includes the lecture theatre and common room	Application 06/01875/LBC; County

		Archives, T/S Misc 37
1935	The building is extended. This involves a small single-storey extension to the west of the 1915 extension and probably the flat-roofed section on top of the eastern part of the 1915 extension. The date of 1935 is taken from the 2006 planning applications, but a date of 1928 is given in a 1975 letter by Jack Lankester. No evidence is given to support either date (which would not be expected of the Lankester letter, but should be expected of the planning application)	Application 06/01875/LBC
1939	A plaque is set up in honour of T.E. Lawrence. This is removed to the newly-constituted Oxford School in 1966, but has since been returned to the Old Boys High School	ESA
1966	The City of Oxford High School for Boys is closed. The City of Oxford High School for Boys merges with Southfield School and becomes Oxford School (now Oxford Spire Academy) on Glanville Road	History Faculty Website; Headington.org.uk
1966-68	The Old Boys' School serves as the College for Further Education	History Faculty Website
1974	Planning permission is granted for the change of the building's use from educational to educational and general cultural activities including a theatre for public performances of music and drama. This application is made on behalf of St. Peter's College who are negotiating with the City council to take over the building at this point	Application 74/00206/A_H; ESA
1975	The University begins a long period of negotiations with the City Council to take over the Old Boys High School, St. Peter's College having withdrawn from their negotiations due to the high estimated cost of the undertaking	ESA
1977	The University of Oxford acquires the Old Boys' High School from the Local Authority on a 99-year lease in October. When the University takes over the building it is heavily refurbished and three new internal ramps are fitted to improve disabled access on the ground floor. The exterior is heavily cleaned and restored. The prefabricated building from in front of the western part of the northern elevation is removed at this time	Original lease; application 07/01515/LBC; historic photographs, ESA
1978	An electric movement is fitted to the clock on the northern elevation and the face is replaced in fibreglass	ESA
1978-2003	The Old Boys' School serves as Social Studies Faculty Centre of the University of Oxford	History Faculty Website
1992	Listed building consent is granted for fitting a satellite dish on a flat roof	92/00369/L
1995	Listed building consent is granted for the installation of 3 internal security cameras	95/00427/L
1995	A new boiler room is fitted to the site	ESA

1995	A quotation is received for the removal of defective cast-iron rooflight in the slated roof elevations. They are to be infilled with roof timbers and slates	ESA
1995	The basement escape hatch is replaced and raised	ESA
1996	Tenders are invited for reroofing the narrow flat-roofed toilet extension in front of the western part of the main northern elevation	ESA
1998	Initial plans to remove the Social Studies Faculty to the St Cross Building do not go ahead	ESA
1998	The Faculty General Office is subdivided with a plasterboard stud, since removed	ESA
1998	A damaged corner stone at the rear of the ground floor is replaced	ESA
1999	New disabled access ramp fitted to western entrance of western extension. Unisex disabled lavatories fitted to ground-floor lavatories at front of the western part of the original building	ESA
2000	Anti-pigeon spikes are fitted to several external areas. Four of the ledges around the main entrance are instead fitted with anti-pigeon gel strips instead, presumably for matters of visual amenity	ESA
2001	A timber stud partition is fitted in the ground-floor print room	ESA
2004- February 2007	The Old Boys' School serves as Classics Centre of the University of Oxford	History Faculty Website
2006	Listed building consent is granted for an internal refurbishment programme which includes removal and insertion of partitions, and the general upgrading of services and fire safety measures	Applicat ion 06/0187 5/LBC
2007	Listed building consent is granted for external alterations involving construction of a new disabled access ramp to the rear entrance,	Applicat ion 07/0151 5/LBC
November 2006- February 2007	The building is refurbished between occupants. This mostly involves rewiring and general updating and redecoration	ESA
July 2007 – Present	The Old Boys' School serves as History Faculty of the University of Oxford	History Faculty Website
2009	Repairs and cleaning are conducted to the external stonework on the northern elevation, plus the George Street boundary wall and piers	ESA

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7.4 Checklist of Significant Features

This checklist is intended for the use of those working or planning work on the site or buildings. It highlights features of architectural significance within the Old Boys' High School; these may be original features or new additions that nevertheless contribute positively to the character of the building. As this is a Grade-II-listed building any repair or alteration work to factors that contribute to the significance of the building will require listed building consent in order to avoid prosecution under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. **If planned work will likely affect any of the aspects featured in the list below advice should immediately be sought from the Building Conservation Team at Estates Services.**

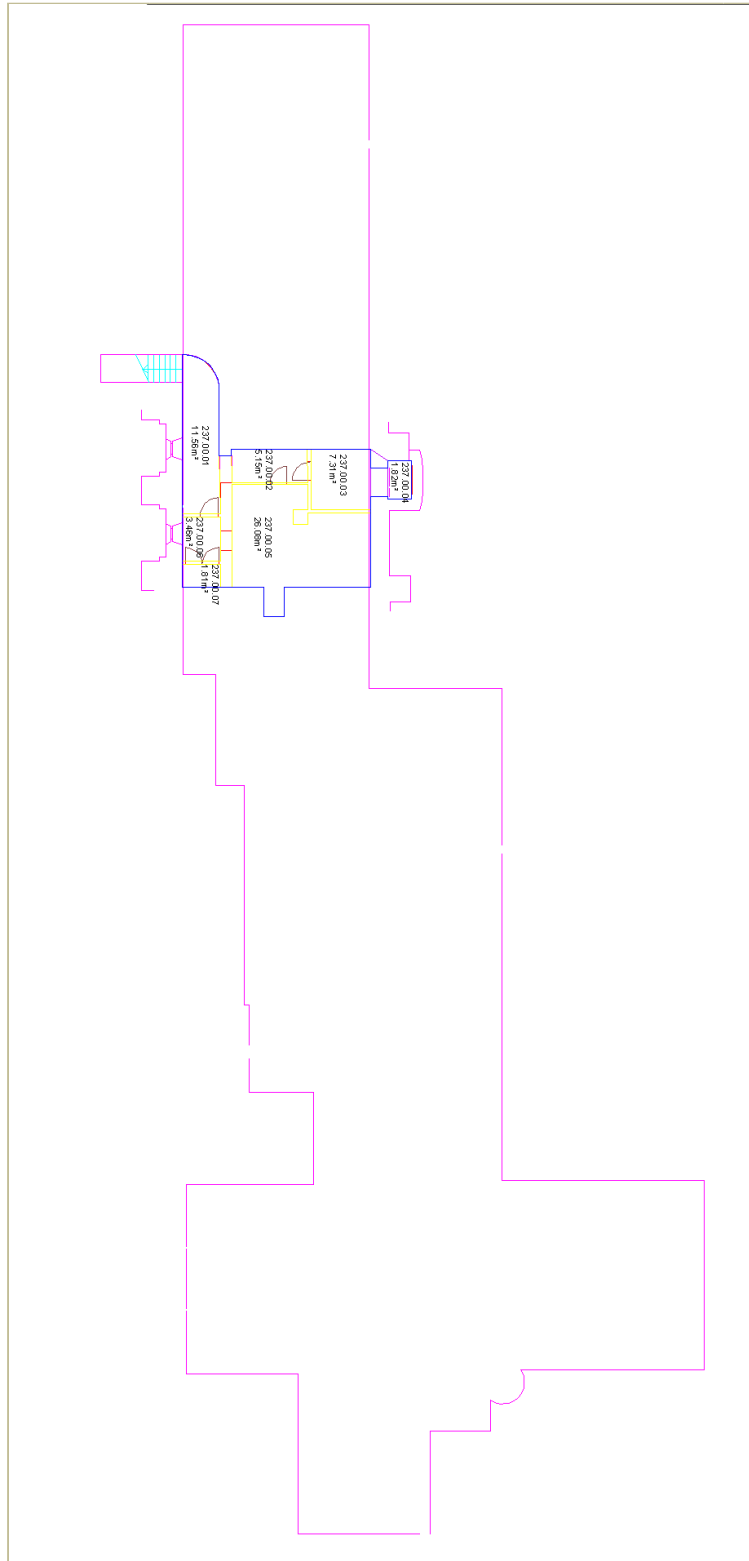
The checklist lists both general significant features that affect the building as a whole and which should be held in mind if working in any space, and specific features of particular significance that should receive special regard if working in these particular spaces. The Further Information column refers to the relevant page reference in the Conservation Plan proper.

The Old Boys' High School, Building # 237		
SIGNIFICANT FEATURE	✓	Further Information
General:		
External elevations of Jackson and 1915 elements, including stone and brickwork and any carved or decorative elements		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Cupola		p.31 and 49
Windows throughout		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Chimneys throughout		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Roofs on Jackson and 1915 elements		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Joinery throughout, including doorcases and ceiling beams		p.33-6, 43, and 49
Exposed stonework throughout		p.33-6, 43, and 49
Specific Features:		
External Elevations		
Roofs and chimneys of Jackson building		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Balustrading, carving, and ball finials of Jackson building		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Buttresses, niches, and pediments on northern elevation		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Pilasters and cornices on northern elevation		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Arches on northern elevation		p.30-3, 42, and 49
Inscribed panels and associated carving on northern elevation		p.30-3, 42, and 49

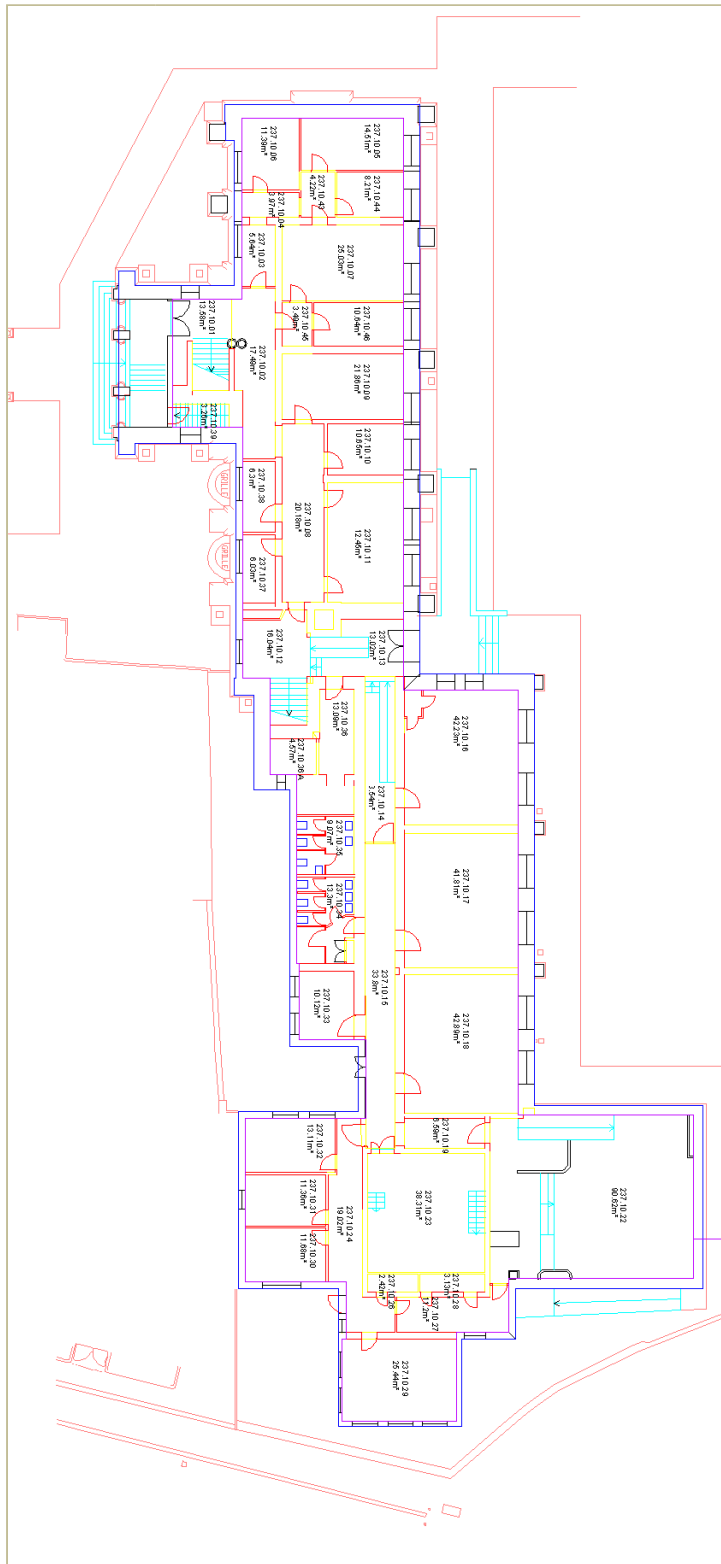
Clock and associated pilasters, finials, and carving on northern elevation	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Central window and surrounds on northern elevation	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Other windows and surrounds throughout	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Front and rear doors and surrounds	p.30-3, 42, and 49
All elements of cupola	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Brickwork and roofs of 1915 extension	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Windows to 1915 extension	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Foundation stone and T.H. Green plaque	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Piers and screen to George Street	p.30-3, 42, and 49
Internal Spaces	
Joinery throughout, including panelling and doorcases	p.33-6, 43, and 49
Plaster moulding throughout, including cornices	p.33-6, 43, and 49
Exposed stone elements throughout, including arches, quoins, and handrails. Windows cases including impression of the school bell in the ground-floor hall	p.33-6, 43, and 49
Windows throughout	p.33-6, 43, and 49
Northern Staircase	
Joinery including doorcase to Hall, panelling, ceiling, and brackets,	p.33-4, 43, and 49
War memorials and T.H. Lawrence plaque	p.33-4, 43, and 49
Stonework, including handrail, arches, columns, and balustraded screen	p.33-4, 43, and 49
Western Staircase and Landing	p.35, 43, and 49
Stone handrails, window cases, and arches	p.35, 43, and 49
Joinery, notably doorcase to Hall	p.35, 43, and 49
Hall	
Doors and doorcases on northern and western walls, including carved elements	p.34-5, 43, and 49
Fireplace and overmantel on eastern wall	p.34-5, 43, and 49
Panelling throughout	p.34-5, 43, and 49
Tie beam ceiling and all associated elements	p.34-5, 43, and 49
Windows and settings throughout	p.34-5, 43, and 49
Heating grilles	p.34-5, 43, and 49

PRIOR TO UNDERTAKING ANY REPAIRS OR ALTERATIONS ON THE ABOVE-LISTED ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES, CONTACT THE CONSERVATION TEAM AT ESTATES SERVICES ON (01865) (2)78750

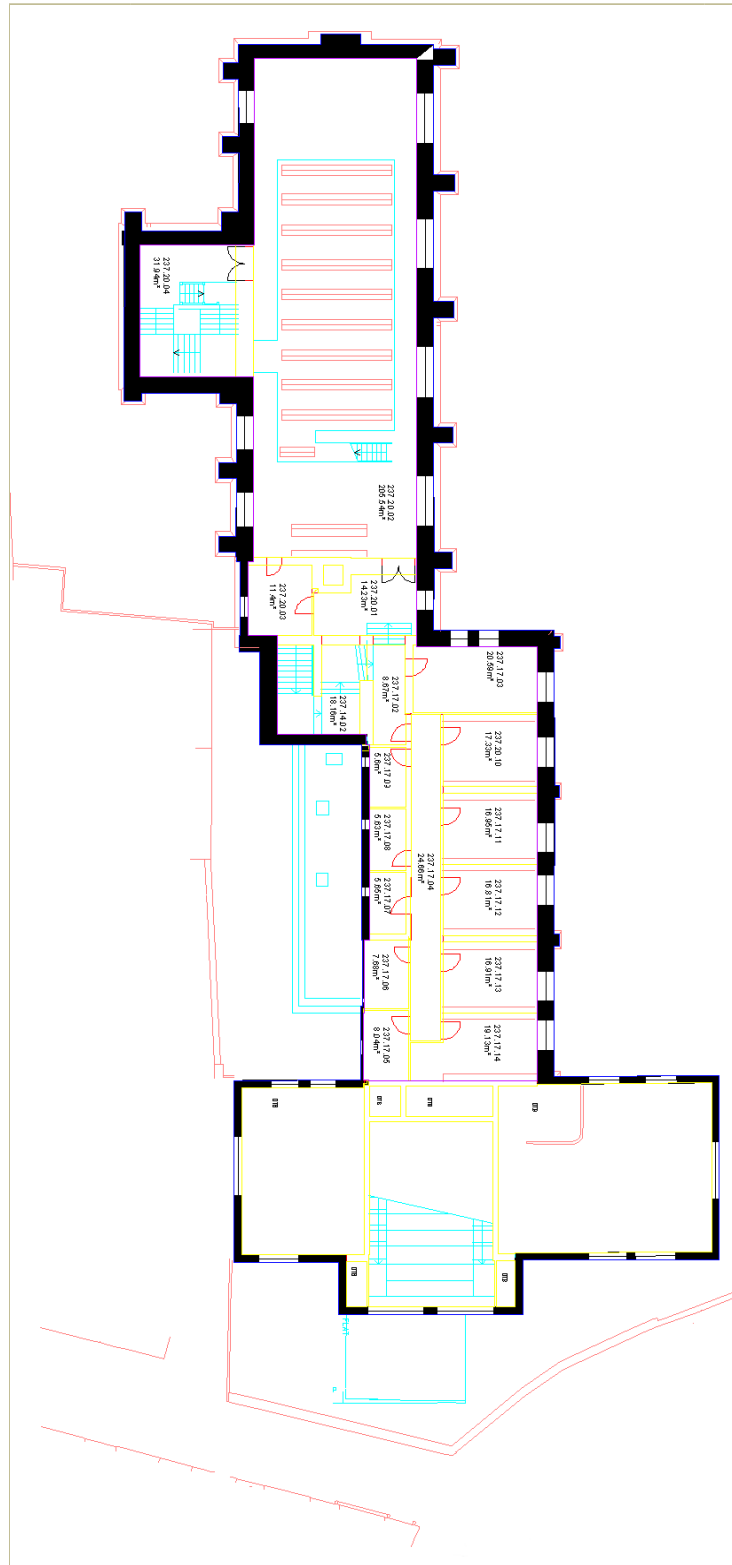
7.5 Floor Plans



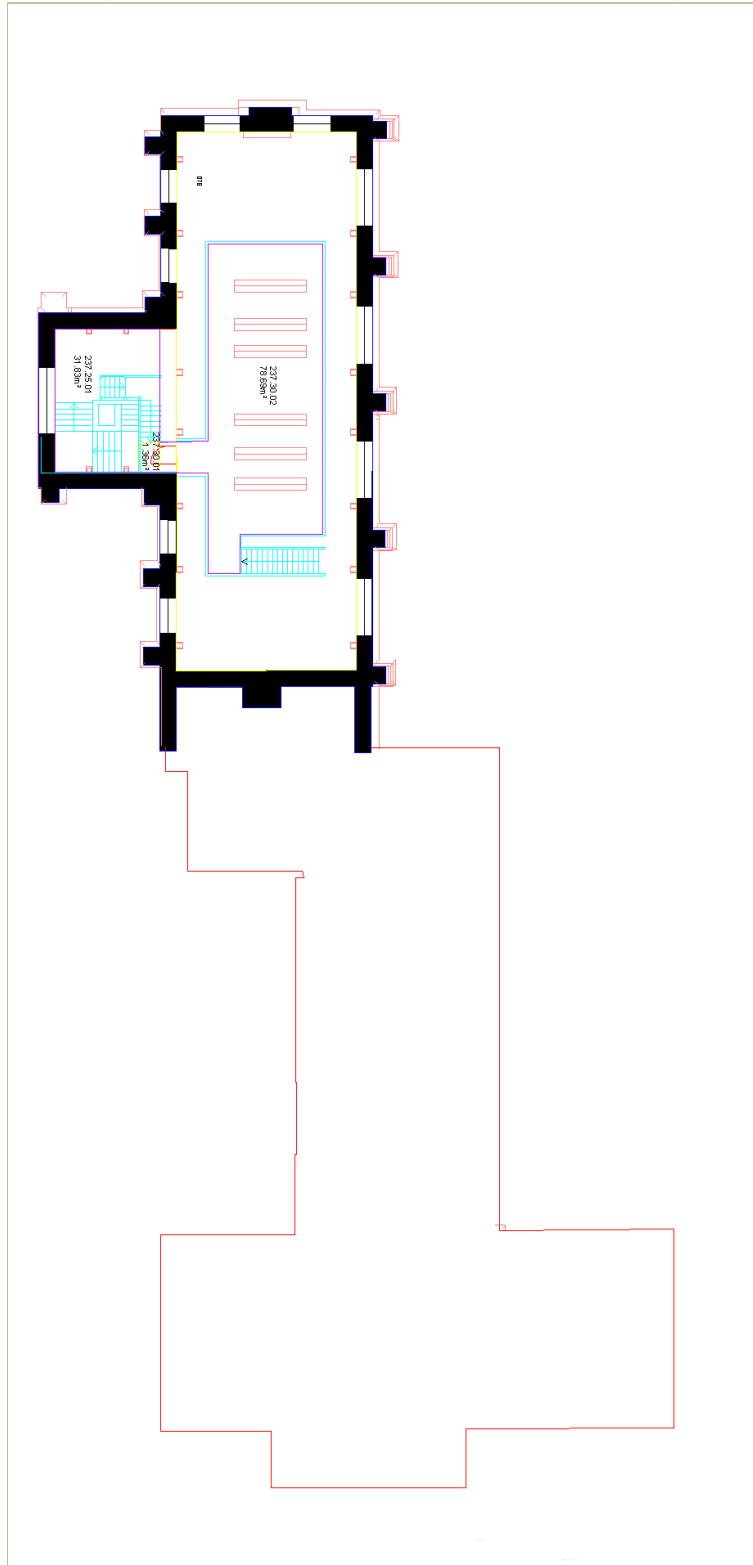
7.5.1. Modern basement plan



7.5.1. Modern ground-floor plan



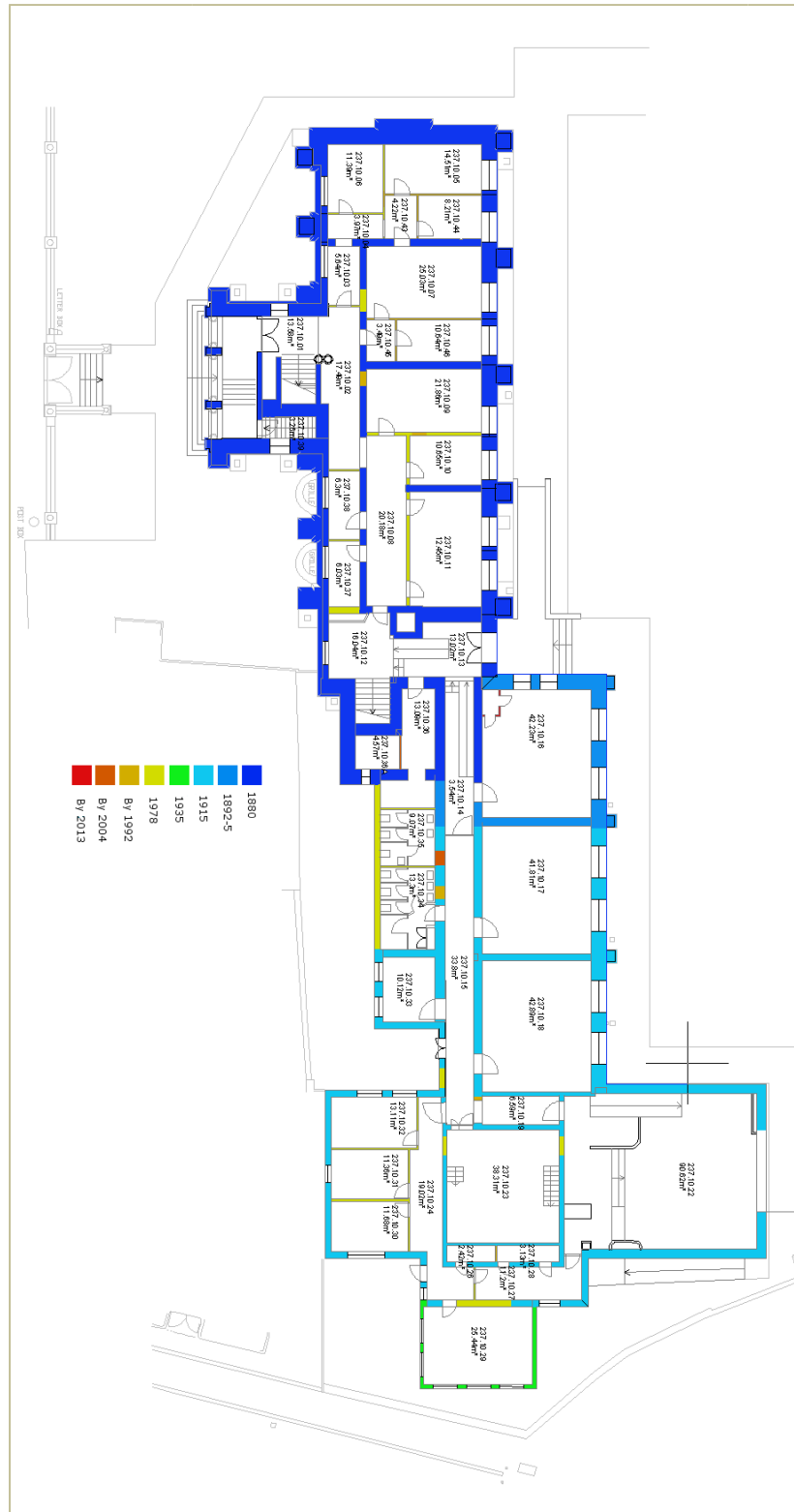
7.5.1. Modern first-floor plan



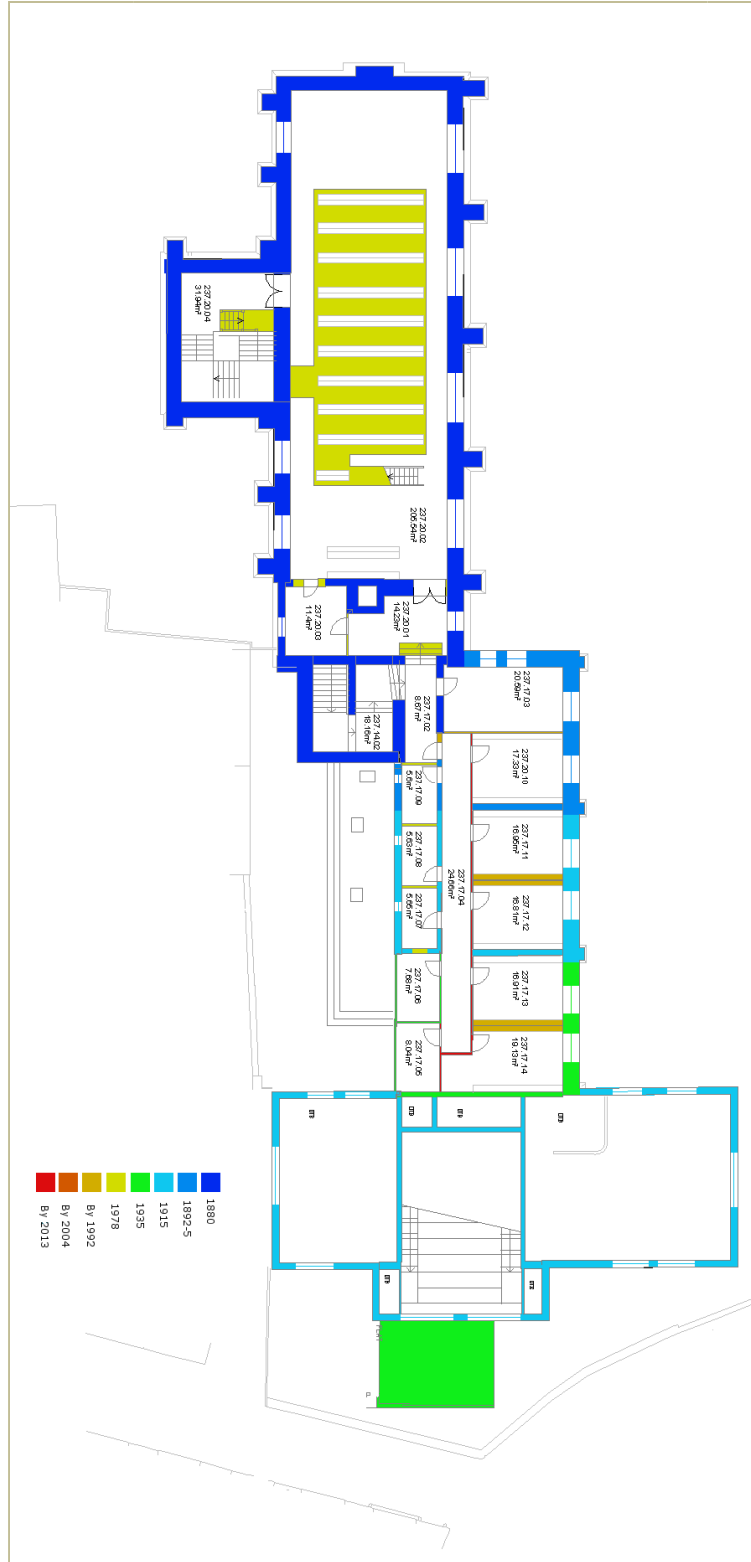
7.5.1. Modern mezzanine-level plan

7.6 Phased plans

These plans show when extant elements were constructed. They do not show where material has been removed or doorways etc. fitted.



7.6.1 Ground floor



7.6.1 First floor



8

ANNEXES

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8 ANNEXES

8.1 1976 Summary of Historic Paint Schemes from ESA

