



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

**2-4 St. John Street
Conservation Plan**

Building No. 299
December 2013

Estates Services
University of Oxford
December 2013

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

Abbreviations:

ESA – Estates Services 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)

2-4 ST. JOHN STREET, OXFORD
CONSERVATION PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

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1 INTRODUCTION

2-4 St. John Street consists of the Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East and subsidiary residential accommodation. The three houses were constructed in 1824-8 and served a residential function until their acquisition by the University of Oxford in 1966. No.3 was assigned to the university's Oriental Institute in 1967 and has fulfilled an associated function since. The construction of the Sackler Library, a development planned in some form since before the university's acquisition of the buildings, in 1999-2001 resulted in the destruction of the rear wings of all three constituent buildings and the loss of their gardens. A significant benefaction from the Khalili Family Trust allowed the conversion of the buildings to their current function.

1.1 Purpose of the Conservation Plan

The University of Oxford 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 2-4 St. John Street.

The purpose of this Conservation Plan is to update 2-4 St. John Street'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 2-4 St. John Street'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 2-4 St. John Street and the surrounding area. 2-4 St. John Street is highlighted in red. The adjacent 5-6 St. John Street is highlighted in yellow. The Sackler Library is highlighted in green. The greyed-out portion represents the area currently occupied by the 2006-9 Ashmolean extension

1.2 Scope of the Conservation Plan

The Conservation Plan will cover the interior and exterior of 2-4 St. John Street, an associated group of Georgian houses on St. John Street in central Oxford. The constituent buildings of this group are physically linked at the basement and attic levels and have some operational association throughout, so the group in its modern form shall be treated in the singular for the purposes of this plan. 2.4 St. John Street is Grade-II listed as part of a group listing which covers 2-63 St. John Street and 5 Pusey Street.

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.

1.3 Existing Information

2-4 St. John Street is part of a significant group of buildings which forms one of Oxford's most important streetscapes. No specific studies have been conducted on these buildings before but various forms of useful information are available:

There are various published books and articles regarding the development of 19th-century Oxford, including limited studies on the Beaumont Street/ St. John Street development.

Oxford University Archives and Estates Services own archives contain various useful historical plans, photographs, and correspondence regarding 2-4 St. John Street since its acquisition by the University of Oxford. St. John's College archives contain limited information about the earlier history of the constituent buildings which has kindly been made available for the purposes of this document.

The original 1972 list description is characteristically brief for a description of its age and is designed to cover a large group; however, it does give some indication of the external features that were thought to make up the particular character for which the group 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 2-4 St. John Street 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

2-4 St. John Street 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.
- 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.1: 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.



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) and in the Science Area (double-ditched barrow). 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. Extract from Loggan's 1675 map of Oxford, orientated with North at the bottom of the image. The Carmelite Friary, marked 'The White Fryers', lies to the rear of the present 2-4 St. John Street

The site of 2-4 St. John Street is just outside the mediaeval city of Oxford; however, despite its extramural location, the area was still a focus for important construction in the Middle Ages. The Church of St. Mary Magdalen, to the east of St. John Street, predates the Norman Conquest; however, it was burnt down in 1074, and was rebuilt in 1194, before being rebuilt by George Gilbert Scott in 1841-2.

¹ A short chronology of 2-4 St. John Street can be found in **Appendix 3**.

The eastern portion of Beaumont Street was the site of the 12th-century Beaumont Palace, royal hunting lodge of Henry II (1068/9-1135), and birthplace of Richard I (1157-99) and King John (1167-1216). Edward I (1239-1307) granted the palace as a private home to an Italian lawyer, Francesco Accorsi, in 1275. It was granted to the Carmelite Order for use as a monastery by Edward II (1284-1327) in 1318. The monastery (Whitefriars Priory) was dissolved and demolished during the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-41), and much of its material was reused as *spolia* in the construction of Christ Church (1546) and St. John's College (1555). The late mediaeval period saw a series of tenements extending westwards from St. Giles along what would later become Beaumont Street.

The surrounding area continued to attract high-profile buildings in the post-mediaeval period. St. John's College was founded in 1555 and occupied the former site of the Cistercian St. Bernard's College (founded in 1437 and dissolved at some point shortly after 1542, remaining a private hall until it was granted to Christ Church by Henry VIII in 1546) on the eastern side of St. Giles, immediately to the east of Beaumont Street.² Worcester College was founded at the western end of Beaumont Street in 1714. Worcester's construction began in 1720 and continued until about 1790, receiving no further major additions until the 1930s.³ The Radcliffe Infirmary and the Radcliffe Observatory were constructed to the north of St. John Street in 1759-70 and 1772-94. A large workhouse was constructed on the site of Wellington Square, at the northern end of St. John Street, in 1772-3 and was in operation until the early 1860s.

This area immediately north of the city underwent development in the first half of the 19th Century. The Beaumont Street/St. John Street development was the first major 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 1823, and the construction conducted between 1828 and 1833 as leases were taken up.⁴ The Beaumont Buildings, immediately to the west of St. John Street, were constructed as part of this same redevelopment. Magdalen Street to the southeast was also developed during this period, and the department store Elliston and Cavell (now Debenhams) was opened there in 1835.

² Page, W., 'Houses of Cistercian Monks: The College of St. Bernard, Oxford' in Page, W. (ed.), *A History of the County of Oxford, Vol. 2* (1907) 86.

³ Pevsner, N., and Sherwood, J., *Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1974) 218.

⁴ Osmond, A., 'Building on the Beaumonts: An Example of Early 19th-century Housing Development' in *Oxoniensia* XLIX (1984) 309. Tyack suggests the land was first advertised in 1820, whilst Hinchcliffe purports that the land was first advertised in 1823, having been surveyed and planned in 1822; Hinchcliffe, T., *North Oxford* (London, 1992) 19. Tyack, G., *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (New York, 1998) 204.



Figure 3. Extract from 1878 OS map of Oxford. The modern positions of some buildings have been overlaid: 2-4 St. John Street in red, 5-6 St. John Street in yellow, the Sackler Library in green, and the Oriental Institute in blue. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2013). All rights reserved. (2013)

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 at the eastern end of Beaumont Street. 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 and Magdalen Street, just southeast of the Taylor Institution. In 1845 the University Galleries were opened, but despite their large size, they had exceeded their capacity within a generation; between 1886 and 1894 large extensions were constructed to the north of the original galleries to house the Archaeological and Tradescant Collections. From its construction, the Ashmolean Museum came to dominate the history and development of Beaumont Street and the southern part of St. John Street but for two instances: the construction of Wilkinson's grand, gothic Randolph Hotel opposite the Ashmolean Museum in 1864; and the construction of the Playhouse, on the site of 8-10 Beaumont Street, in 1938.

Throughout the 20th century, the Ashmolean expanded to the extent that it and related departments now dominate a large block between Beaumont Street in the south, Blackfriars in the northeast, and St. John's Street in the west.

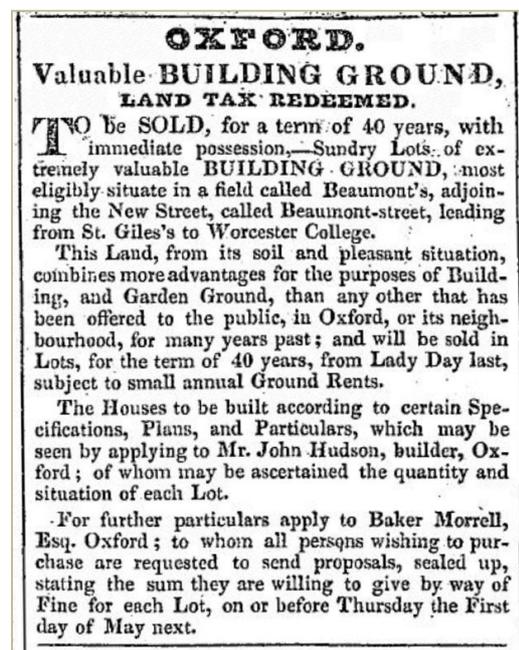
St. John Street retains a more residential character than Beaumont Street, which has become defined by its institutional buildings and occupation by professional practices. Beaumont Street has also become defined by heavy motor traffic, which has far less effect of St. John

Street. As the houses in the development were generally built by the initial lessees or speculators to general standards specified by St. John's College, rather than to a unified design, the internal design of individual house differs; however, as a general rule the buildings of St. John Street are smaller than those on Beaumont Street and larger than those in Beaumont Buildings. This has made them generally less amenable to being split into offices

In April 1971 Oxford City Council designated the majority of the city centre as part of the Central (City and University) Conservation area, this includes St. John Street (see **Appendix 2**).

2.2 History of 2-4 St. John Street

Whilst a small number of middle-class houses were constructed at Headington Hill in the early 1820s, the houses of Beaumont Street and St. John Street formed the first planned middle-class housing development in Oxford;⁵ an exercise not repeated for another 30 years. Worcester College had been somewhat isolated on the western edge of the city since its foundation in 1714, and St. John's College made it clear in 1804 that they were willing to allow a portion of their land between St. Giles's and Worcester College to be made available for conversion into a link road for a nominal sum.⁶ With this in mind, St. John's College ceased renewing the existing agricultural leases in this area, anticipating leasing the land along what was to become Beaumont Street for housing once the road was constructed. The college employed Henry Dixon to survey the road and the land either side in 1822 and a Winchester-based architect, William Garbett, was employed to produce plans for the houses to be built on the street.⁷



**Figure 4. Advertisement from
Jackson's Oxford Journal, 26th April
1823**

St. John's College advertised the building land on Beaumont Street in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* in April 1823 (**Figure 4**). 'The lease fines for the first plots taken by Mr Pinfold and Mr Chaundy were fixed at £128 and £117 respectively, with an annual ground rent of £5 each. This compares with 26 guineas [£27.6s], the fine previously paid for the whole of the Beaumonts. The development was obviously going to increase the income of the College

⁵ Tyack, G., *op. cit.*, 204.

⁶ Hinchcliffe, T., *op. cit.*, 18-19.

⁷ *Ibid*, 19.

considerably.⁸ As further leases lapsed, St. John's College was able to make more land available for building and in 1824 they asked Dixon to survey the remaining land on Beaumont Street that had not yet been sold.

The development was designed as two roads facing onto landmarks: Beaumont Street onto the façade of Worcester College and St. John Street, at right angles to this, aligned towards the tower of the Radcliffe Observatory.⁹ The first leases for St. John Street were signed in 1824, covering houses on the southernmost stretch of the street, which is approximately 2 metres narrower than the northern portion of the street, which was developed later on.¹⁰ The northern portions of the street were considered less desirable, leading onto the 1772-3 workhouse on the site of Wellington Square, but the northernmost plot was actually the next to be leased, with its low price clearly outweighing the perceived undesirability of its location. About half of the houses on St. John Street were built or being constructed by 1831, the majority of the leases on the street had been taken up by 1834, and the development was complete by 1836.¹¹

The St. John's College plots on the Beaumont Street/St. John Street development were leased on 40-year building leases. This meant that when a lease was signed either a shell of a building was already in place or was about to be built, all to standards and a general design dictated by the college. The original leases for 2-4 St. John Street all refer to 'lately erected' houses and it seems likely that the block represents a single phase of building. The first leases were as follows:

- 2 St. John Street – 20th May 1828 – George Kimber of Oxford, tallow chandler.
- 3 St. John Street – 1st December 1826 – John Bayzand of Oxford, a coachman.
- 4 St. John Street – 5th April 1824 – Thomas Harris of Marston, a milkman.¹²

Kimber was not just a tallow chandler, being a brewer with a lease on much of Friar's Entry, where he had his brewhouse, and a speculator. With his partner, Crews Dudley, Kimber speculated on several plots on the Beaumont Street development, not building but rather buying the leases and then selling them on at a profit to builders; however, Kimber operating alone did build on some plots and it seems likely that this is what happened at no.2, as the lease would not have been entered onto the ledger unless at least a shell was in place.¹³ He most likely sold this on as a private residence shortly afterwards, though St. John Street leases were harder to sell than those on Beaumont Street. The lease for no.4 is the only lease in the development taken up by Thomas Harris and his residence is listed as in Marston, so it may be that he was either a very small-scale speculator or landlord. Bayzand, who took the lease on no.3, drove the Oxford to Southampton coach for 36 years and purchased the lease

⁸ *Ibid*, 19-20.

⁹ Hinchcliffe, T., *op. cit.*, 19.

¹⁰ Osmond, A., *op. cit.*, 307.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 308-9, 310.

¹² St. John's College archives.

¹³ Osmond, A., *op. cit.*, 324.

for use as his own residence. Bayzand's memoirs noted that '...at that time, [in] St. John's Street and Beaumont Buildings resided twelve or fourteen coachmen...' ¹⁴ This emphasises the humbler nature of the properties compared to Beaumont Street, whose occupiers tended towards the middle classes or professions. ¹⁵

The houses likely served as private residences or lodging houses in the decades following their construction. By at least 1880 no.2 was serving as a lodging house for the university, as was no.3 by 1882 and no.4 by 1884. ¹⁶ This means that they were lodging houses let by private landlords but licensed by the university's Delegacy of Lodging Houses. From 1881, the Delegacy conducted sanitary inspections of the properties prior to granting or amending licenses. ¹⁷ All three properties remained in this use for some time. The Sanitary Officer's report for no.2 in 1912 notes that 'a new wing [has been] built'. This did not represent a new extension but rather the rebuilding of the pre-existing rear wing, adding an additional bedroom, a bathroom, WC, larder, and kitchen. ¹⁸ In 1926 the first-floor WC in no.4 was converted into a combined bathroom and WC. This bathroom extended from the first-floor landing and was located in the rear extension. This arrangement remained in place until the late 1990s, when the rear extension was demolished. A hot water system was fitted in no.4 in 1929. Interestingly enough, in the 1920s no.2 served as a university lodging house under the landlady F. Lowe, as well as the business address of Lowe and Oliver, electrical engineers, which was founded in 1923. ¹⁹

In 1931, the university began discussions with St. John's College about acquiring the freehold to 2-6 St. John Street in order to redevelop the site for the construction of an institute for oriental studies. These discussions did not bear immediate fruit due to a lack of funds but the university's intentions towards this site were clear and an understanding was created whereby it would eventually acquire the buildings. ²⁰ In 1947, in response to the Town and Country Planning Act of that year, the university confirmed with St. John's College that their long-term plans involved 2-6 St. John Street and they jointly sought the approval of the City Council for the site to be treated as functional land.

The Oriental Institute was eventually constructed in 1958-60 to the north-east of the site but the university's interest in the St. John Street houses remained undiminished, with the importance of the site emphasised by the near-continuous expansion of the adjacent Ashmolean Museum. In July 1961, the university again approached St. John's College about the purchase of the freehold for these properties in order to accommodate an anticipated future wing for the Ashmolean, at that time planned for c.1970. By this point, only no.2 still served as a lodging house, with nos.3 and 4 serving as private residences with rent-protected

¹⁴ *Ibid* and Bayzand, W., 'Coaching in and out of Oxford from 1820 to 1840' in *Collectanea* 4th ser., OHS 47 (1905) 280-1.

¹⁵ Hinchcliffe, T., *op. cit.*, 22-3.

¹⁶ OUA, ref. LHD/RP/2/44.

¹⁷ OUA: <http://www.oua.ox.ac.uk/holdings/Lodging%20Houses,%20Delegacy%20LHD.pdf>, accessed 10th December 2013.

¹⁸ OUA refs. LHD/RP/3/2 and LHD/RP/3/1/9 #876.

¹⁹ *Kelly's Street Directory* 1927.

²⁰ OUA ref. LA 3/OCP 200E(2).

tenants. The college advised the university that its practice was to let the buildings on 40-year leases (as they had since the original leases were signed) and that the university would best be served by taking up the leases on the individual buildings as they became available and subletting them on short leases in order to facilitate redevelopment should it eventually purchase them. Otherwise the college would lease the buildings to individuals and the university, if it eventually purchased the freeholds, would face the prospect of taking on rent-protected tenants with long periods left on their leases, who it would be obliged to rehouse in order to redevelop the site. The lease to 4 St. John Street was due to become available in September 1961 and the university subsequently acquired this.²¹

After purchasing the lease to no.4, the university surveyed the building, finding serious damp in the basement. The possible uses of the building in the interim period before the entire block could be acquired and redeveloped were discussed and it was decided to convert the building into two flats for use as transit accommodation for married graduate students. This work was undertaken in April 1962. This created a one-bedroom maisonette (with bathroom, living room and dining room, and a kitchen in the rear extension) on the ground floor and basement and a two-bedroom maisonette (with kitchen, living room, attic study or third bedroom, and the 1926 bathroom in the rear extension) on the first and second floors extending into the attic. No.4 was reroofed in May to September 1963 reutilising 20% of the pre-existing slates.²²

The lease to no.2 was acquired by the university in July 1962. The building was surveyed and found to be in a very poor state. The end wall was found to be held up by two tie rods, the general interior decoration was very poor, and the basement was in an uninhabitable state. The university let the building to Worcester College on a short lease. Worcester took a full-repairing lease, with the stipulation that it took no responsibility for the rear wall or basement. The college rehabilitated the interior of the building and sublet it as a residence to one of its fellows. A fire in the attic bedroom caused some minor damage in May 1964.²³

The lease for no.3 became available in July 1964 and was acquired by the university. As with nos. 2 and 4, the building was in a poor state of repair. The university sought to sublease the building to a college as it had with no.2 but none could be found that was interested (Corpus Christi was the only college to show even limited interest but required such unfavourable terms as to make it impossible for the university to agree). The purpose of subleasing was effectively just to service the cost of the university's own lease on the building, which it was only holding until the freehold could be purchased and the site redeveloped. With subleasing not a possibility, it was decided to retain no.3 as part of the functional estate and it was allocated to the Oriental Institute in October 1965 to serve as an annexe. This proved controversial, with the local authority, in light of Oxford's chronic housing shortage, initially refusing consent to change the building's use from residential to tutorial use. The university considered an appeal but the local authority reversed its decision before this was necessary, citing the historic understanding with the university that this site could be used for the

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² OUA ref.LA 3/OCP 200E(4)/2.

²³ OUA ref. LA 3/OCP 200E(2).

Oriental Institute.²⁴ The basement of no.3 was allocated to the Ashmolean in 1967.²⁵ From this point until the late 1990s, nos.2 and 4 were managed by the University Land Agent as residential properties, whilst no.3 served as a functional part of the university estate.

In May 1964, the university had reaffirmed with St. John's College its intention to purchase the freehold to the entire block, 2-6 St. John Street, when the funds were available, to which the college agreed. In anticipation of this sale, the District Valuer valued the block at £43,800 (£10,000 of which being the value of the site alone) in April 1965.²⁶ Discussions between the university and St. John's College stalled briefly around the college's stipulation that the contract of sale should include a clause requiring any future redevelopment of the site to maintain the general character of the St. John Street development. This was later amended to a looser clause stating:

'In the event of rebuilding on the property...no new buildings shall be erected unless the elevations thereof shall be approved in writing by the Vendors such approval not to be unreasonably withheld provided such new buildings shall be so designed and built...as to maintain the general appearance and scale of the present street frontage and so as to be in accord as to fenestration and architectural detail with the present houses and in particular that the facade of any such new building shall not be otherwise than (a) In Bath stone and (b) Upon the same building line and with the same cornice height as the present houses.'

Sir Leslie Martin, who had recently overseen the design and construction of the St. Cross Building and was a favoured architect of the university at this point, was employed in June 1965 to write an architectural appreciation of the site, with particular reference to whether it would be feasible to redevelop the site to meet the Ashmolean's future requirements whilst adhering to St. John's College's stipulated clause.²⁷ Martin concluded that this would be possible and on 4th July 1966 the university purchased the freehold to 2-6 St. John Street from St. John's College. The purchase was funded by an interest-free loan from the University Grants Committee. This was their mechanism for dealing with purchases where immediate development was not anticipated; the loan would become a grant when the development was near completion.

Plans were produced in 1966 for the construction of a carpark at the rear of 2-6 St. John Street to serve the Oriental Institute.²⁸ Worcester College relinquished their lease on no.2 at Christmas 1969. In March 1970 this was refurbished in anticipation of being let on a short-term basis. The gas fires in the building were removed and the voids boarded up, as was the open fire in the first-floor front room. The first tenant moved into no.2 at the start of July 1970. In the same month, repairs were carried out to the lead of the roof of no.3. Repairs were also carried out to roof slates at no.2 in October 1971.²⁹ The baluster of the top landing in no.2 was renewed in May 1972. Internal repairs were undertaken at no.2 in November 1974

²⁴ OUA ref. LA/OCP 200E(3)/2 and UR 6/S/12/14 file 1.

²⁵ OUA ref. LA 3/OCP 200E(1) 1; ESA.

²⁶ OUA ref. LA 3/OCP 200E(2).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ OUA ref. UR 6/S/12/14 file 1.

²⁹ ESA.

by A.E. Simpson due to a series of bathroom floods. These included internal redecoration, damp proofing, plastering, and general repairs. Some ceilings at no.3 were replastered at the same time.³⁰

The planned extension of the Ashmolean into this area had not occurred as quickly as anticipated but it remained the university's eventual ambition for this site and in 1976 a survey was carried out at the rear of the properties for this purpose. In 1983, the Master of Balliol enquired about purchasing the houses from the university and was informed that they remained part of the university's long-term plans and that all but no.3 were managed by the University Land Agent.³¹

In February to March 1977, internal plaster repairs were carried out at no.3, followed by complete internal redecoration. Damp remained a problem in the basement of this building and much of the rotten woodwork was replaced in November 1978.³² In 1981, major external work was carried out at no.3 because pieces of stone had been falling into the street. This involved repairs to the stone of the main façade, including the replacement of the badly corroded window cills and heads and some work on the open pediment of the porch.

There had been a small two-storey studio in the rear garden of no.2. This had not been used since about 1975, previous to which it had briefly been let to the Playhouse as a storeroom, and it was in a dangerous state of repair. Planning permission for its demolition had been refused in 1975 on the grounds that it could potentially be returned to a residential function and that the building was of aesthetic value, contributing to a mews atmosphere created by the outbuildings along the back of 2-6 St. John Street. The state of repair of the building was such that it could not be put to any functional use by the university and the cost of converting it for residential use would be uneconomical, so it remained unused and its condition deteriorated further. In 1983 the university took the view that, since a carpark had now been constructed at the rear, the studio was now in the curtilage of this rather than of 2 St. John Street, and so was no longer covered by its listing. Due to its small size it was not covered by the limitations on demolition within the conservation area and so the university demolished it without seeking further permission (resulting in a stern reprimand from the local authority).

No.3 continued to function as an annexe for the Oriental Institute, with one of the first-floor bedrooms operating as a seminar room. In 1991, external double glazing was fitted to some of the ground- and first-floor sash windows. The internal decoration in no.3 was in a poor state and it was completely redecorated in 1995-6. Damp had been a major problem in the basement of no.3 even prior to the university's acquisition of the building and this continued into the 1990s. As part of the internal redecoration a damp-proof lining was fitted to the basement walls and the wooden staircase, which had rotted to a state of hazardousness, was replaced.³³ The sash windows in the building were overhauled and those on the ground floor fitted with opening blocks.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

The plans for the expansion of the Ashmolean into this area progressed in the late 1990s. Plans were developed for the new Sackler Library, replacing the Ashmolean Museum Library, though this would extend only into gardens of the St. John Street properties, necessitating the demolition of the rear extensions, rather than replacing the houses in their entireties. In 1998, enabling works were carried out at the rears of the properties, including plumbing and electrical works affecting all the three constituent houses of 2-4 St. John Street.



Figure 5. 5.1, left, the southern end of St. John Street, facing onto 2-4 St. John Street and the future entrance to the Sackler Library, in 1991. 5.2, right, a similar view in 2013

Temporary planning permission was granted in 1997 to utilise all the constituent buildings of 2-6 St. John Street as decanting accommodation during the construction of the Sackler Library. This involved creating six pass doors in the walls between the constituent buildings in order to allow them to operate as a single unit. The relevant planning permission required that the partitions and residential usages be reinstated when the Sackler Library was completed.³⁴

³⁴ Listed building consent application 97/02023/L and planning consent application 97/02024/NFH.

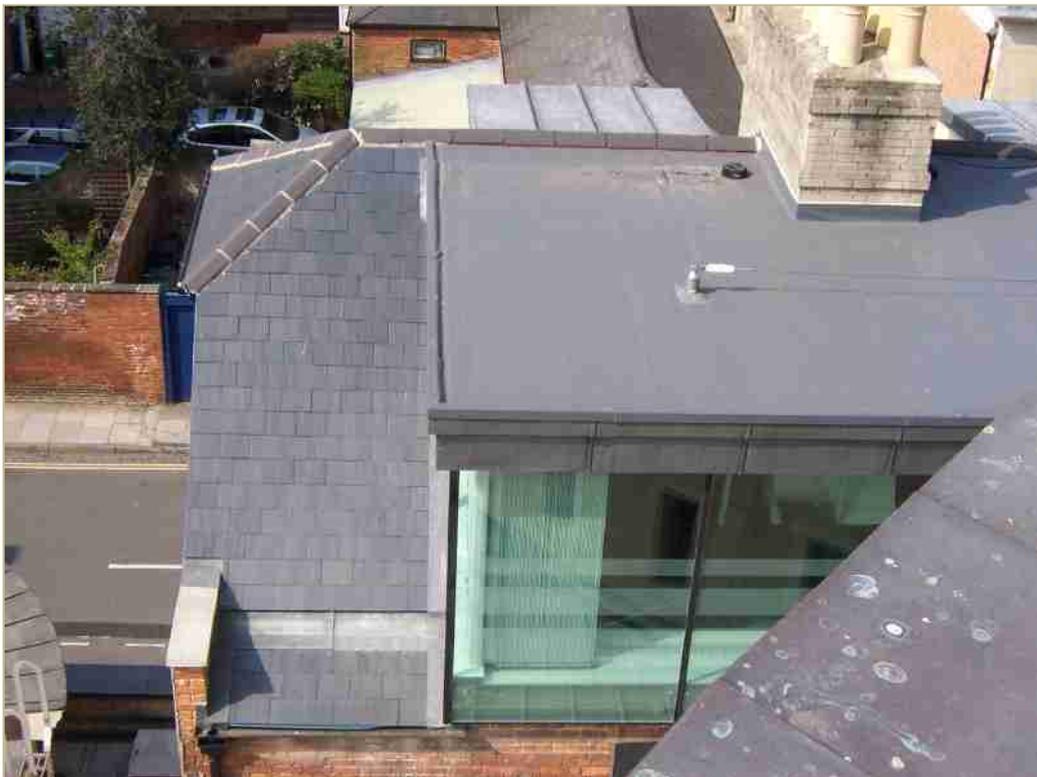
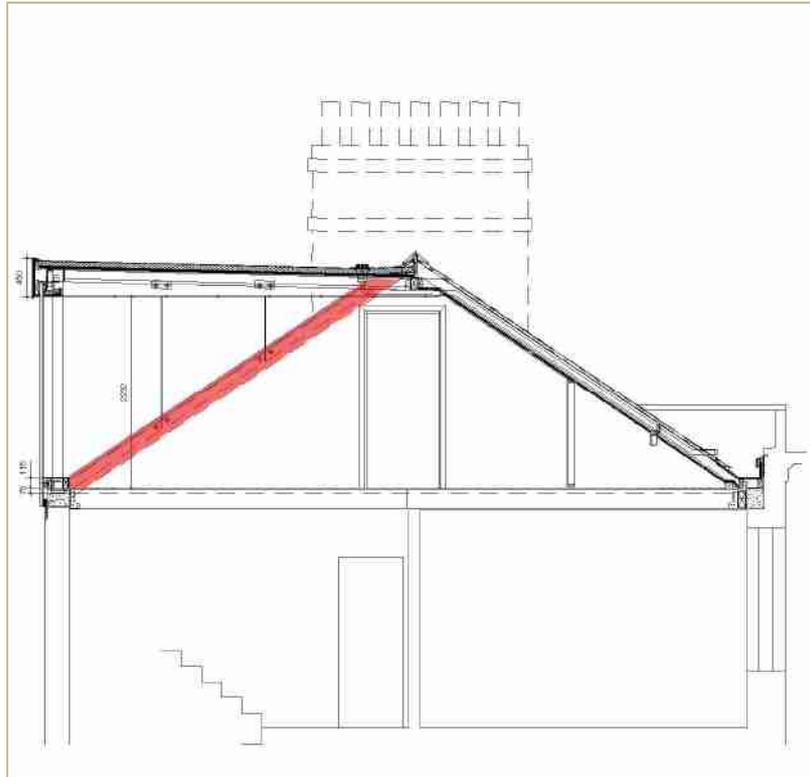


Figure 6. 6.1, top, post 2003 section (running east to west) of the attic of 2-4 St. John Street. The dormer extension can be seen on the left-hand side of the image. 6.2, bottom, the 2003 dormer at the rear of 2-4 St. John Street from the Sackler

The Sackler Library was constructed in 1999-2001 and, as anticipated, the rear extensions of 2-4 St. John Street were demolished during this period, with the new construction extending

into the original gardens of the houses and along the southern elevation of no.2 (**Figure 5**). The 1997 planning and listed building consents required that the houses be returned to residential use following the construction of the Sackler Library; however, a substantial benefaction from the Khalili Family Trust in 2002 allowed an alternative scheme to be pursued. The Khalili benefaction anticipated that no.3 would return to its long-established use as an annexe of the Oriental Institute but with substantial alterations allowing it to operate as the Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East. As no.3 alone would not have been large enough to house the research centre, the proposal included bringing the basements and attics of no.2 and 4 into functional use. The remaining portions of nos. 2 and 4 would return to residential use but no.4 would remain affiliated to the Khalili Research Centre, providing high-quality accommodation for visiting academics, with no.2 returning to the University Land Agent. The benefaction also allowed for external stone repairs to the façade of the entire block, 2-6 St. John Street.

The work was undertaken from 2002-5 and when it was complete the new Khalili Research Centre extended across the basement and attics of 2-4 St. John Street and throughout all floors of no.3. The attic stairs were removed in no.4 but the greatest changes were in the attic itself. The roof covering all three constituent buildings was completely rebuilt and at the rear slope a glass dormer was constructed along the entire length of the attic (**Figure 6**. This is also visible in **Figure 5.2**). This raised the height of the attic ceiling, making it a functional space. The basement stairs were removed in no.2, but were retained in no.4 as a fire escape, and the basement across all three buildings was completely refurbished. The party walls were retained in the basement but new openings allowed all three areas to interact as a single basement and most of the internal basement partitions, especially in no.2, were removed. A new doorway was constructed between the front and rear rooms on the ground floor of no.4. A new partition and a new doorway were fitted in the second-floor front room of no.3.

In 2003, during the refurbishment, there was a fire on the ground floor of no.4. This caused heat and smoke damage on ground floor and smoke damage on the first floor, which was rectified as part of the ongoing refurbishment.

Following the project, no.3, incorporating the basement and attic of nos. 2, 3, and 4, opened as the Khalili Research Centre. No.4 became, as planned, residential accommodation for use by visiting scholars related to the Khalili Research Centre. No.2 remained vacant. In 2009, no.2 was refurbished to bring it into residential usage but now related to the Khalili Research Centre, rather than the Land Agent, in the same manner as no.4. This involved full internal refurbishment, including: the repair of sash windows; the renewal of panelled doors (with new four-panelled doors fitted to all the rooms off the hall staircase) and ironmongery; the repair of original fitted cupboards (refitted with shelves and doors); the replacement of missing architraves and skirting; the repair of plaster moulding; the extension of the modern central heating; and the renewal of missing floorboards. A new fitted kitchen and modern bathroom were also installed. The small staircase from the second floor into the attic (in use by the Khalili Research Institute) was vestigial, having been truncated by the 2002-5 alterations, and was removed at this point. The removal of this staircase allowed the doorway to the second-floor front bedroom to be moved from its original position (opposite the

doorway to the bathroom) to the south, putting it in line with the landing of the main staircase.³⁵

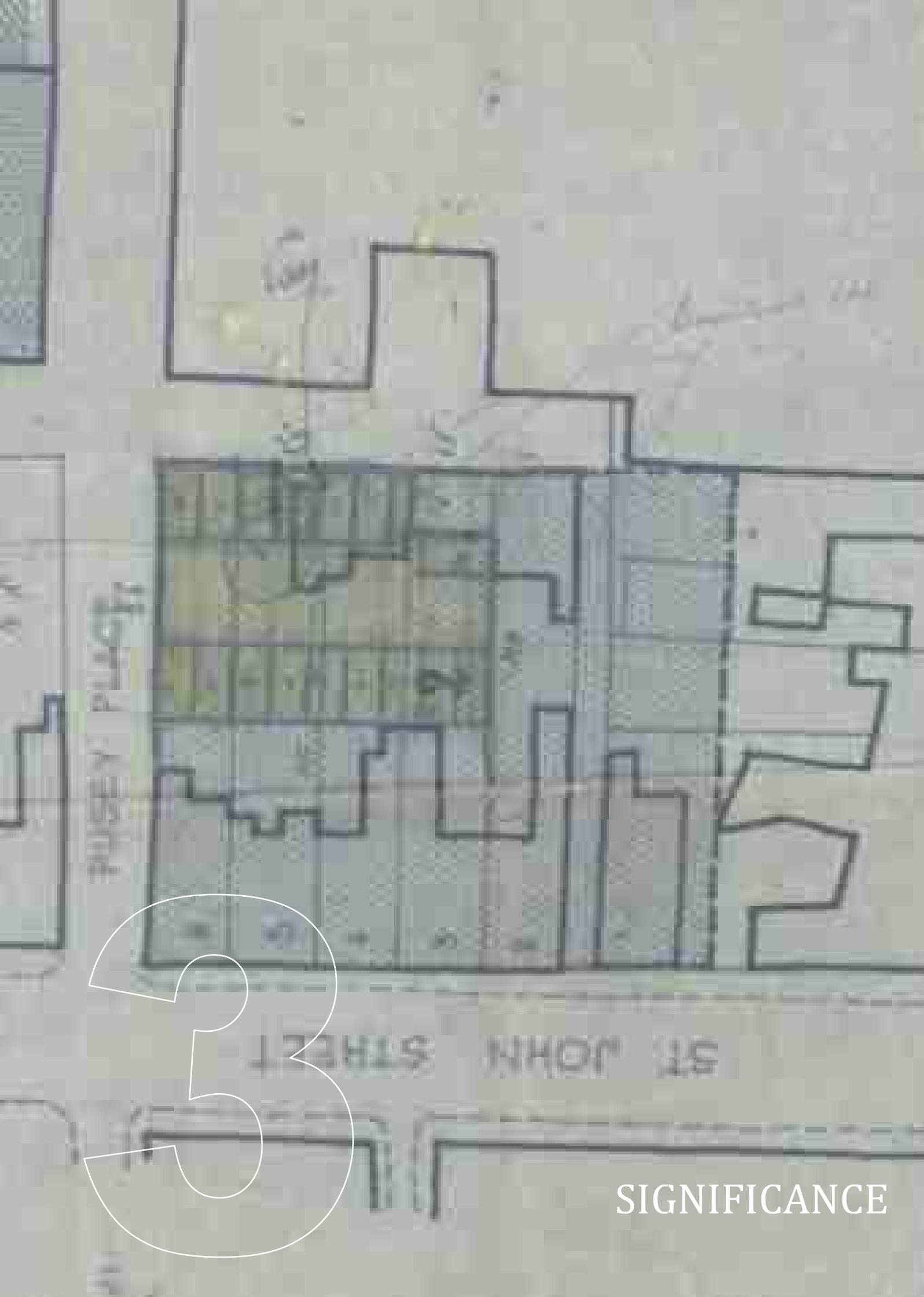
Further alterations were made in the basement of no.4 in 2012 when a new WC was fitted beneath the 19th-century staircase in this space.³⁶ The partition between the front and rear rooms on the ground floor of no.3 had been removed in 2003 in order to create a single large space. This was repartitioned with a glass partition at a later date.

All three buildings continue to form a block associated with the work of the Oriental Institute, with no.3, stretching into the basement and attic of all three original houses, acting as the Khalili Research Centre, and the remaining portions of nos.2 and 4 operating as residential accommodation for associated visiting academic staff.

³⁵ Listed building consent application 09/02745/LBC; pers. comm. relevant project manager.

³⁶ Listed building consent application 12/03287/LBC; pers. comm. relevant project manager.

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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 2-4 St. John Street has been publically recognised by its designation as part Grade-II-listed group in 1972 (see **Appendix 1**) and its inclusion in Oxford City Council’s designation of its Central (City and University) Conservation Area in 1971, and in its subsequent revisions in 1974, 1981, 1985, and 1998 (see **Appendix 2**).

3.1 Significance as a part of St. John Street/ Beaumont Street, Oxford city centre, and the Central (City and University) Conservation Area



Figure 7. The western façade of 2-4 St. John Street. 5 and 6 St. John Street are also visible at the left-hand side of the image

Beaumont Street/St. John Street is unique as the only Georgian streetscape in Oxford. Individual buildings of the period are preserved elsewhere, but this area contains the only complete development and is an integral part of the Conservation Area. St. John Street is more wholly residential in character than Beaumont Street, the only exception being the Sackler Library at its southern end. The Bath stone façade runs along both sides of the street from the southern end (no.2 on the east and no.63 on the west) right to its northern end where it meets Wellington Square. This is broken only by intersecting streets (Pusey Lane and Pusey Street on the east and the two entrances to Beaumont Buildings on the west). It remains more intact than the grander Beaumont Street development, which has lost elements to the Ashmolean Museum, the Randolph Hotel, and the Playhouse.

The uniform, Georgian street front is of both illustrative and substantial aesthetic value. The primary façade of 2-4 St. John Street is an important constituent element in this group, defining the character of the southern entrance of the street. The southern elevation of no.2 is of particular interest, as it is one of only two exposed gable elevations on the street to be rendered to match the stone façade, rather than leaving the brickwork exposed. The other example is 5 Pusey Street, which is on the northern corner of St. John Street and Pusey Street and has a separate entrance on the rendered façade.

The buildings of St. John Street are listed as a group and this emphasises the importance placed on their shared, uniform façades. The sash windows and parapets contribute to this design and show only limited variation along the street as a whole.

3.2 Architectural Significance

3.2.1 External Elevations

The Bath stone-faced frontage is the most significant external element of 2-4 St. John Street. The façade is of substantial aesthetic significance but the main the majority of its significance comes from its inclusion in the St. John Street group, of which it is an integral element. The list description, which covers the group as a whole, suggests strongly that it is as part of a cohesive streetscape that the building was listed. The paired, Doric columned and open-pedimented doors to nos.3 and 4 are particularly attractive.

3.2.2 Internal Spaces

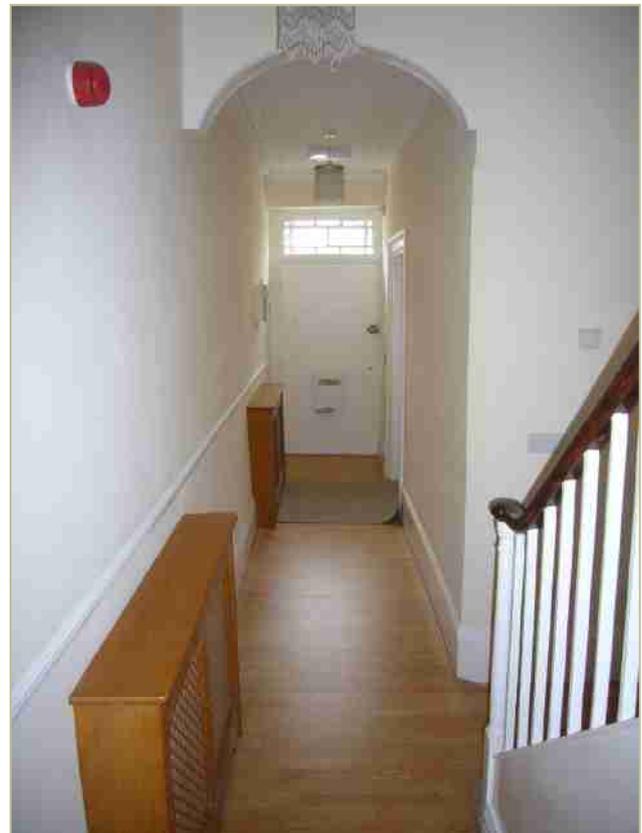


Figure 8. 8.1, left, fitted cupboard and window case in no.2. 8.2, right, staircase and moulded arch in no.2

All three constituent buildings of 2-4 St. John Street have undergone considerable internal alteration throughout their histories. Other than a short period as decanting accommodation during the construction of the Sackler Library, nos.2 and 4 have served continuously as residential accommodation since their construction, whilst no.3 has served a non-residential function since 1965.

No.4 was completely refurbished in 2003 and No.2 in 2009 and neither building had a great deal of original material in place prior to these projects. Original skirting and cornice moulding is extant in both buildings, though the latter represents modern reintroduction in many areas. Simple plaster arches to the staircases have been retained in both buildings. A single panelled door was retained on the ground floor of no.2 but the rest are modern replacements. The fitted cupboards are original, though have modern doors and shelves. The sash windows and carved cases are also original. Some plain mantelpieces have been retained but the most significant internal features are the main staircases which are attractive, though typical of their age. Other than the loss of the attics and basements, nos.2 and 4 largely retain their original layouts.

No.3, which has served as an office since 1965, has a similar lack of historical material, though it does retain some chimneypieces. As with nos.2 and 4, it retains its original sash windows and staircase.

3.3 Archaeological Significance

Oxford has a rich archaeological heritage and this is particularly true of St. John Street, with its history as the setting for both a mediaeval royal palace and a Carmelite priory. Excavations at the rear of the property in 1999, prior to the construction of the Sackler Library, discovered Bronze Age ditches, possibly the remains of a ring ditch, which places it in the context of a ritual landscape of such ditches which stretched at least from the University Parks to the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter. The same excavations also revealed limestone walls, roof tiles, and window glass related to the 14th-century remains of the Whitefriars priory. The standing remains of the priory (itself incorporating elements of Henry I's Beaumont Palace) were demolished for the construction of the Beaumont Street/St. John Street development in the 1820s.

The soil in the area is quite shallow and the basements cover the entirety of the extant footprint of 2-4 St. John Street, so it seems unlikely that there is archaeological material preserved directly beneath the building; however, it seems highly probable that material may be preserved in the surrounding area.

3.4 Functional Significance

2 and 4 St. John Street continue to function as residential properties whilst no.3 serves as an academic research centre. The Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East is an important component of the Oriental Institute. The geographic proximity of the location to the Oriental Institute, the Sackler Library, and the Ashmolean Museum makes this an ideal use for the building. The buildings in this area have been designated for uses relating to the Ashmolean Museum for c.85 years.

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VULNERABILITIES

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4 VULNERABILITIES

The ability of 2-4 St. John Street to fulfil a contemporary function

The constituent buildings of 2-4 St. John Street were designed with a residential function in mind and, apart from no.3, it seems unlikely that the necessary planning consents could be obtained to alter this usage in the long term. The current usage of no.3 as the Khalili Research Centre is anticipated to last for at least 40 years, at which time it will have served an institutional function related to the Oriental Institute for almost a century.

The internal spaces of the buildings retain little historic material and the significance of the group is derived almost entirely from its western façade. Any extant historic material in the interiors should be retained but, whilst they are attractive spaces due to sympathetic refurbishments, they are not particularly sensitive to change.

By remaining in use, the upkeep and conservation of the heritage asset is funded and its continued existence and significance ensured. Under the current usage, the significant areas are not threatened, and its listed status ensures that any further alterations operate within the constraints of an accepted understanding of the building's significance as a heritage asset.

4.1 Accessibility

The ability of 2-4 St. John Street 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 heritage asset is lessened if any person who wishes to legitimately use and enjoy the building is hampered in doing so by inadequate access provision. Access to all three aspects of 2-4 St. John is hampered considerably by the original building design. There is no level access to any of the constituent buildings, which all rely upon three steps from the street. Movement between floors within the buildings is reliant entirely upon the original staircases and there is no level access to any floor.

It is unfortunate that not all users can easily enter the building or freely move around it. It is unlikely that lift access could be provided within the buildings without substantial alteration.

4.2 Maintenance

4.2.1 Exterior Elevations and Setting

The exterior elevations of 2-4 St. John Street, most notably the western Bath stone façade, are its most significant features. They are an important contributory factor in the significant character of the St. John Street streetscape. The façade is in a good state of repair and benefitted from extensive remedial work in 2002. All the façades in this area were originally constructed with a thin layer of a soft variety of Bath stone secured with iron cramps, so they have required extensive repair and replacement over time. Patching is clearly evident on the façade of 2-4 St. John Street but this is not out of character with the development as a whole. The iron balconies on the first floor of nos.2 and 4 are the simplest example on the street but are not out of keeping with the character of the area. The southern elevation has been heavily

altered by the construction of the lobby of the Sackler Library. It is rendered and is in a clean and attractive state.

The building has no northern elevation, as this is a party wall with no.5. The eastern elevations have been extensively altered by the construction of the Sackler Library, which necessitated the demolition of the accumulated extensions.

In general the exterior faces of the building have aged very well but they remain open to weathering and erosion, potential vandalism, and pollution; damage which could detract from the significance of the heritage asset.

These houses were the earliest to be built as part of the St. John Street development and in this respect the setting has changed substantially since 2-4 St. John Street was first constructed; however, since the completion of the estate the only major changes in the landscape setting have been the demolition of the workhouse and the construction of Wellington Square to the north and the introduction of motorised traffic.

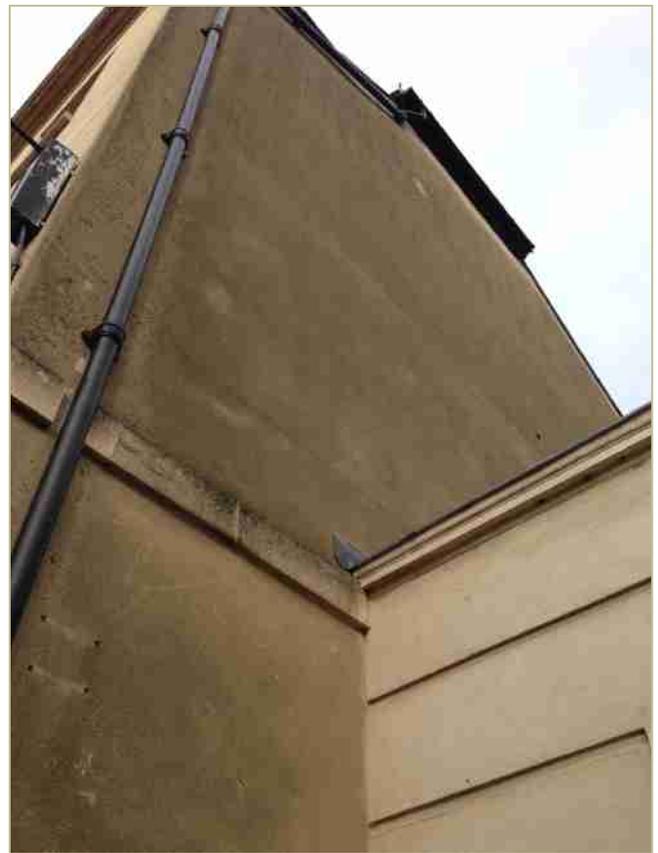


Figure 9.9.1, left, patching on the façade of no.2. 9.2, right, the southern elevation of no.2, with its join to the lobby of the Sackler Library

4.2.2 Internal Spaces

The internal areas of the building contain only limited material of historical value. Such items include the primary staircases, the sash windows, and extant skirting and cornice moulding. The original layout remains largely in place on the ground, first, and second floors. Nos.2 and

4 have benefitted from high-quality refurbishments and are pleasant residences. No.3 also benefitted from a high-quality refurbishment but has a more institutional character, with a bland palette.

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 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 2-4 St. John Street as a heritage asset, and having identified ways in which the significance of 2-4 St. John Street 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 2-4 St. John Street. It needs to be reviewed regularly, and revised as appropriate to take account of additional knowledge and changing priorities.

5.1 **2-4 St. John Street continued use in a contemporary 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**

The continued use of 2-4 St. John Street in a contemporary function is important to its continued significance. It has been heavily refurbished to fulfil this function but limited alterations may 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 2-4 St. John Street 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 2-4 St. John Street 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 by those with a legitimate reason for doing so is central to its significance. As noted in **Section 4.1**, the accessibility of the building is hampered by its original design and there is no level access to any part of the constituent buildings.

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 2-4 St. John Street 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 character of St. John Street, Beaumont Street, and the surrounding area. 2-4 St. John Street's significance is largely tied to its rôle as part of the St. John Street group and any future work must not diminish this

2-4 St. John Street forms part of a block with 5 and 6 St. John Street, which in turn forms an important part of the St. John Street group. This is part of one of the most important streetscapes in Oxford, being made up of the uniform façades of its constituent buildings.

The possible impacts on this streetscape must remain a focus for any future development or alteration.

5.6 Conservation of specific factors contributing to overall significance

2-4 St. John Street possesses external and limited internal features of some significance (**Sections 3.1** and **3.2**). 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 The primary, western façade will remain substantially unaltered

The primary façade is the most significant element of the building and will remain substantially unaltered.

The southern elevation also has some impact on the streetscape and any alteration to this will only be undertaken with a full understanding of the impact this might have on its setting 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 internal spaces of the constituent buildings contain various elements which contribute positively to their overall characters, notably the original main staircases. The sash windows contribute to the character of the significant western elevation.

Any internal alterations planned in the future should only be undertaken with a full understanding and respect for the character of the internal spaces 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 2-4 St. John Street's 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 around or beneath 2-4 St. John Street, 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

It is likely that there is significant archaeological material preserved beneath 2-4 St. John Street (see **Section 3.3**), with the remains of Bronze Age ditches and a 14th-century Carmelite priory having been found at the rear of the site. 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 2-4 St. John Street 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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6.4 Other Documents

- Listed building description courtesy of English Heritage (see **Section 6.6**).

- Historical plans, documents, and correspondence courtesy of Oxford University Archives, refs. LHD/RP/2/44, LHD/RP/3/, LHD/RP/3/1/9 #876, LA 3/OCP 200E(2), LA 3/OCP 200E(4)/2, LA 3/OCP 200E(2), LA/OCP 200E(3)/2, UR 6/S/12/14 file, and LA 3/OCP 200E(1) 1.
- Historical documents courtesy of Estates Services Archives, ref. 299.
- Historical lease information courtesy of Michael Riordan FSA, archivist at St. John's College.

6.5 Websites

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- OUA website: <http://www.oua.ox.ac.uk/holdings/Lodging%20Houses,%20Delegacy%20LHD.pdf>, accessed 10th December 2013.

6.7 Image Credits

- Cover and chapter covers: Estates Services photographs.
- Figure 1: Adapted from Google Maps (see **Section 6.6**).
- Figure 2: Extract from Loggan's 1675 map of Oxford.
- Figure 3: Adapted from 1878 OS map of Oxford. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2014). All rights reserved. (2014).
- Figure 4: From *Jackson's Oxford Journal* 28th April 1823.
- Figure 5: 5.1, Estates Services photograph. 5.2, photograph by author for Estates Services.
- Figure 6: 6.1, from ESA ref. 234. 6.2, Estates Services photograph.
- Figure 7: Photograph by author for Estates Services.
- Figure 8: Estates Services photograph.
- Figure 9: Photograph by author for Estates Services.



APPENDICES

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Appendix 1 Listed Building Description

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: No name for this Entry

List Entry Number: 1047113

Location

2-23, ST JOHNS STREET
24-33, ST JOHNS STREET
34-63, ST JOHNS STREET
5, PUSEY 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: 245859

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

ST JOHN'S STREET

1.

1485

(East Side)

Nos 2 to 23 (consec)

Nos 24 to 33 (consec)

(West Side)

Nos 34 to 63 (consec)

SP 5106 NW 5/503

II GV

2.

With No 5, Pusey Street. Laid out with Beaumont Street as a unified terrace-type scheme circa 1837. The design is simpler than that of BEAUMONT STREET (qv). 3 storeyed Bath stone fronts on brick with cellars, a moulded cornice and a smallparapet. Sash windows in plain reveals. Some of the doorways are coupled and have pediments. The windows have glazing bars and some have cast-iron grilles. 6 panel doors, some with fanlight, some with rectangular lights over. Some of the roofs are not visible behind parapets, some are slate mansards.

All the listed buildings in St John Street form a group.

Listing NGR: SP5104506683

Selected Sources

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

Map

National Grid Reference: SP 51045 06683

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 - [1047113.pdf](#)



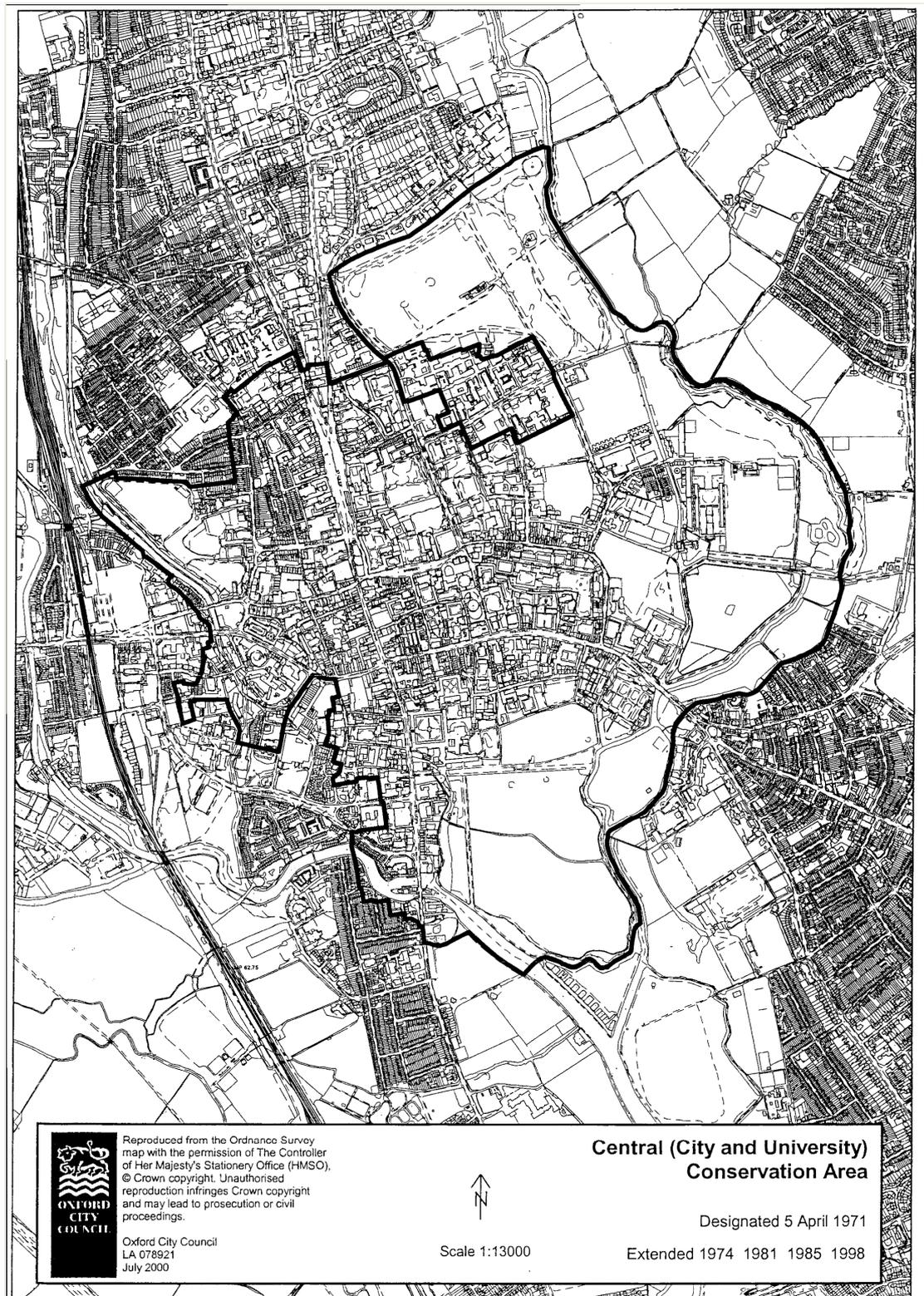
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Appendix 2 Conservation Area Description



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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Appendix 3 Chronology of 2-4 St. John Street

Date	Event	Reference
1820-22	The first collegiate use of Bath stone in Oxford at the north and south blocks of the west blocks of Hertford College	Arkell (1947) 95-6
1822	St. John's College asks Henry Dixon to survey a road from Worcester College to St. Giles's and the land either side for building leases. William Garbett is employed to produce plans for the street	Hinchcliffe (1992) 18-21; Osmond (1984) 305
1823	Advertisements for the building land appear in <i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i>	Hinchcliffe (1992) 18-21
1824	Dixon is asked to survey the land not yet let	Hinchcliffe (1992) 18-21
5 th April 1824	4 St. John Street is leased to Thomas Harris of Marston, a milkman	SJC archives
October 1824	The first five plots at the southern end of St. John Street are let	Osmond (1984) 305
October 1824	The block directly opposite 2-4 St. John Street is leased and these houses are complete and occupied before October 1827	Osmond (1984) 306-7
1825	5-7 Beaumont Street have been let, constructed, and are occupied	Osmond (1984) 305
1 st December 1826	3 St. John Street is leased to John Bayzand, a coachman	SJC archives
20 th May 1828	2 St. John Street is leased to George Kimber, a tallow merchant and property speculator	SJC archives
1880	No.2 is serving as University lodgings by this point	<i>Oxford Post-office Directory</i> , 1880
1881	The houses all have first-floor internal WCs built out from the stairs substantially prior this point	LHD/RP/2/44
1882	No.3 is serving as University lodgings by this point	LHD/RP/2/44
1884	No.4 is serving as University lodgings by this point	LHD/RP/3/2
1912	The report of the Sanitary Officer of the University's Lodging House Delegacy notes that 'a new wing built' for no.2. This cannot be traced from contemporary OS maps and seems to represent a rebuilding of an existing extension	LHD/RP/3/2
1926	The first-floor WC in no.4 is converted into a combined bathroom and WC. This arrangement was certainly in place as late as 1961 but the room was destroyed when the extensions were demolished in 1999	LHD/RP/3/2
1927	No.2 is still serving as University lodgings but it is also the business of the landlady's family's other business, Lowe & Oliver, electrical engineers	<i>Kelly's Directory</i> 1927
1929	A hot water system is fitted in no.4	LHD/RP/3/2

1931	The University begins discussions with St. John's College about acquiring the freehold of 2-6 St. John Street but it is not pursued due to a lack of funds	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
1947	Following the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, the University confirms with St. John's College that its long-term plans involve 2-6 St. John Street and they jointly obtain the approval of the City Council that this should be treated as functional land	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
1952	By this point, no.2 is still serving as University lodgings but the other two houses are now private residences again	<i>Kelly's Directory</i> 1952; LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
July 1961	The University again approaches St. John's College about taking over the freehold of 2-6 St. John Street, with an eye towards redevelopment related to the Ashmolean. The college responds that there are several rent-protected tenants and that the University would be best served by taking up the leases as they became available, easing a future sale. The lease to No.4 will become available from September 1961 and if the University do not take it up it will be offered elsewhere on a 40-year lease	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
29 th Septem ber 1961	The University acquires the lease to 4 St. John Street from St. John's College	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
Septem ber 1961	Serious damp is found in the front basement of no.4	LA 3/OCP 200E(4)/2
April 1962	4 St. John Street is converted into 2 flats for use as transit accommodation for married graduate students	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
July 1962	The University acquires the lease to 2 St. John Street from St. John's College. The end wall of the building is in a poor state, being held up by 2 tie rods, and the internal decoration in general is in a poor state. The basement, which suffers badly from damp, is in an uninhabitable state. It is let to Worcester College who rehabilitate the interior and sublet it to one of their fellows. Worcester's sublease absolves them of responsibility for the basement and the rear wall	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
Novem ber 1962	Both flats in no.4 are occupied and serving as transit accommodation	LA 3/OCP 200E(4)/2
May- Septem ber 1963	No.4 is reroofed. This includes the reuse of 20% of the existing slates	LA 3/OCP 200E(4)/2
April- May 1964	St. John's College agrees to sell the freehold to 2-6 St. John Street to the University	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
11 th	Some damage is caused by a fire in the attic bedroom of No.2	LA 3/OCP

May 1964		200E(2)
July 1964	The University takes a 21-year lease on no.3 in anticipation of redeveloping the site for the Ashmolean c.1970. Attempts are made to sublease no.3 to a college on a short lease but none are interested but for Corpus, who required very unfavourable terms. With no return possible through subleasing, the University determine to allocate the building to a University department and it is allocated to the Oriental Institute by October 1965	LA 3/OCP 200E(1) 1
1 st April 1965	In anticipation of the upcoming sale, the District Valuer values 2-6 St. John Street at £43,800 (£10,000 of this being the value of the site)	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
June 1965	Sir Leslie Martin is hired to write an architectural appreciation of 2-6 St. John Street as regards the planned future expansion of the Ashmolean, especially in light of St. John's College's stipulation in the conditions of sale that any future extension would retain the general character and cornice height of the rest of the street	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
4 th July 1966	The University acquires the freehold to 2-6 St. John Street from St. John's College. The purchase is funded by an interest-free loan for the University Grants Committee	Land Registry
November 1966	The Oriental Institute was allocated no.3 in October (confirmed in December) 1965 but the local authority refused planning permission to change the use of the building from residential to tutorial use. In November 1966 the city council overturned its previous decision and granted such permission	LA/OCP 200E(3)/2, UR 6/S/12/14 file 1
1966	Plans are made to construct a carpark for the Oriental Institute at the rear of 2-6 St. John Street	UR 6/S/12/14 file 1
1967	The Ashmolean is assigned the basement of no.3, which is otherwise assigned to the Oriental Institute	ESA
Christmas 1969	Worcester relinquish their lease on no.2	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
March 1970	No.2 is redecorated etc. in anticipation being let furnished on a short-term basis. Gas fires are removed and boarded up, as is the open fire in the first-floor front room. The first tenant moves in on 1 st July	LA 3/OCP 200E(2)
July 1970	Repairs are carried out to the lead of the roof at no.3	ESA
October 1971	Slate roof repairs are carried out at no.2	ESA
May 1972	In no.2 a new electric water heater is fitted to the 2 nd -floor bathroom and the baluster to the top landing is renewed	LA 3/OCP 200E(2A) 2
June-July 1974	External redecoration is carried out at no.3, primarily consisting of repainting painted areas to match the pre-existing scheme. Windows are overhauled. The rear elevations (rear additions no longer extant) are re-rendered at the same time. Trees at the rear of the property are also removed	ESA
August	Further repairs to the roof lead are carried out at no.3	ESA

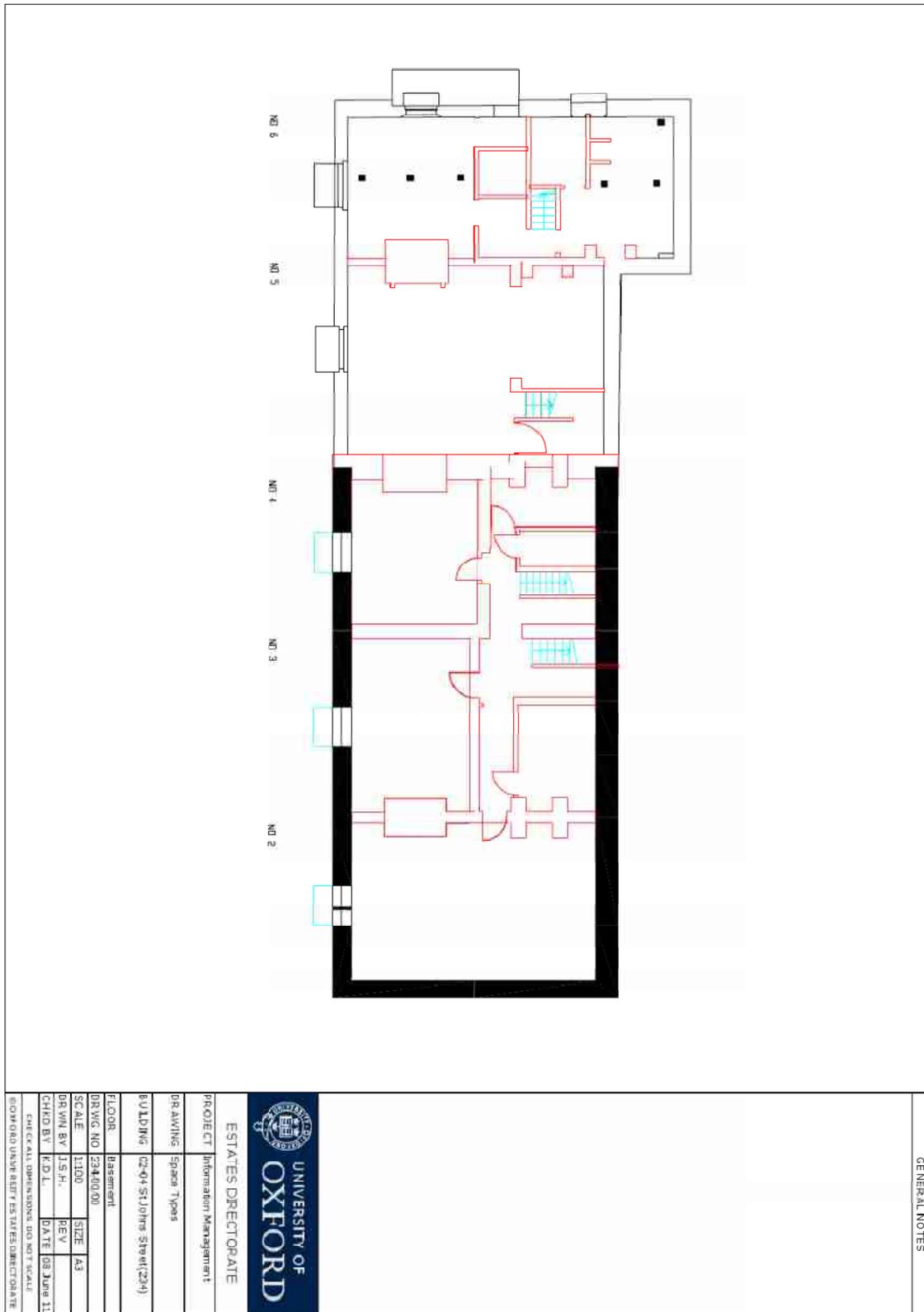
1974		
September 1974	A chimney stack at the rear addition (not extant) of no.3 is demolished	ESA
November 1974	Unspecified plaster ceilings at no.3 are replaced	ESA
November 1974	At no.2 A.E. Simpson undertake internal decorations, damp proofing, plastering, and general repair work following a series of bathroom floods	LA 3/OCP 200E(2A) 2
June 1975	2 slates fall off the southern side of the roof of no.2 and are repaired	LA 3/OCP 200E(2A) 2
1975	Planning permission is denied to demolish the small building at the rear of no.3, which had previously been let as a store to the Playhouse and was in a poor state of repair. The rationale behind the refusal is that the building could potentially be returned to a residential function and has some aesthetic value; however, its poor state of repair rules out any functional use	LA/OCP 200E(3)/2
1976	A survey is carried out at the rear of the houses for the proposed extension of the Ashmolean	ESA
February-March 1977	Internal plaster repairs are carried out at no.3, followed by complete internal redecoration	ESA
November 1978	Damp remains a major issue in the basement of no.3 and much of the woodwork, which is rotten, is replaced	ESA
1981	Major external stonework repairs are carried out at no.3, including replacement of the window cills and heads, which are badly corroded, and work on the porch	ESA
1983	The Master of Balliol enquires about purchasing these houses and the University replies that they remain part of the long-term plans for the Ashmolean and that all but no.3 are handled by the Land Agent	ESA
March 1983	The small building at the rear of no.3, for which planning permission for its demolition was refused in 1975, is demolished on the grounds that it is now in the curtilage of the rear carpark rather than the listed building	ESA
1984	A plaster partition is fitted in the first-floor seminar room in no.3	ESA
1989	Several windows in the loft of no.3 are repaired and 4 new sash windows are fitted	ESA
1991	External double glazing is fitted to a ground-floor and a first-floor window at no.2	ESA
1995-6	No.3 is internally redecorated, having been in a very poor state of repair	ESA
1995-6	Damp remains a major problem in the basement of no.3. A damp-proof lining is fitted to the walls and the basement staircase, which has rotted to the point of hazardousness, is	ESA

	replaced	
1996	The sash windows of no.3 facing St. John Street are overhauled and opening blocks are fitted to the ground floor	ESA
1997	Planning permission is granted to create six openings between 2-6 St. John Street in order to convert the houses into decanting accommodation during the construction of the Sackler Library, after which the properties were required to return to residential use	Planning application 97/2023/L
1998	Enabling works are carried out in anticipation of the construction of the Sackler Library, including electrical and plumbing works affecting all 3 houses. At no.4 existing rear doors and windows are prepared to provide access to the new library	ESA
1999	Plans are considered to bring nos.2 and 4 back into residential use	ESA
1999-2001	During the construction of the Sackler Library, 2, 4, 5, and 6 are brought into temporary office use. The construction of the library results in the demolition of the rear wings of the properties and the loss of their gardens, as well as any remaining outbuildings	ESA
2002-5	The Khalili Family Trust makes a sizable benefaction for the conversion of no.3 into a centre for the study of Islamic art, archaeology, and culture. Nos. 4 is refurbished and returned to a residential function as transit accommodation affiliated to the Oriental Institute (no.2 remains out of use). Extensive internal alterations and external renovation and refacing are carried out. The roof is replaced and a new dormer roof extension is fitted to the rear of the building. 2-4 St. John Street are connected at the basement and attic levels, with the attic staircase removed from no.4.	ESA
2003	During the refurbishment work, there is a fire in the ground-floor front room of no.4, causing heat damage and smoke damage downstairs and smoke damage on the first floor	ET 1/9B/252
2009	No.2, which had remained empty since the construction of the Sackler Library, is internally refurbished to bring it back into residential use. the staircase between the second and third floors is removed	LBC application 09/02745/LBC
2012-3	An additional WC is fitted under the 19 th -century staircase in the basement of no.4	LBC application 12/03287/LBC

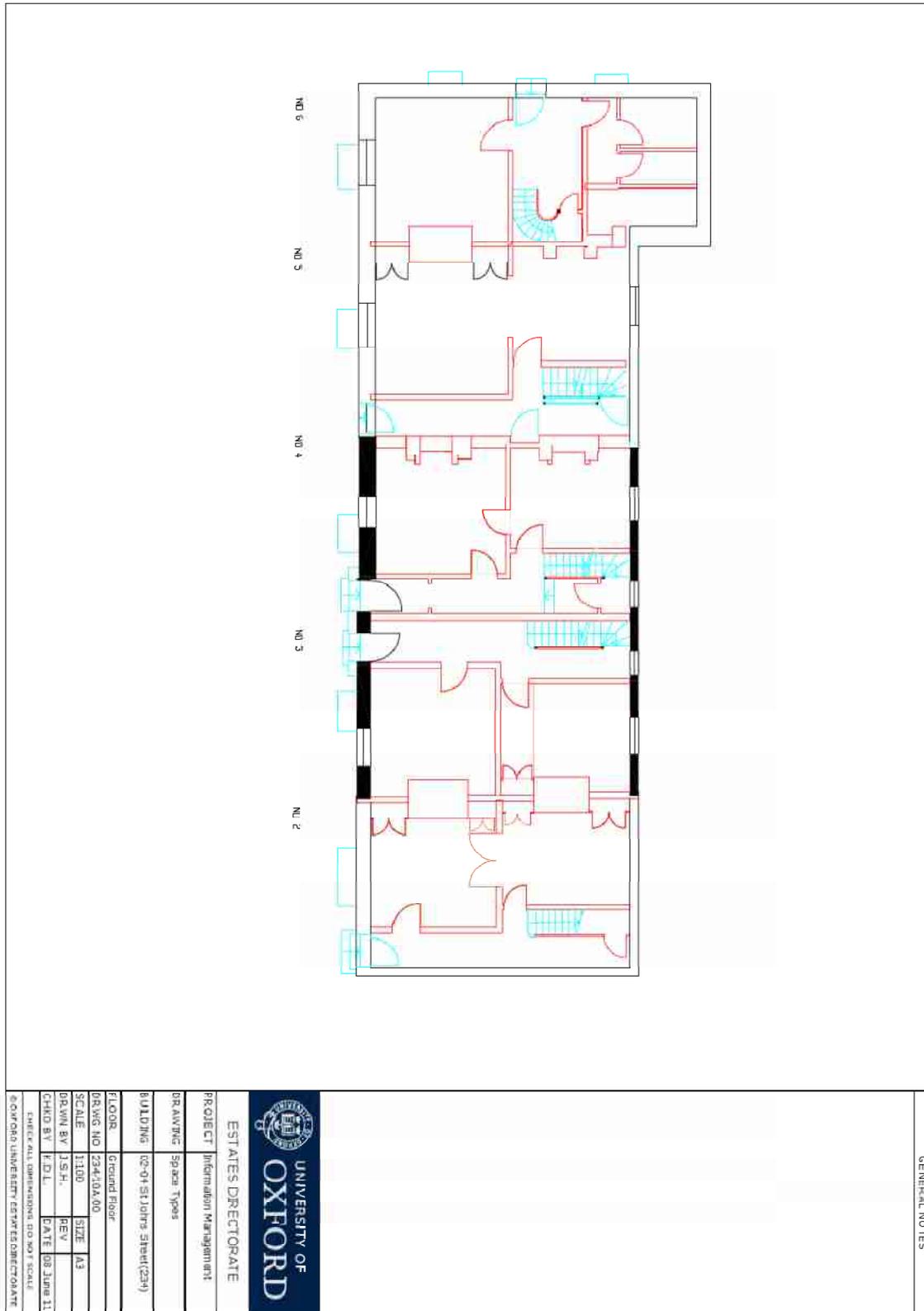
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Appendix 4 Floor plans

7.5.1 Basement Plan



7.5.2 Ground-floor Plan



7.5.3 First-floor Plan



7.5.4 Second-floor Plan



7.5.5 Third-floor Plan



