

Welcome to the consultation exhibition for the new centre for the Humanities

Welcome to our first public consultation which outlines the proposal for the new Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, located in the centre of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter in Oxford.

This proposal is currently at the pre-planning stage and we are inviting your feedback in order to inform the design process.

Once you have had the opportunity to review the consultation boards, we would be interested to hear your views and obtain any comments you may have. Your comments can be provided to us via one of the following ways:

- By visiting the website at: www.ox.ac.uk/humanitiesconsultation and clicking on the Consultation tab.
- By emailing your views to: consultation@humanities.ox.ac.uk
- Post your response to:
Humanities Building Public Consultation
 Carter Jonas
 Mayfield House
 256 Banbury Road
 Oxford
 OX2 7DE
- By calling:
 01865 615361

The public consultation event will be running from 18 November until 9 December 2020.

Next Steps

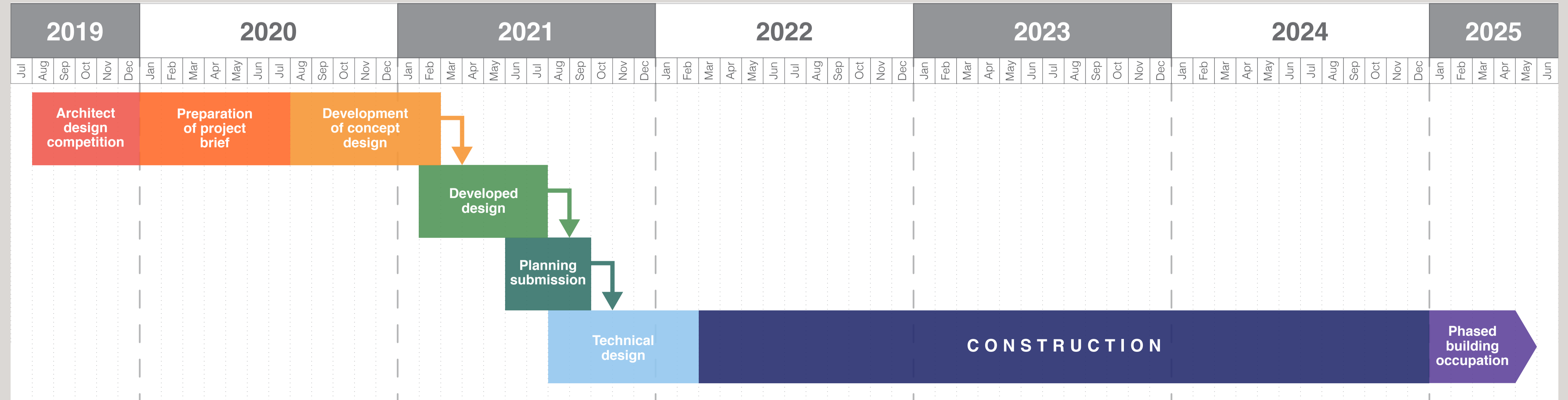
We will continue to evolve the design proposal for the new building, taking into consideration any comments received from this public consultation. The intention is to undertake a second public consultation once the design has progressed and prior to the submission of a planning application.

As illustrated in the timeline to the right, it is the intention to submit a planning application in autumn 2021 at which point a further consultation will be undertaken by the Local Planning Authority.

Thank you for the time you have taken to review these proposals.



Aerial view from the southwest. Red line defines the site boundary.



An Introduction to the Humanities

The humanities tell the story of what it means to be human, and Oxford is regarded as the world leader in how the humanities are taught and studied. The new Humanities building will take our teaching, research and public engagement to new heights. For the first time in the University's history, eight faculties and an institute will be housed together along with a new library. Academics in the building will work together to tackle some of the most pressing questions of our time, from the impact of Artificial Intelligence to the environment.

Crucially, the building will be open to the public, and we aim to bring research and performance in the arts and humanities to new audiences. The Centre will benefit the Oxford community in a number of ways:

- Space for schoolchildren to visit and engage with Oxford's researchers.
- Exhibition space.
- New performance venues for music, theatre, drama, dance, lectures and more, including a 500-seat concert hall with world-class acoustics; a 250-seat theatre; and a 100-seat 'Black Box' lab for experimental performance.
- Our venues will be open to regional cultural organisations, with whom Oxford researchers will strengthen their partnerships.
- A new Cultural Programme which will bring the world's leading performers and artists to Oxford.
- Improved landscaping and more greenery around the building.
- Improved public realm and public access across the site, opening up and connecting the ROQ and the surrounding area.

We cannot wait to welcome you into the building for the first performance!

The Design Team

The University of Oxford has instructed the following Consultant Team to develop proposals for this important site:

Architects:	Hopkins Architects
Project Manager:	CPC Project Services
Planning Consultants:	Carter Jonas
Heritage:	Purcell
Landscape Architects:	Gillespies
Civil/Structural Engineers:	AKT II
Services Engineers:	Max Fordham
Transport:	Pell Frischmann
Sustainability:	Etude
Acoustic Consultant:	ARUP Acoustics
Theatre Consultant:	Charcoalblue

Other specialist consultants to be appointed as appropriate.



Bookshelves in Oxford University's Bodleian Libraries.



Hugh Quarshie, actor and Oxford graduate in Philosophy, Politics and Economics.



The Centre will benefit teaching in the Humanities.



The Centre will attract world-class musicians to perform in Oxford.

The Brief

The brief for the new Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities brings together eight faculties, six libraries, a new Institute for Ethics in AI and a number of research institutes in one building, alongside varied spaces for performance and public engagement. While under a single roof, the building will facilitate engagement across the public and academic elements of the Humanities Division and provide new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

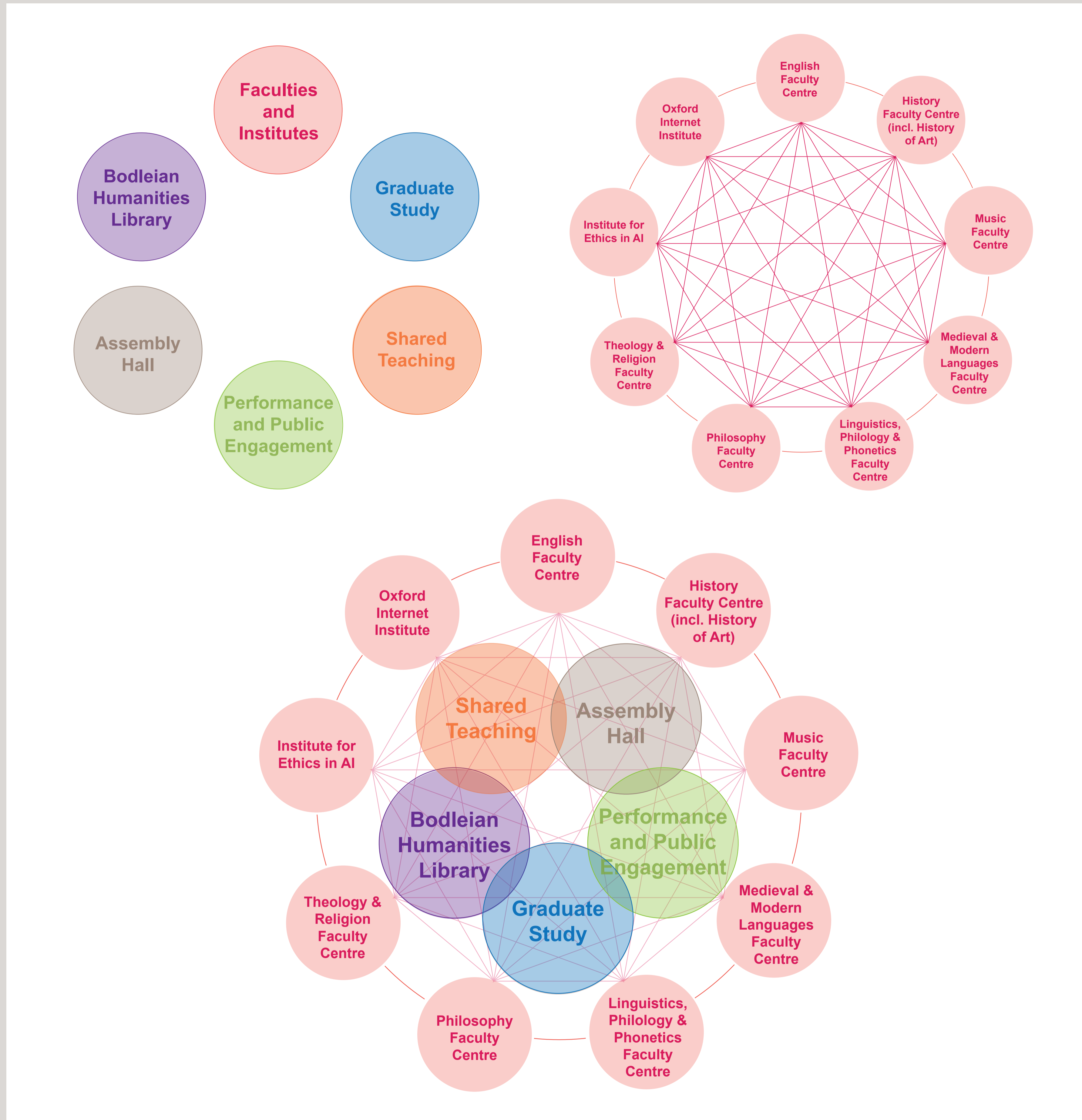
The following faculties and institutes will have centres in the new building:

- Faculty of English
- Faculty of History, including the Department of History of Art
- Faculty of Music
- Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages
- Faculty of Linguistics, Philology, and Phonetics
- Faculty of Philosophy
- Faculty of Theology and Religion
- Institute for Ethics in AI
- Oxford Internet Institute

The building will include a concert hall, and a number of spaces designed for multiple purposes, including teaching, research, performance, exhibitions, public engagement:

- Bate Collection of Musical Instruments
- Exhibition Hall
- School and Public Engagement Centre
- Cafe
- 500-seat Concert Hall
- 250-seat Theatre for lectures, drama and dance
- 100-seat lecture and film teaching facility
- Black Box Performance Lab
- Rehearsal Space

Furthering the University's mission to disseminate by every means the advancement of learning, it will share its research, assets and resources with the widest possible community, using exhibitions, concerts, public lectures, screenings and drama performances. With such stakeholder breadth and depth, the brief for the Centre is challenging, and in order to meet it, we have developed a design strategy based on diversity within unity, where different needs can be accommodated within one overall identity.



Strategic consideration of collaboration, engagement and interaction within the new Centre for the Humanities

Materials and Quality Benchmarks

In considering the emerging design, Hopkins Architects have referenced several of their projects, which reflect the warmth, quality, and excitement, aspired to in the New Humanities Building. These references range from the choice and treatment of materials, to the character and relationship of spaces, and their acoustic and sustainability performance. A few examples can be seen below:

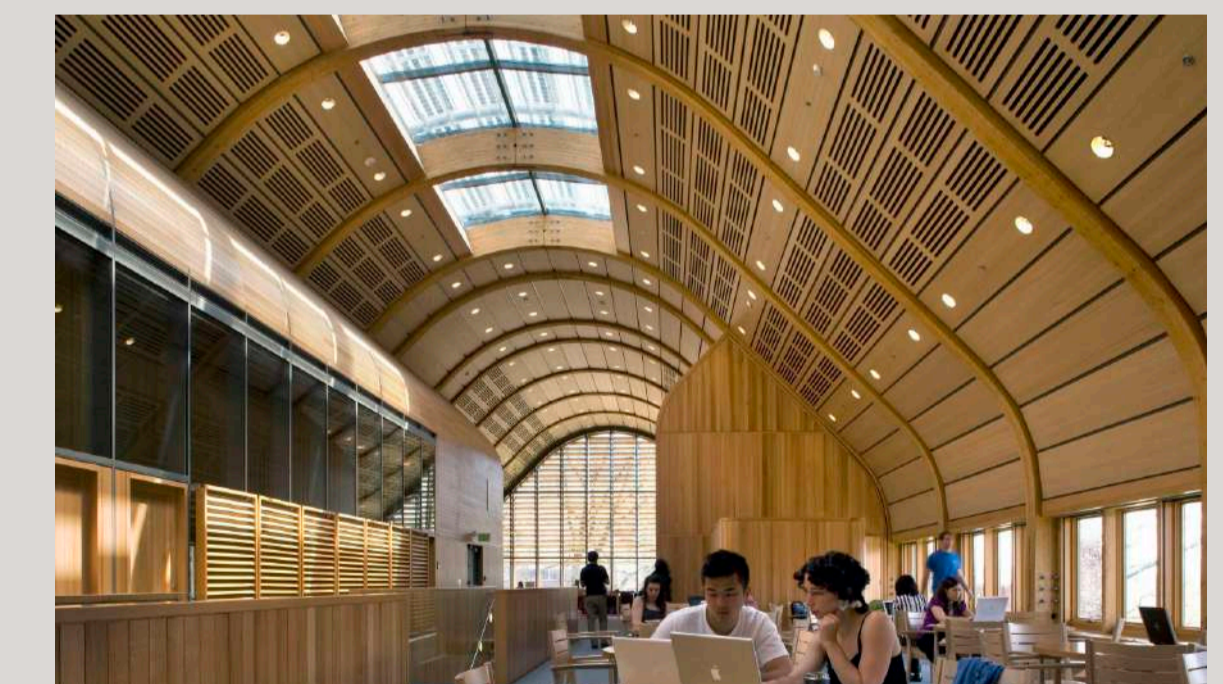


Brick

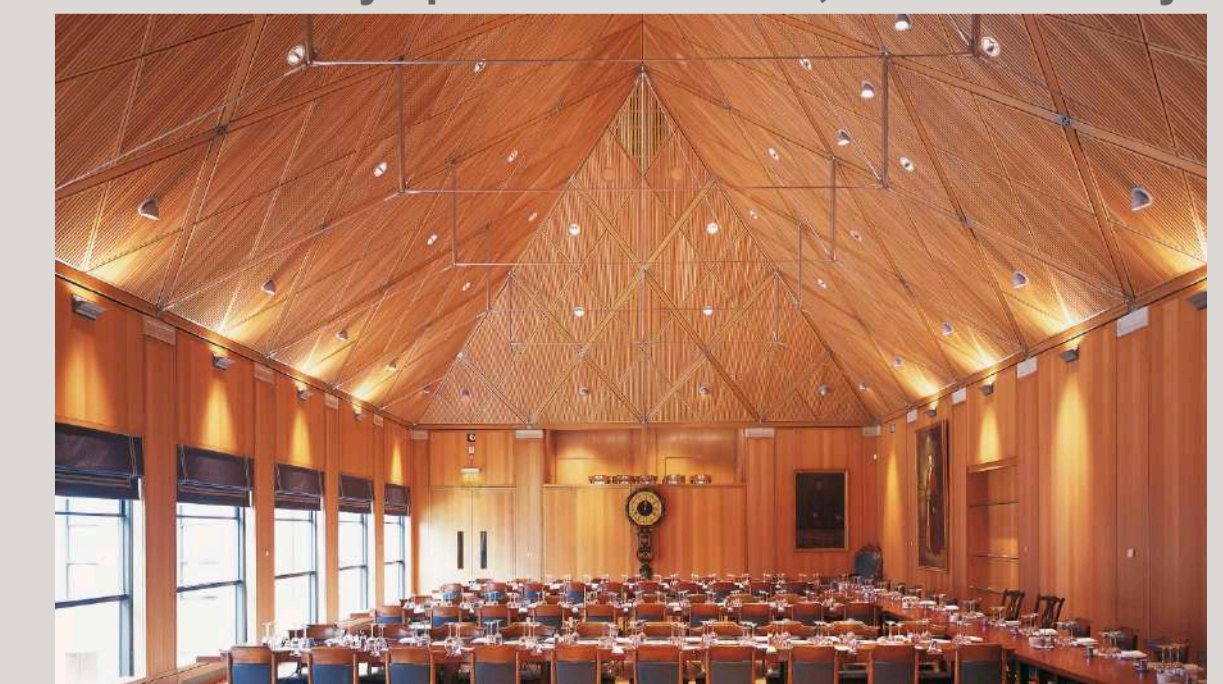
Pitch faced stone



Smooth stone



Informal study spaces Kroon Hall, Yale University



Haberdashers' Hall, City of London

Site and Context

The site is located within the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ) which is located 1km north of Oxford City Centre. The currently vacant parcel of land, located in the centre of the ROQ, has become available as part of the wider redevelopment of the site brought about through the demolition of the previous Radcliffe Infirmary buildings. The site is surrounded by the Grade I listed Radcliffe Observatory, Green Templeton College and the Gibson and Harkness Buildings to the north. The Andrew Wiles Building (Mathematics Institute) to the east and Somerville College to the south east. The Blavatnik School of Government is located to the south west and Freud (formerly St. Paul's Church) to the west. The main arterial route of Woodstock Road runs to the east of the site and Walton Street to the west.

The site itself extends to 1.51 hectares. In terms of topography, the site rises gently from south to north. There are a number of existing pedestrian and cycle connections that traverse the site and connect the ROQ area to the city and beyond.

Planning Policy

The Oxford City Local Plan 2016-2036 confirms that this site forms part of Policy SP54: Radcliffe Observatory Quarter. Policy SP54 states that planning permission will be granted for academic institutional use, student accommodation and residential development which could include employer linked housing.

The site is also designated as a Category 1 Employment Site. This policy confirms that planning permission will be granted for the intensification, modernisation and regeneration for employment purposes if it can be demonstrated that the development makes best and most efficient use of the land and does not cause unacceptable environmental impacts and effects.

The proposals for this part of the ROQ area seeks to provide a new, modern academic facility for the Humanities Division. It will build on the University's presence within the ROQ area and as a result provide many public benefits as part of the proposals. The concept for this site sits comfortably within the requirements of the planning policy for the ROQ.



The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter site



1. View of site from Radcliffe Observatory looking South



2. View looking northwest across the site towards the Radcliffe Observatory



3. View looking southwest along Somerville College towards Blavatnik School of Government



4. View of the site along the Harkness Building looking North East

Surrounding Heritage

Development on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter first started in the late 18th century and has continued to today, resulting in many important buildings and spaces around the site. This history is being celebrated and integrated into the evolving design for the new building.

History of the Site

1772 – The foundation stone was laid for the Radcliffe Observatory. The original architect was Henry Keene, with James Wyatt taking over following Keene’s death prior to completion. The building was positioned to face directly south in order to allow accurate studies of the planets, stars, sun and moon.

1770 – The Radcliffe Infirmary on Woodstock Road was opened to patients. It was originally one gradually expanded over 200 years to cover most of what is now the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

1825 – Oxford University Press relocated to Walton Street.

1848 – The heliometer (the small domed building in front of the Observatory) was built.

19th century – The residential suburb of Walton Manor was laid out in the early 19th century to the north of the ROQ. Industry and residential areas grew up in Jericho along the east side of the canal.

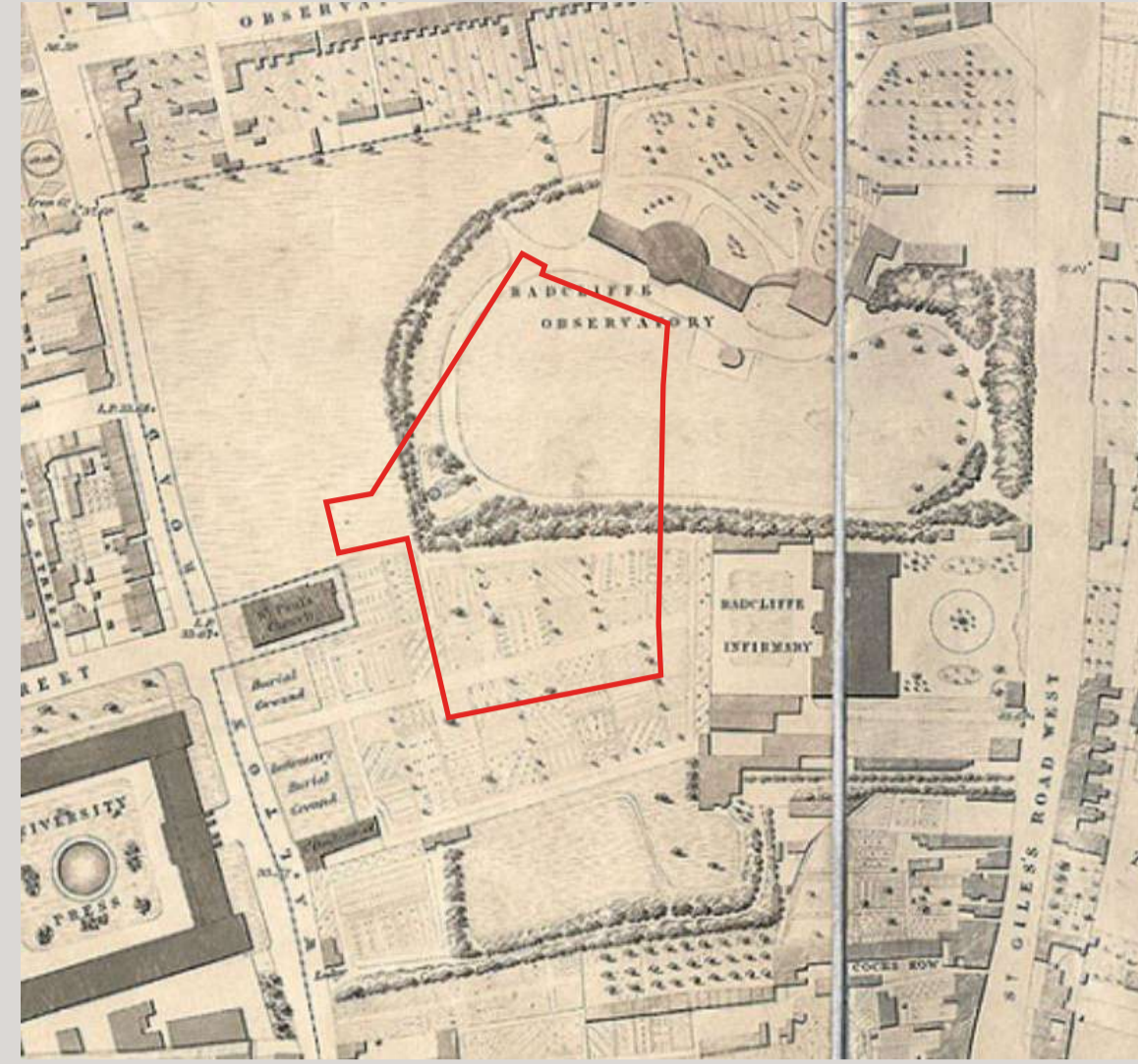
1850 – Robert Hoggar’s plan of Oxford, showing the Observatory and Infirmary adjacent to one another on separate plots.

1930s – The Radcliffe Observatory moved operations to South Africa and the Infirmary took over its original buildings and grounds.

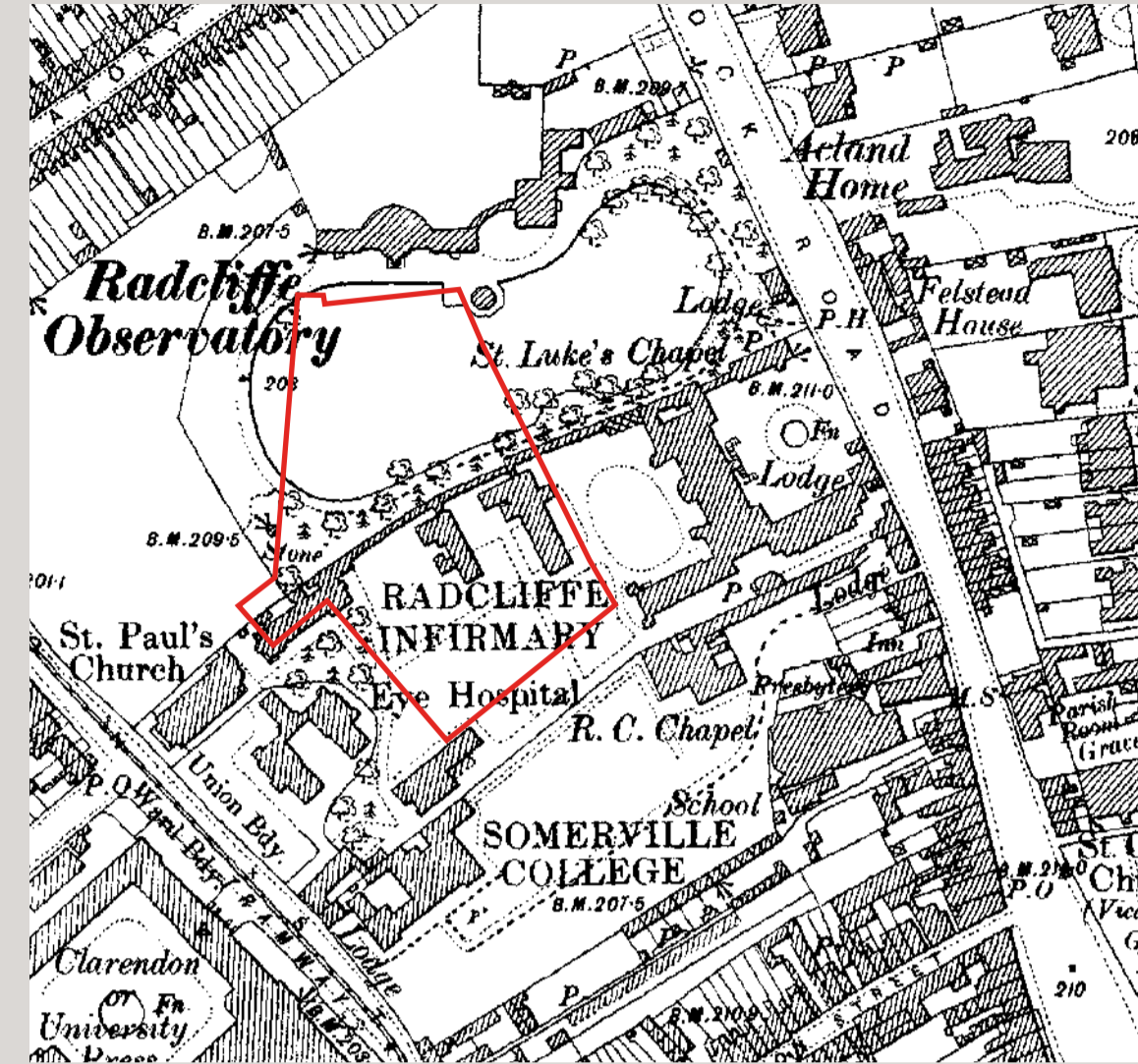
1950s – By the 1950s, the infirmary had expanded into the Observatory grounds.

1977 – Green College (now Green Templeton College) took over the Observatory as its campus.

2007 – All departments moved from Woodstock Road to hospital sites across the city and the University set about clearing the ROQ for future development.



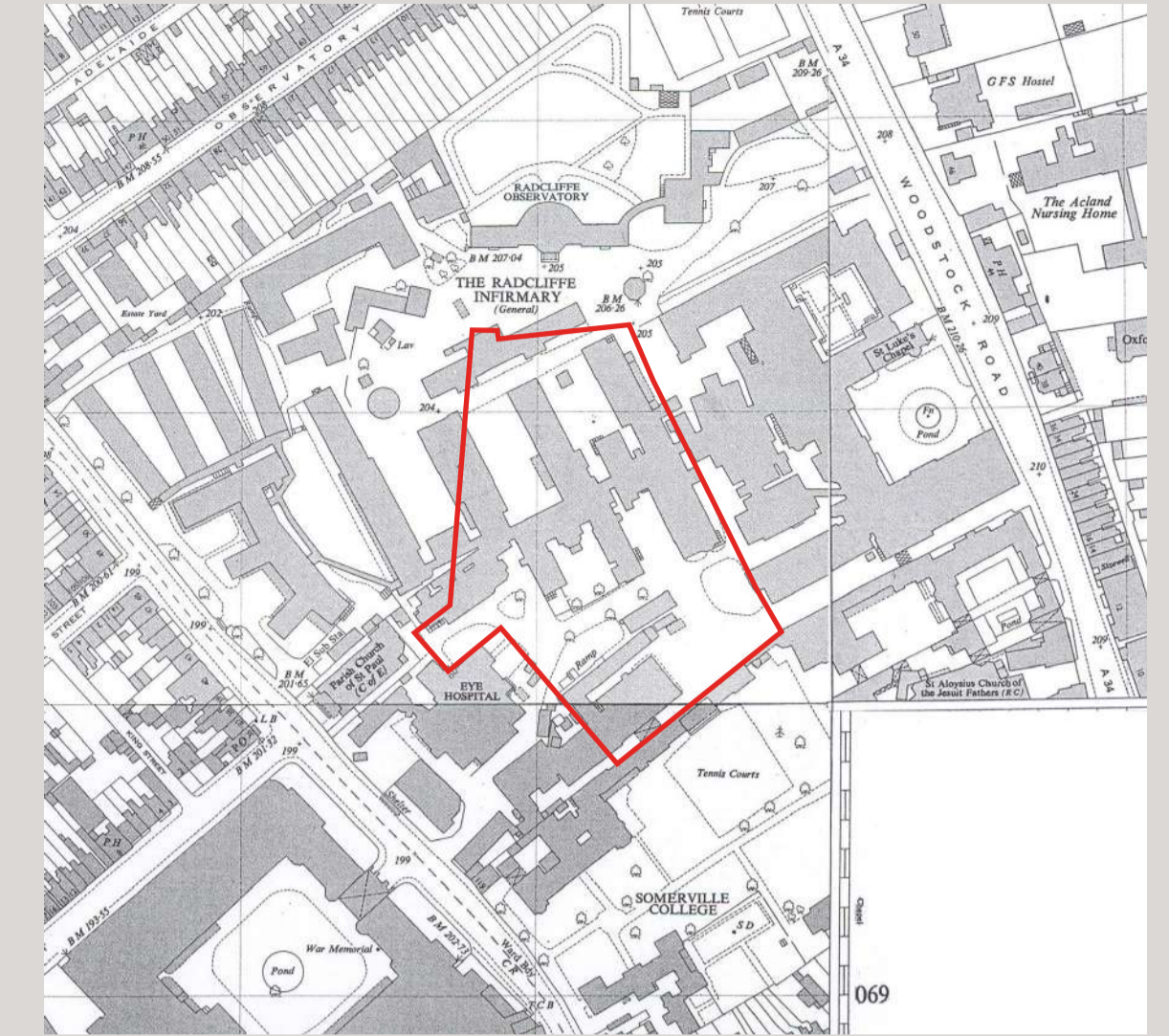
1850 - Radcliffe Observatory



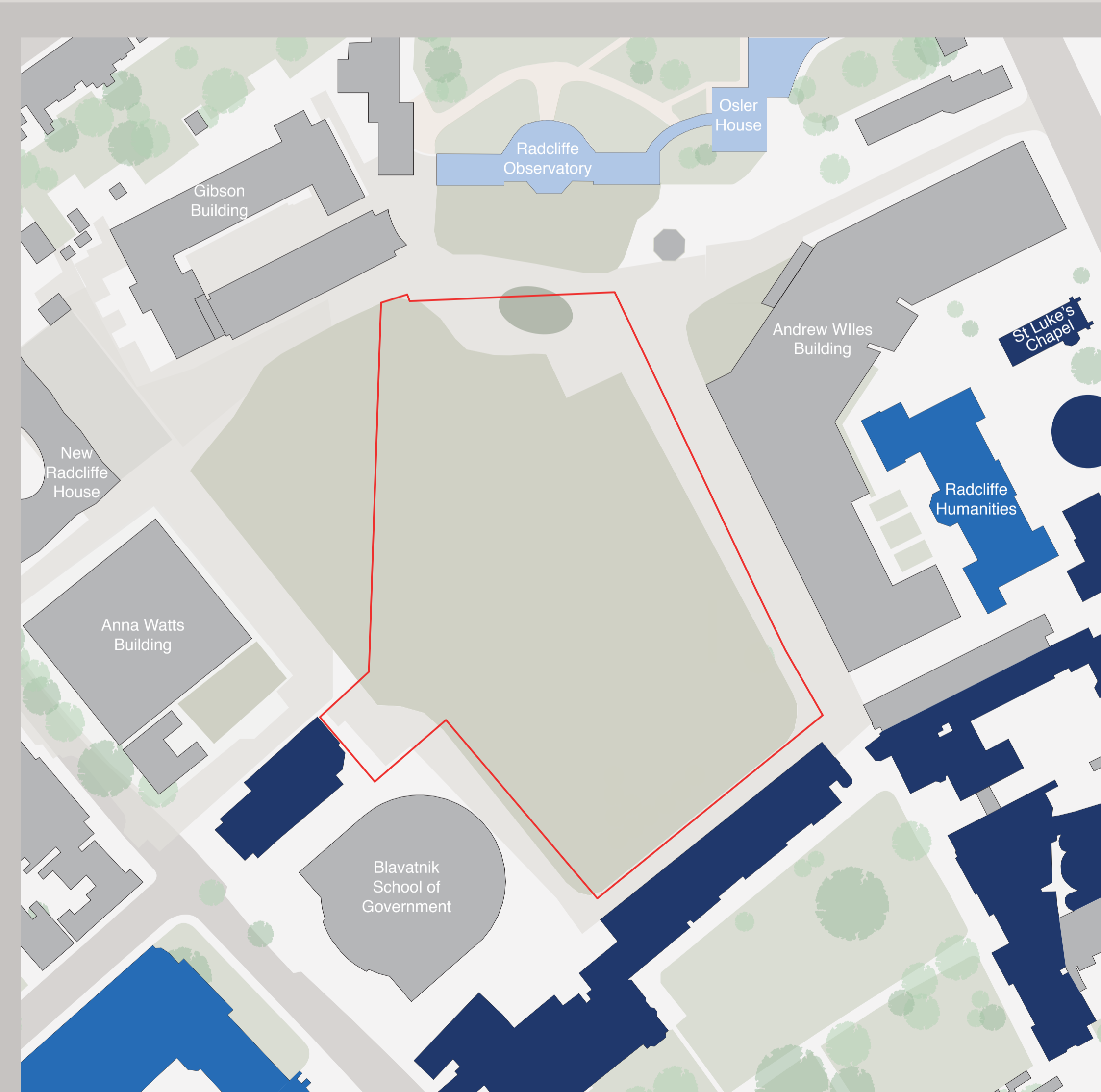
1900 - Radcliffe Infirmary



1950s - Radcliffe Infirmary



1958 - Ordnance Survey showing Radcliffe Infirmary



Humanities Plot Boundary
 Grade I Listed Building
 Grade II* Listed Building
 Grade II Listed Building

LISTED BUILDINGS

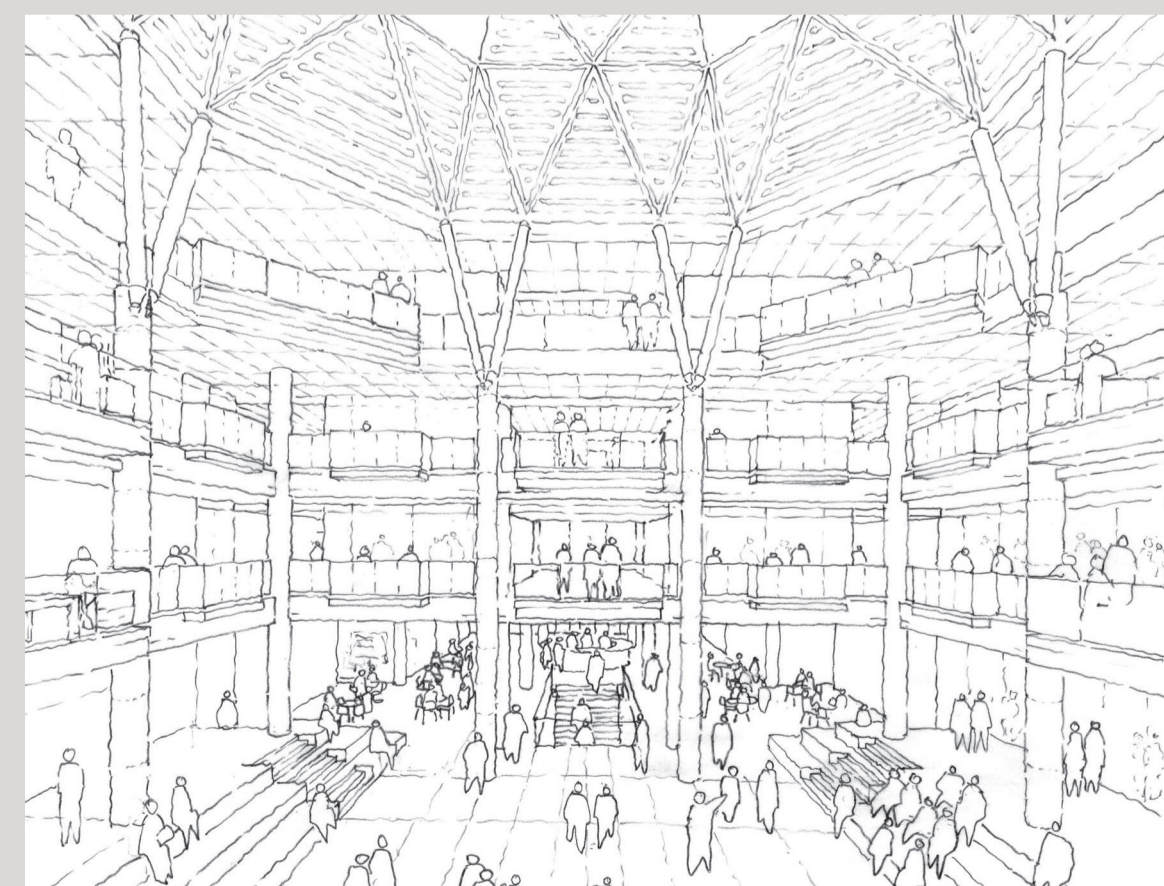
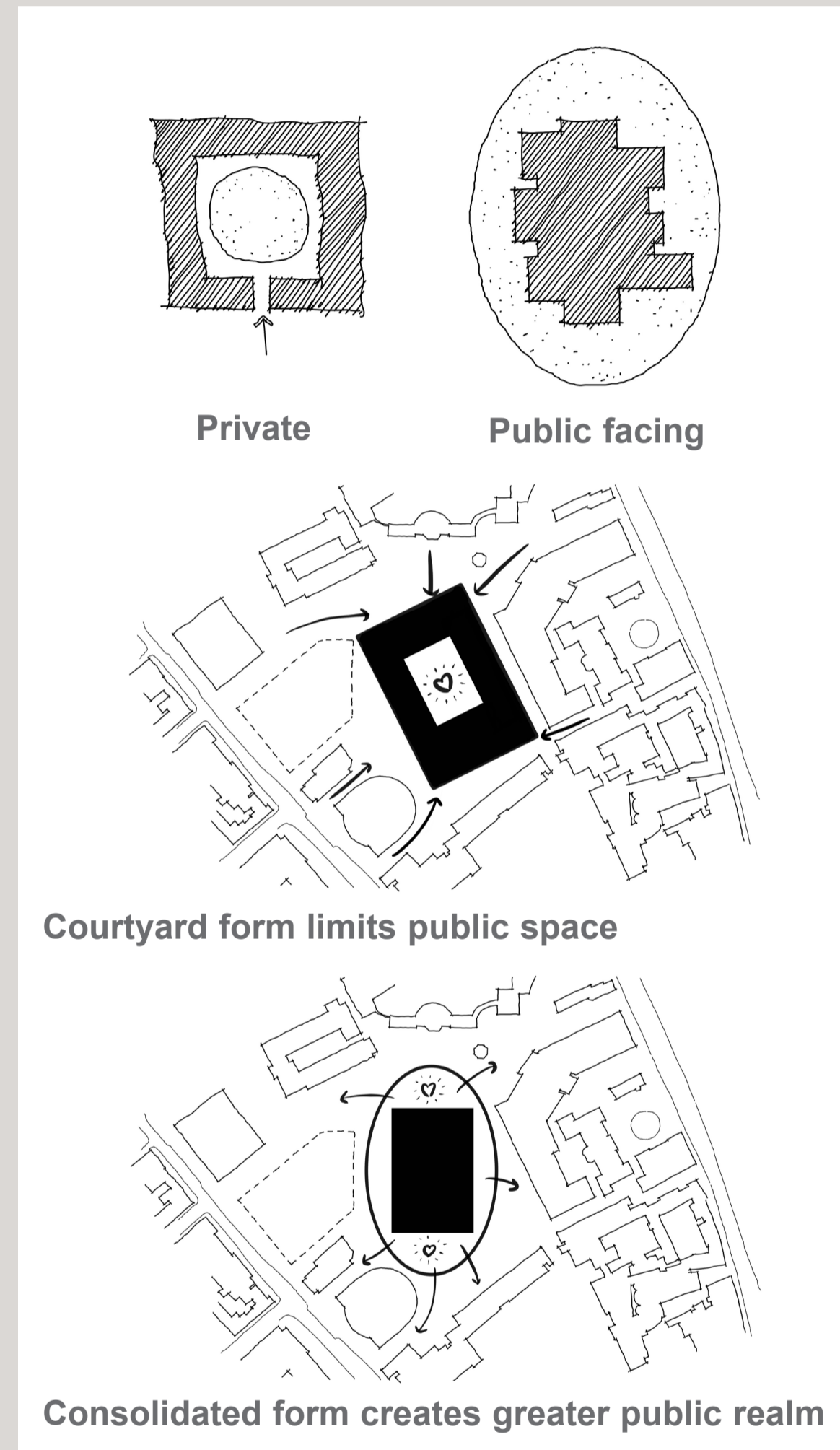


Humanities Plot
 Central Conservation Area
 Jericho Conservation Area
 North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area
 Walton Manor Conservation Area

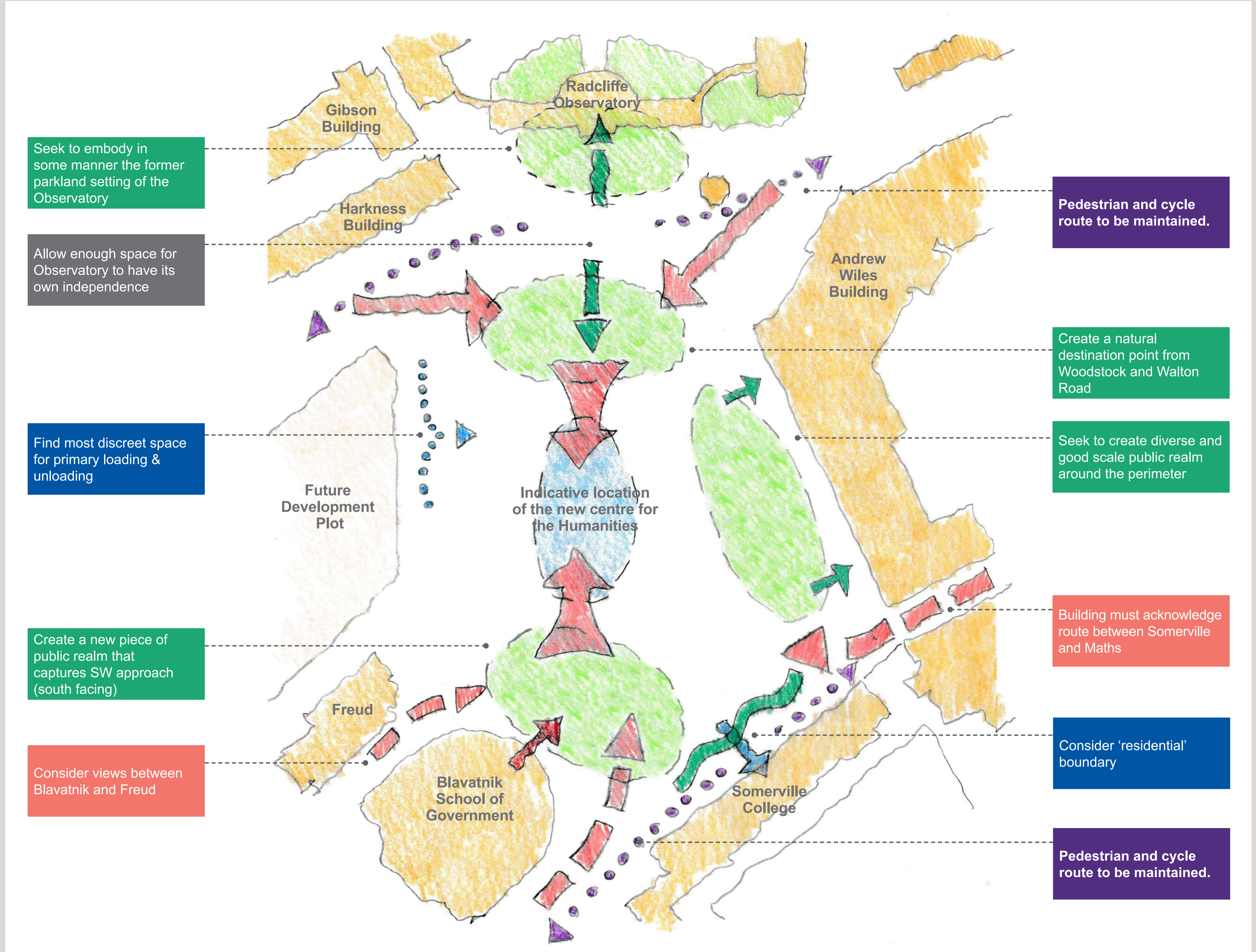
CONSERVATION AREAS

Opportunities and Constraints

- A community of structures bringing the faculties together around a central Assembly Hall.
- Using massing, scale, views and landscape to particularise its response to its setting.
- Creating a varied roofline from 2 to 4 storeys, with opportunities for roof terraces both north and south of the building.



Conceptual sketch of the Assembly Hall



Site Opportunities and Constraints

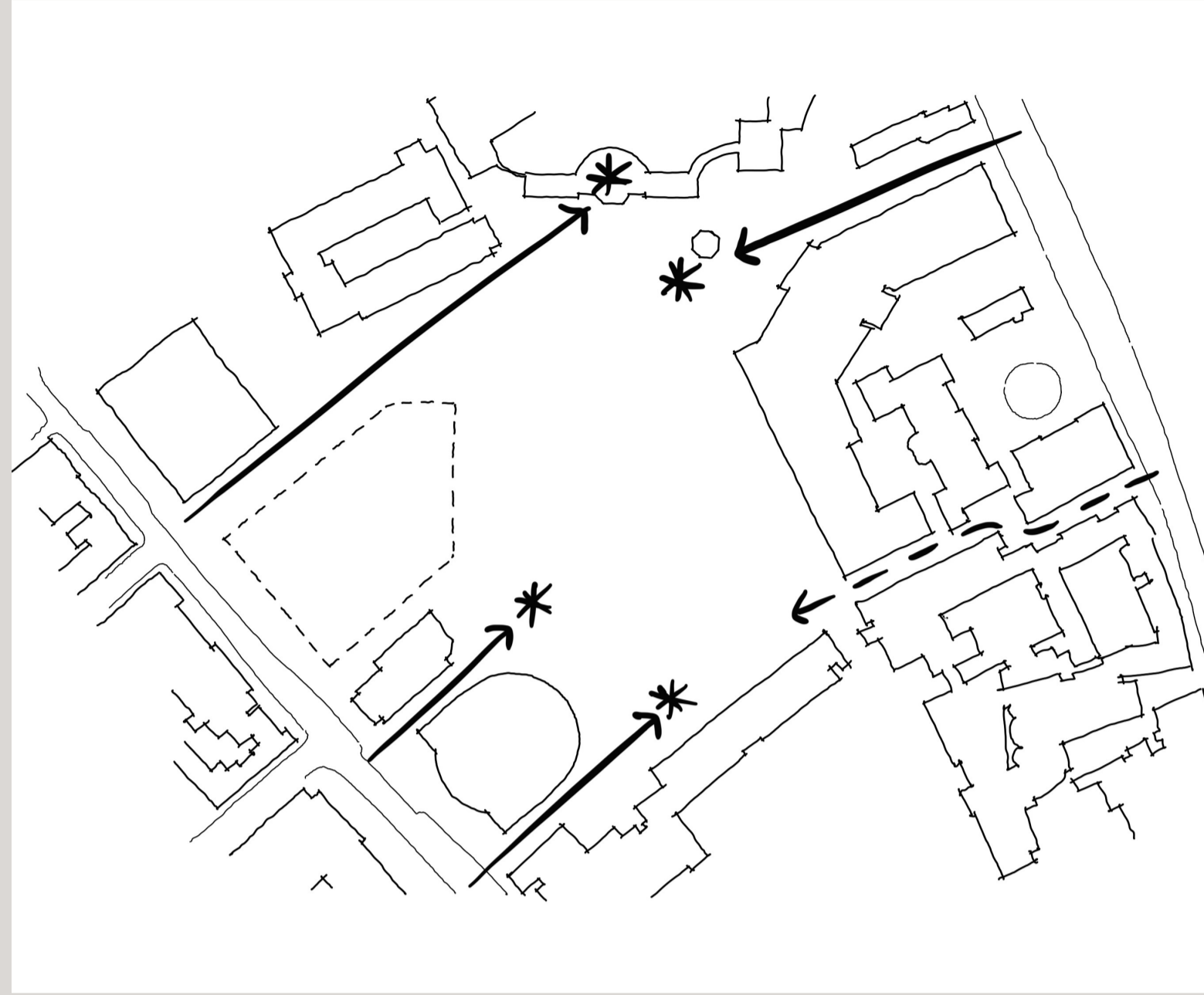
A Developing Approach to the Site

The proposal will have a minimal amount of vehicles entering the site with vehicle access for servicing and maintenance taken primarily from Woodstock Road. This creates a significant opportunity for improved landscape and public realm in the ROQ area.

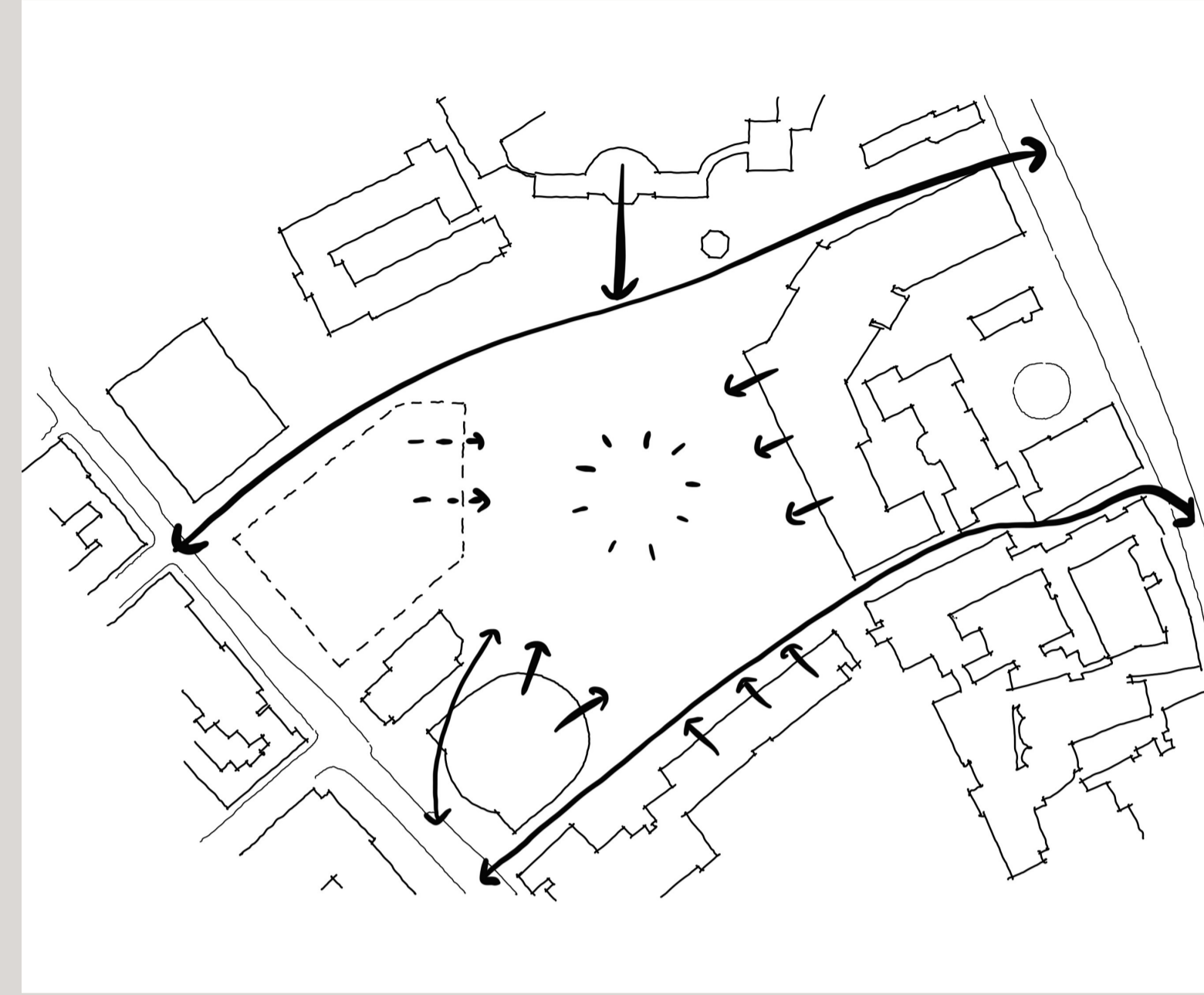
Our initial approach to landscape and the public realm has been to create an emerging design for a building that is compact as possible on the site to provide, in turn, the maximum space and opportunity for a series of landscaped spaces.

The setting out of the new building is aligned with the north/south axis of the Observatory. This strategy achieves two goals. It creates a more formal space between the northern entrance and the Observatory, while creating more informal and picturesque spaces between the new building and the adjacent existing buildings to the east, south and west.

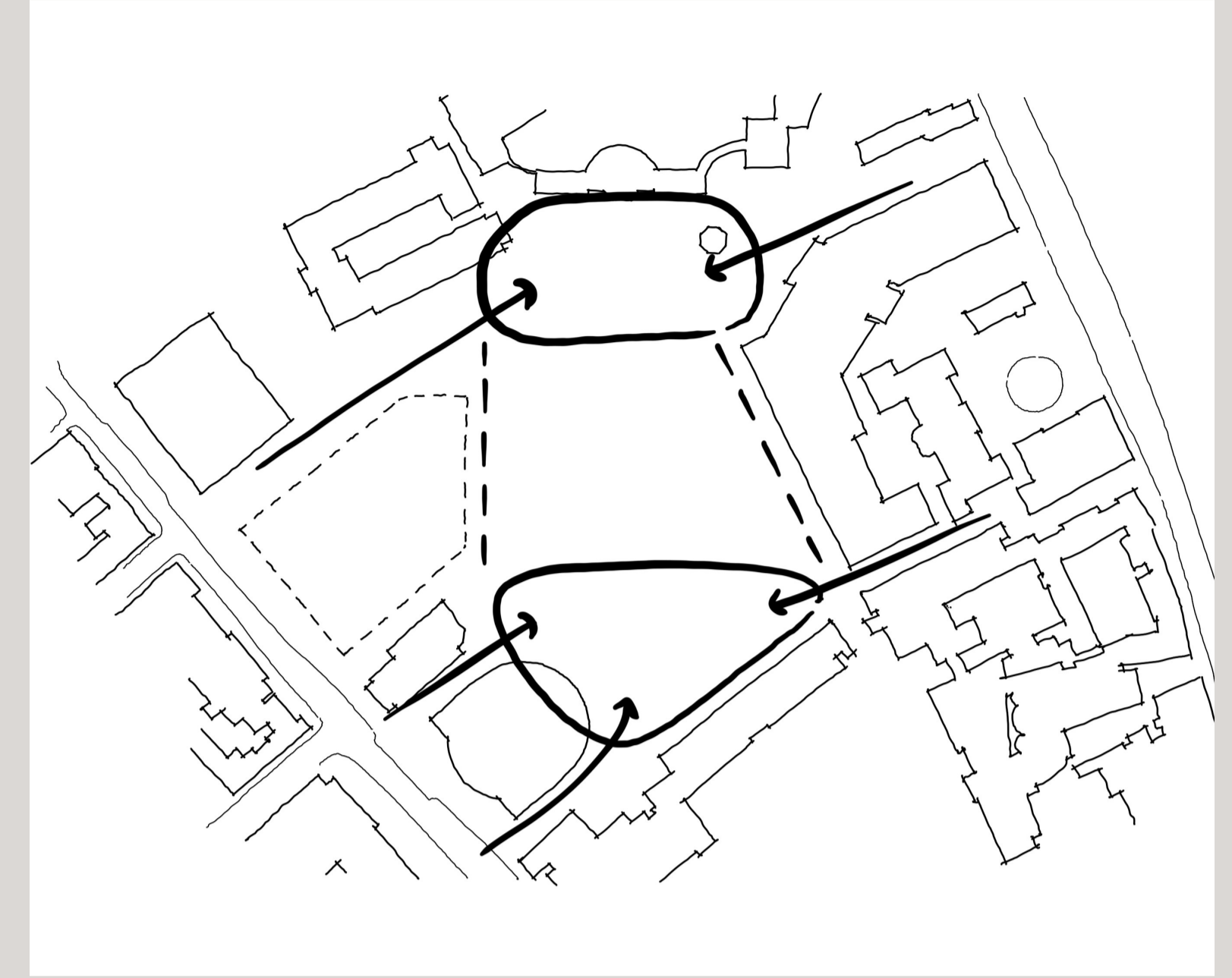
In the new space to the north, we intend to create a welcoming green space and celebratory point of arrival that will engage the Observatory and the Heliometer in a meaningful manner. To the south an inviting urban landscape will support University and public events of significant scale.



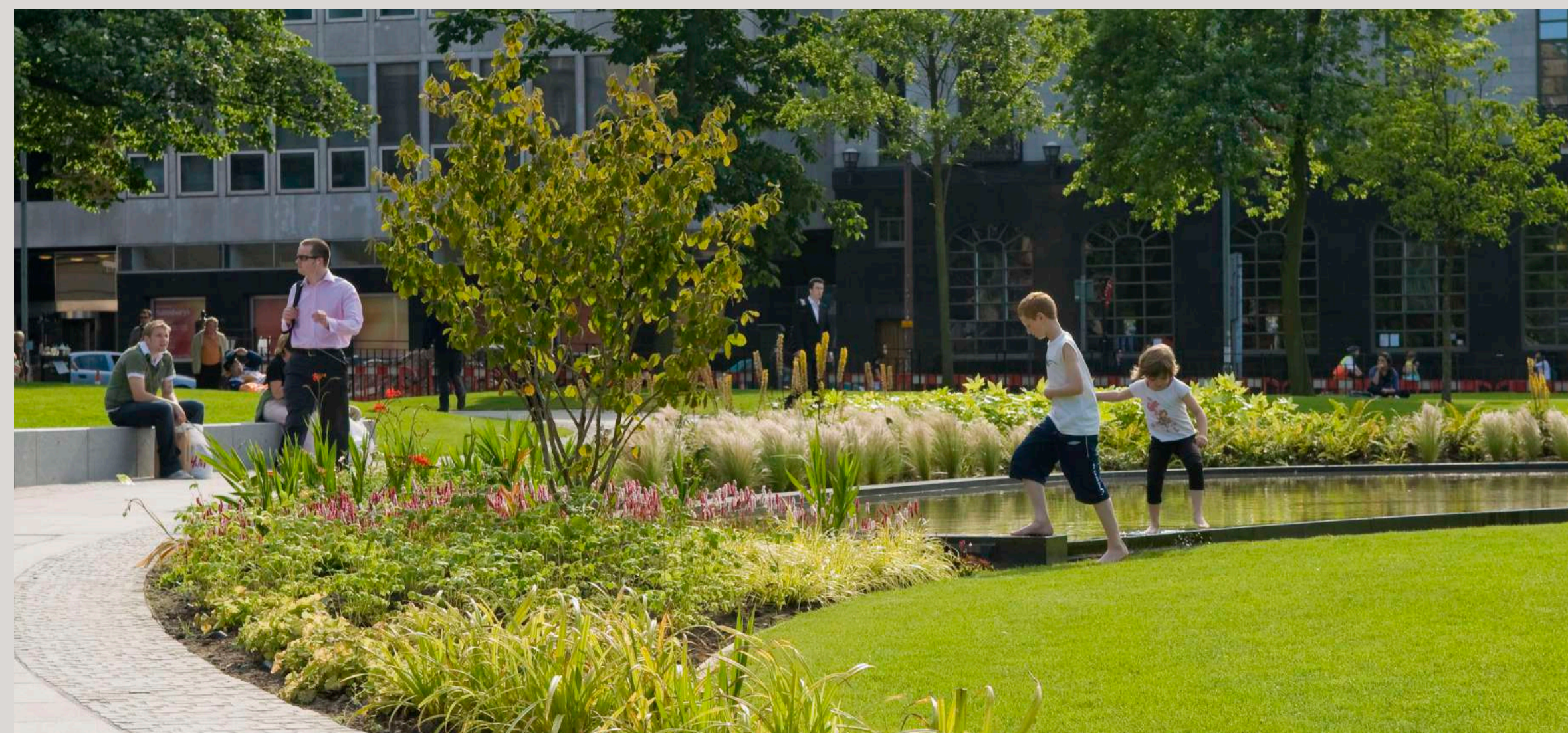
Announcing the site from the street



Movement and edges



Contrasting destination spaces



Concept exploration - a green space to the north



Concept exploration - a city space to the south



Responding to City & Carfax Height

The ‘dreaming spires’ of Oxford are internationally recognised as a symbol of the city and its renowned University. As such Oxford City Council (OCC) recognises the significance of the skyline of the city and has sought to protect the character of views from inappropriate development. In 2014 OCC, Oxford Preservation Trust and English Heritage collaborated to produce an ‘Assessment of the Oxford View Cones’. The Study provides a basis of evidence and analysis, examining the significance of each of the 10 protected views as set out in the Local Plan.

The preservation and enhancement of the identified views of Oxford, the setting of the City and any interaction the proposed development may have on the significance of viewpoint location, time depth, perceptual qualities or detracting elements experienced from these locations are all key elements informing the design and location of the Proposed Development.

The views assessed of the Proposed Development will be agreed in consultation with Oxford City Council and other relevant stakeholders, being informed by site investigation and baseline studies.

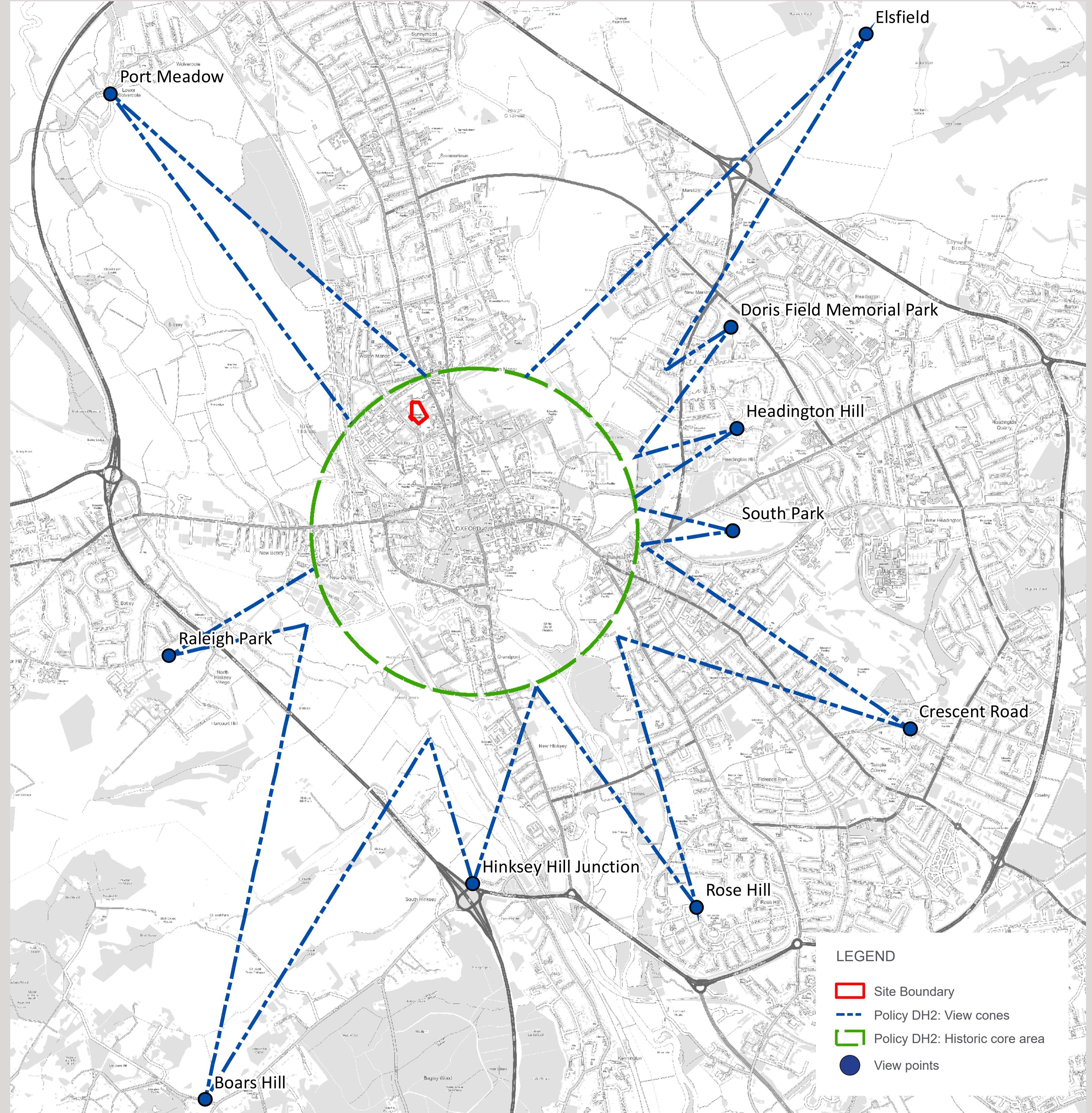
How will this development impact our neighbours?

Whilst the proposals are at an early stage, the team is already considering the potential impacts of the construction of this development on our neighbours. The team is aiming to achieve a development that operates within reasonable hours for construction work, minimises dust and particle emissions, keeps roads and footways clean and ensures that the contractor is held to the Considerate Constructors Scheme (or equivalent). These are the first of a number of issues that will be developed as the proposals progress. Further details will be presented on this matter at the next consultation stage.

The intention is to maintain the very low use of vehicles on the ROQ site, with no additional parking being provided other than disabled parking bays, laybys for servicing requirements and taxi drop off spaces with all vehicles accessing the site from the existing entrance on Woodstock Road. Building users and attendees of events within the building will be encouraged to use public transport, bicycles and pedestrian routes.



Oxford city skyline. Photo by Oxford University Images.



Ten Protected View Cones of Oxford

- LEGEND
- ▭ Site Boundary
 - - - Policy DH2: View cones
 - - - Policy DH2: Historic core area
 - View points

Sustainability Strategy

The new Humanities building will be developed in line with the University of Oxford Sustainability design guide. Various sustainability issues will be considered and addressed appropriately during design:

- Passivhaus principles to achieve a highly sustainable and efficient building, minimising energy use and carbon dioxide emissions, and reduce embodied carbon where possible.
- Drive design for long life, low environmental impact, low maintenance, flexibility and end of life recycling.
- Reduce water consumption.
- Support biodiversity gain by suitable gardening, swift nests, green roof, beehive, etc.
- Promote and support sustainable travel modes focusing on walking and cycling.
- Offer infrastructure for high-quality video conferencing.
- Addressing infrastructure for efficient waste and resource management.

Energy benchmarking activities will be undertaken during the project, and specific targets for energy consumption for the building will be agreed. The building systems are being developed in line with the following principles:

- Passivhaus principles development
- Simple engineering services
- Easy/intuitive local control of individual spaces
- Open protocols and access for maintenance
- Low running and maintenance cost

Please let us know what you think about the proposals in one of the following ways:

- By visiting the website at: www.ox.ac.uk/humanitiesconsultation and clicking on the Consultation tab.
- By emailing your views to: consultation@humanities.ox.ac.uk
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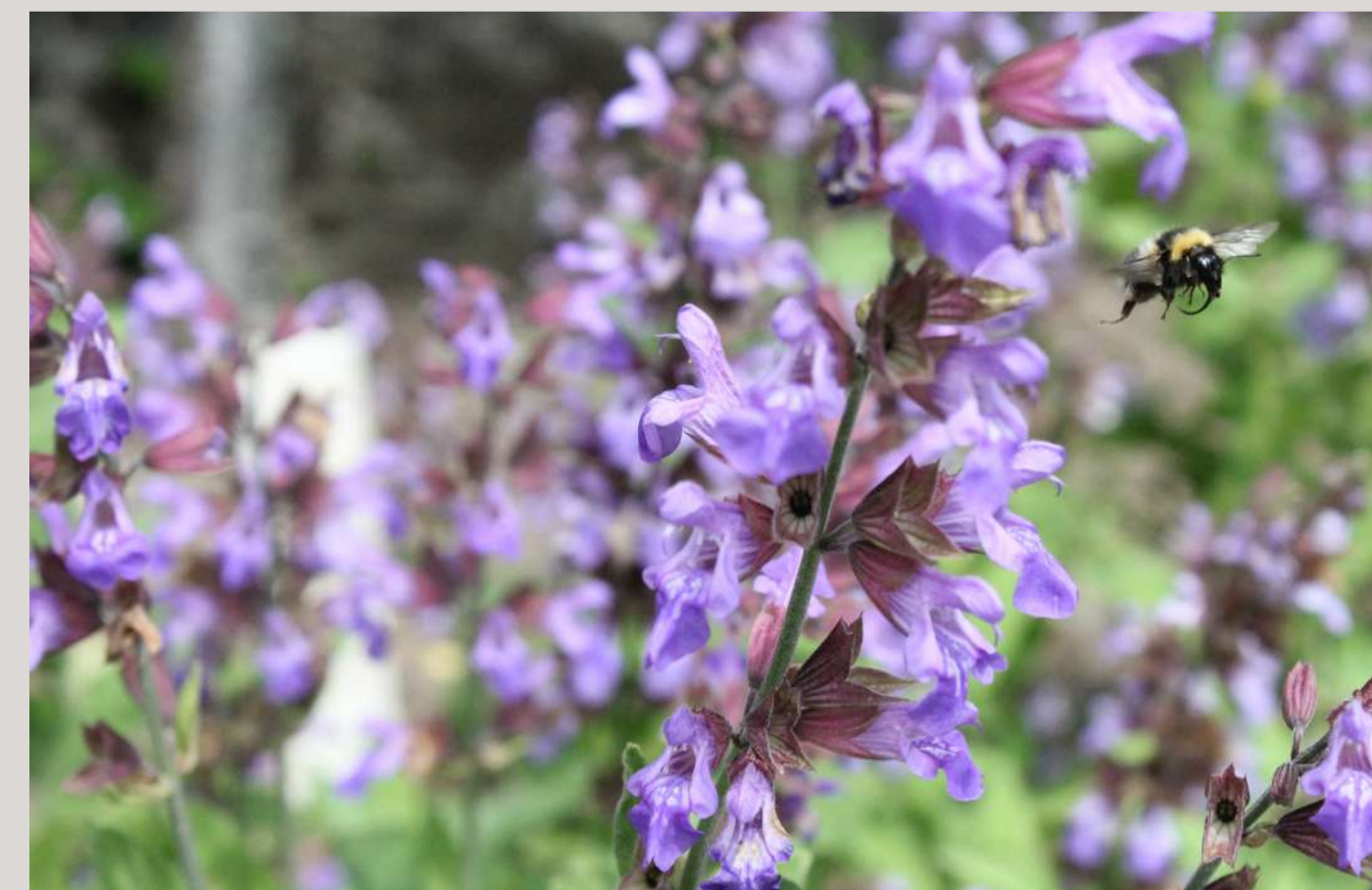
Re-use of urban brownfield land.



Increased biodiversity: fauna. Photo by Roger Wyatt.



Sustainable transportation.



Increased biodiversity: flora. Photo by Vikki Rose.

The following hierarchy leads the approach:

1. Passive Measures - minimise building energy use by considering building form ("passive environmental control") to avoid or minimise the need for mechanical cooling and heating, and artificial lighting;
2. Efficient Services - minimise plant energy use by selecting the most appropriate engineering systems and optimising system performance ("active environmental control"); and
3. Renewable Energy - the use of appropriate on-site renewable energy technologies.