

Michaelmas Meeting of the Estates Committee
Minutes
12:30pm Wednesday 20 October 2021
Elton Bowring Room

Present: Professor Phil Allmendinger (Chair) (Items 1 to 5d); Dr Tamara Follini (Chair of the Conservation Committee, ex officio); Dr Andrew Friend; Mr Daniel Patten (UCS Representative); Mr Patrick Taylor (MCR Representative); and Professor Wendy Pullan;

In Attendance: Dr Jo Costin (Secretary); Miss Emma Easterbrook (Assistant Bursar); Ms Deborah Hoy (Estates Director); and Mr Jason Randall (IT Manager).

1. **Apologies**

Professor Andrew Balmford (Chair of the Environment Committee, ex officio); and Professor Jacqueline Tasioulas (Senior Tutor).

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The Assistant Bursar declared an interest as a possible purchaser of Mowbrays Farmhouse.

3. **Minutes of 26 May 2021**

4. **Matters Arising**

a. ***Memorial Court Boiler Project***

Feedback

The Committee was looking for feedback from the student body on this project, which was a long running one to find a greener solution for heating in Memorial Court. The general sense from the UCS was that they wanted a strong commitment to net zero or a green alternative in some form, and that a temporary solution was acceptable provided there was a limitation on it to ensure it wasn't used as a reason not to implement a long term green solution. The boilers would at some point need replacing with a greener solution.

Background

The boilers were now reaching 25 years old, and in need of replacement. A greener solution was on the edge of current technology and no examples were available to show it working. At the last Estates Committee it was agreed to look at replacing the P Boilers in a more traditional way. One of the barriers to moving the Green solution forward now is that it was around £2.5 million to replace with gas, and between £2.5 million and £4 million to replace with a greener solution, without any clarity on where within this range the price would fall.

Existing Boilers

The College has been able to source parts from one warehouse in the North of England. The P boilers did get through the last winter though they broke down several times. It should be noted that the boilers in the Gillespie are also in poor condition although much newer. A solution would need to encompass the whole site.

Grants

Historically some grants were available, and a bid for Salix funding was put in for a building at the Colony which was unsuccessful. Other Colleges were also not successful. We are not currently aware of any grant funding, although the Govt may follow their residential grants in due course.

Wider Solutions and Other Colleges

Conversations held with Kings, about ground source heat pump on their lawns but this would not help with Memorial Court. The University plans to roll a scheme out at Sidgewick, then eventually to encompass the University Library, but this was some distance in the future. There was potential to look at a scheme which could run off this in future. There were some issues with hydrogen as it was not clear whether it would be supplied around Cambridge and there were issues with how hydrogen was produced.

Electric heating was a possibility, but it had not been particularly successful in Old Court (installed in C where there was no existing heating). The electricity was 100% green, however it was three times the cost of gas. Owing to the infrastructure in Memorial Court, and electric replacement was more difficult, potentially requiring intervention/refurbishment of all rooms. Changes to the mains may also be needed, but this was not thought to be too difficult owing to the substation on site.

Colleges have been discussing green heating schemes including ASHP and GSHP, but no College has yet completed a listed building or the size of Memorial Court.

Radiators and Hybrid Solution

The system currently runs at 80 degrees, an ASHP or GSHP would run at 40-50 degrees. There was some discussion about using a hybrid solution, with gas bringing the water up to full temperature. This would remove the need to replace all radiators with much larger ones. However, we can find no examples of this being completed elsewhere.

Insulation

There were issues with adding insulation as the building is listed, including internally. Adding double glazing would also be difficult. The attics were rooms, so there was no attic to lay insulation in. There was potential to look at adding secondary glazing, this was not as effective as double glazing but any steps towards insulation and better efficiency would be helpful, regardless of the heating solution.

DSH

Next Steps

To continue to look at both a greener solution overall and a possible replacement in P.

b. *House Sales*

All four houses (two donated before Covid and two which have become surplus to requirements) which were up for sale have now been sold

and completed, the last at the end of the last month. The College received receipts from these sales of £2,865,250.

Mowbray's Farmhouse was put on the market at the end of September. A number of viewings have taken place and an offer received this week at the asking price. Savills have advised to go back to other interested parties before agreeing.

117 Histon Road is currently tenanted by a member of staff (rented on the open market). This property will be sold after the end of the tenancy. It needs significant work.

5. **Old Court**

a. ***Phase 1a – Outstanding Issues***

Following the Phase 1a works, including new boiler room, the site suffered from hot water issues, with the water not at a temperature not reaching complaint levels. A small piece of work was commissioned over the summer from a different contractor, which appears to have been successful, with all temperatures now at the right levels.

Following this the system was chlorinated (standard practice after work) and samples taken (to detect legionella). The interim results were negative, but the final samples received last Tuesday had one positive. This appears to be an isolated issue, and could be resolved by flushing but following discussions with the Bursar and Head Porter it was agreed to carry out chlorination again owing to the historic hot water issues in Old Court.

There are six students in Old Court who do not have their en suites operational. There are bio-filters on two showers in G basement to provide shower facilities, the preference is to avoid using bio-filters as these hold back bacteria growth in the system. It will be another three weeks before the final results of the sampling are received.

b. ***Progress Phase 1b***

Initial Delays

By the start of summer, the project was 12-14 weeks behind schedule. This was due to a number of reasons, including the structure of H Staircase being supported by the 20th Century additions (meaning the need to design a new way to hold it up), asbestos in the mortar joints of the river wall, a culvert with archaeological finds which had to be hand dug, and hitting the floor of the old hall when digging the lift pit meaning a 4 week hand dig with the archaeologist. There was a 7 working day stoppage for Trinity Hall exams the impact of which is still being negotiated. The contractor is claiming two weeks for these seven days.

Thrust Boring Failure

Three weeks ago the thrust boring works, which were intended as a cheaper, quicker way to install the drainage than trenching, failed. The pilot bore (100mm) passed through fine. The 225mm bore pulling the services hit the piles installed by Barnes. The pile was supporting the

temporary structure but was intended to for part of the permanent structure. The thrust borers had to leave site for another job. A solution has been found which will then allow the borers to nibble away the pile. This should be in place by 1 November, however the thrust borers are not able to return until 18 November. Other thrust borers were contacted but only had dates from January onwards.

This was the last high risk item on the risk register.

Programme Impact

The initial impact of the thrust boring was 10 weeks. This takes it into the Christmas period, with a potential further 2 week lost for the Christmas shutdown. A final programme has not yet been issued. At present, the kitchen and hall will reopen in January 2023, and the River Room in March 2023. It was queried whether the Great Hall could be opened earlier for wine receptions or meals catered from the Temporary Kitchen. It was also suggested that the UCS Representative speak with the UCS Social Secretary and the Catering Manager to look at formals in another College's hall, as some undergraduates would not have an opportunity to use the hall.

Once the programme is received it can be challenged.

One of the key issues is the timber frame, due on site on 28 February. At present the contractor is not telling the manufacturer of the delays to avoid it being pushed back, and is instead looking for where it can be stored.

Financial Impact

The majority of the costs will fall on the contractor (hire of bridge and crane at c. £30,000 a week). However the College has costs for fees and the temporary kitchen, which may or may not be successfully recovered from Barnes. The College is also in negotiates for a quiet time for Trinity Hall for 2022 exams, the failure of the thrust boring may affect how these negotiations go. Barnes have previously taken action at their own cost to reduce delays, but looking at the potential £300,000 loss they are less likely to do this.

c. ***Furniture***

At the outset of the project, the focus was on maximum seating. However, there has subsequently been a move to create more of a café feeling, with fewer tables and more informal seating, expressed at the joint Old Court Working Party and Conservation Committee meeting. At the most recent Conservation Committee, there was a strong feeling that there should be comfy chairs and that people were unlikely to want to sit with their backs to the river. The Estates Director took the architects to see the Jesus and Newnham cafes, both of which are bigger.

A preference was expressed for a greater mixture of seating.

The furnishing of the room should be approached with the expectation that it might changed in future, with the furniture not needing to be extremely sturdy or as high quality, as this would lead to a reluctance

to refurnish to meet changing needs. Downing café has changed numerous times in line with use.

The tables suggested were collapsible, and the chairs stackable, to allow use as a concert or screening space. However there was an issue with where these would be stored.

The Master, Chair of the Conservation Committee, Professor Wendy Pullan, and the Estates Director were meeting with the architect tomorrow afternoon. Old Court Working Party and Conservation Committee had been asked to send feedback.

TF / WP / DSH

It was important that any furniture could be easily cleaned.

The UCS and MCR representatives were asked to send a list of suggestions as to how they thought the room would be used.

PT / DP

d. ***Lighting***

Previously there had been a suggestion that the wall lamps would look better with a lighter surrounding band. A sample was secured, but the preference was for the black banded lamps.

The hanging lamps were simple and nice, they looked low in the image but would be fitted so no one walked into them.

There was also discrete lighting in the ceiling. Considerable work was done on the lighting strategy. The appearance from outside was also important.

Additional rechargeable standing lamps were suggested that could be moved around as needed for reading.

The wall fixtures may prevent installation of art.

Additional sockets in the centre of the room were suggested.

e. ***Phase 2 Review***

Earlier in the year, owing to financial issues on Phase 1b, £600,000 was moved from Phase 2 to Phase 1b. The Estates Director is meeting with the Project Manager and Quantity Surveyor in early November to review the Phase 2 works (re-roofing east, south and west ranges, rewiring in D, central heating in D, refurbishment and en suiting student rooms) to reduce these by £600,000.

DSH

f. ***Development Proposal for the Great Hall***

Major works in the Great Hall were taken out of the main Old Court Project due to financial restrictions. Development are currently looking at a project to get separate funding to refurbish the Great Hall, improving the acoustics, lighting, and furniture. The existing tables take eight people to move and restrict usage of the room. The oak could be re-used in new tables, and the underside of the new tables would have acoustic materials. The overall aim was ambitious, with a £750k million project proposed, and would need to be done within the same timeframe as the main project. The proposal has been approved by Council to be put forward to the donor.

It was pointed out that the hall was difficult acoustically, and a number of reports had been carried out over time to look at way to improve acoustics. It was also suggested that discussions were held with other Colleges who had carried out refurbishments. Specifically it was thought that the work at Jesus should be reviewed.

There were a number of things, including lighting, work to the pictures, and WiFi which could be incorporated.

6. **Clare St Regis Project Update**

a. ***Commercial Flats***

Completed at the end of May. By the second week of July all flats let and occupied. Generally quality of finish better than in student areas.

b. ***Clare St Regis (Student Blocks)***

The buildings had to be taken in the middle of Covid outbreaks, owing to a risk the contractor would be shut down and the site not be available for handover until after students due to have moved in. The building was accepted with a larger than normal number of snags, and work has been carried out over the summer trying to resolve. The rooms were very hot, as no internal sensor was installed to tell the boiler to turn off. This has now been rectified, but continued issues with heat levels in the corridors. The building was very well insulated, meaning heat was retained well. The Estates Director thank the students for their patience over the number of snags and visits that have been required.

The twelve month defect period ends in January 2022, so it was important not to put up with any issues in the building the MCR was asked to encourage students to report any problems with the building Work was put into making the building very sustainable, including work on low embodied carbon within the build.

MCR

c. ***Final Account***

An agreed final account with Cocksedge the contractor has been reached, including VAT, of £12,590,000. This is under budget. Outside of this final account there some fees and furniture but even with this the project is around £2 million under what was borrowed at the start.

d. ***Blue Plaque***

An application has been approved for a Blue Plaque to commemorate Richarda Morrow-Tait, the first woman to fly around the world. Fundraising is currently in progress (£1,000 needed).

7. **Braeside – Initial Options**

a. ***Background***

It was identified in 2011 that the building needed a full refurbishment. This was place in the 5 year programme for 2017, however due to increase in costs of the Old Court project and the refurbishment of

Braeside was postponed. The funding for the construction has been identified in the next financial year 22/23 for the refurbishment. The refurbishment is intended to last 50 years. Problems with the drainage have caused some subsidence, which will be resolved as part of the works.

The property has a very old boiler in the kitchen, and insufficient showers (it was difficult to create bubbles in this building last year owing to the low number of showers).

b. ***Appointments***

Following a tender competition ArchAngel have been appointed as the Architect. They are a small local firm and carried out a refurbishment on Castle End around 11 years ago, and also designed the MCR bar.

c. ***Budget and Options***

The College gave the Architect a construction budget of £600,000 - £800,000 excluding VAT for the initial options study.

The architect identified three specific areas, but these could not all be carried out within the budget, so the College has been asked to prioritise these.

The three key areas were: general improvements (services and additional en suites); sustainability improvements (insulation and heat pump); and additional rooms (potential for two on the ground floor and two on the top floor).

The plans submitted showed the maximum possible.

The UCS Representative indicated that the large kitchen was felt to be one of the best things about Braeside, although only accessible by some students allocated it. There was a preference for a gyp that had a small table, or for a table that could be shared.

Correspondence was received from the Chair of the Environment Committee, who was not able to attend, stressing the importance of the sustainability improvements. Insulation would be difficult to retrofit, and it was important to move forward on the path to Carbon Zero.

It was noted that when balloting that En suites were the most popular room, however they could be added in house if the services were put in place (it was intended to include a sink in each room).

The aim was to have 50% en suites across the Colony, with provision at 31% at present. Additional showers were essential, but it was not necessary to do 50% en suites in Braeside.

With regards to rooms the preference was to put the ones into the roof, which required more structural alterations. However, the changes to the staircase would make the whole building feel more open.

Estates Committee Recommendation: It was agreed that the sustainability issues were the highest priority. Some additional rooms to be sacrificed. The kitchens would be looked at to get a bit more space, and if 50% en suites was not reached this was fine provided that there was a good shower facility.

d. **Next Steps**

The Architect to be asked to produce a final option with cost on the basis of the recommendation, updates to be by circulated by e-mail, as the design would need approving quickly to enable construction to start in Sept 2022.

UCS to discuss and feedback any further comments to the Estates Director.

A workshop would be held with relevant departments to understand the detailed requirements from the building.

8. **Condition Survey Update**

DSH

During September a full five year condition survey was carried out of most of the estate (Clare St Regis and the part of Old Court under construction were excluded, and only a health and safety survey carried out on Queen Edith's House and Netherfield House). The initial condition surveys have been received, and a meeting held earlier in the week to agree presentation of the information. The report currently included some unnecessary information and lacked some details on the defects. The new Buildings Manager, due to join the team in December, will be asked to review in detail so that a summary can be given in February.

9. **AccessAble Update**

Paper

The surveys have all been carried out, and the draft version of the app / website information provided to the College. The survey report, including any recommendations about works to improve access, is due in a few weeks' time. A number of other Colleges are also having the surveys carried out, so a joint launch event for the app is planned in December 2021 / January 2022.

10. **Queen Edith's / Netherfields Redevelopment**

a. **Updated Design**

At the last meeting, Option 8 was presented, which had a mixture of studios, en suites, and rooms with communal bathrooms. The scheme was not fully supported by the MCR. The MCR President and Estates Representative met with the Estates Director, and requested all non-en

suite rooms. The architect developed this into Option 1/9, but this was more expensive to build owing to larger rooms. Option 10 gave an additional four rooms to spread the cost, but would cost £200,000 more to build than option 8. This was fed back to the architect, who has produced another design but it has not yet been costed.

b. ***Demand for Rooms***

The Accommodation Office had 91 graduates requesting rooms. 70 requested en suite, 11 requested bedsits (non en suite), and 10 expressed no preference. From existing demand, any accommodation would need some en suite rooms.

The MCR had indicated that there were insufficient non en suite rooms at present. However, currently vacant rooms included 1 non en suite room in Clare Court out of 16, 2 vacant rooms at 102 (next to St Regis, all non en suite) out of 6. The current buildings at Queen Edith's and Netherfields, which showing their age, have 3 vacant rooms at Netherfields out of 8 and 9 vacant out of 12 at Queen Edith's. Historically students have not chosen Queen Edith's and Netherfields unless they need to be close to Addenbrooks. Part of the current low occupancy was due to covid and not letting to students from other Colleges.

c. ***Design***

The building would be a new build with high sustainability. The footprint was not necessarily restricted, and there was potential to look at an L Shaped building. The architect appointed was Nex, a London based firm whose director lives in Cambridge.

d. ***Next Steps***

The MCR had not supported option 8 which meant this could not move forward.

Option 8 provided three different rents within the building and appeared to be the best option in light of the lettings information provided for this term. It could also be divided into two separate blocks (with a possibility to also make the studios completely separate with their own entrances). It could be that one block would let to Clare students, the other to other Colleges if there was insufficient demand from Clare students.

The MCR had not been able to get a survey from those currently in residence. The MCR Representative was asked for feedback and said would discuss this further with the MCR.

MCR

11. **Environment Committee**

The Environment Committee recommended that consideration be given to embodied carbon in Braeside as was done at Clare St Regis.

12. **AOB**

Punts: John Rutter would like to donate a punt, this means disposing of another punt. A site visit by an external contractor needed to assess the punt to be donated.

Sewage at Sportsground: Needs to be reviewed.

Use of Sportsground: Proposal approved in principal by Council for the Stephen Perse Foundation to use the Sportsground on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. This does not conflict with College use.

17. **Dates of Meetings**

9 March 2022, 12:30 (Clare St Regis)

18 May 2022, 12:30 (Location TBC)

Distribution: Professor Phil Allmendinger (Chair); Mr David Ball (Bursar); Professor Andrew Balmford (Chair of the Environment Committee, ex officio); Dr Jo Costin (Secretary); Miss Emma Easterbrook (Assistant Bursar); Dr Tamara Follini (Chair of the Conservation Committee, ex officio); Dr Andrew Friend; Professor Howard Griffiths (Chair of the Gardens Committee, ex officio); Mr Daniel Patten (UCS Representative); Ms Deborah Hoy (Estates Director); Mr Brenan Morgan (Head Porter); Mr Patrick Taylor (MCR Representative); Professor Wendy Pullan; Mr Jason Randall (IT Manager); and Professor Jacqueline Tasioulas (Senior Tutor).

For information: Lily Rafalin (UCS President); Will Wood (MCR President).