

APPLICATION - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Consultee:	BNE - Conservation
Reference Number:	26/02109/FUL
Proposal:	Demolition of 1970s library and replacement with new library, social and study spaces including re-provision of bridge to the Bodley Library. Alterations to kitchen, Upper Hall and adjacent areas including new plant, access improvements and alterations to wc, provision in the south east range of Second Court. Re-landscaping of Bath Court and ancillary works, installation of temporary kitchen and dining facility in Second Court for the duration of the works.
Site Address:	Christs College Library Christs College St Andrews Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire
Case Officer:	Dominic Bush
Responding Officer:	Paul Robertshaw
Date:	13.07.26

- ☒ No objection
- ☐ Amendments are / Further information is required
- ☐ Object for the following reasons:
- ☐ Outside remit of this consultee's specialism

Documents Reviewed

- Plans
- Heritage Statement – Turley, May 2025
- Design and Access Statement – Grafton Architects, May 2025
- Townscape and Visual Appraisal – Caroe Architects, May 2025

Suggested Conditions	Code
New walls	CS39AS
Joinery details	CS09AS
Rainwater Goods	CS49AS
<p><u>Materials</u></p> <p>No development shall take place above ground level, except for demolition, until details of all the materials for the external surfaces of buildings and ground surfaces to be used in the construction of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Samples of the materials shall be made available on site for inspection by officers. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2018, policy 61).</p>	Bespoke
<p><u>Precise details</u></p> <p>No work shall commence on the relevant areas until details of the following items have been submitted for the prior, written approval of the Local Planning Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Details of first floor landing alterations including timber samples, to be inspected and agreed on site with the conservation officer, and junctions with new work and existing panelling (b) Details of alterations to panelling (c) Details of photovoltaic panels showing relationship to roof (d) Details of vents, flues and extracts (e) Details of signage (f) Details of external lighting (g) Details of gates and railings (h) Details of structural alterations to listed building <p>The works shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.</p> <p>Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2018, policy 61).</p>	CS03AP insert

Hard and soft landscaping	SL10CS
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Background information /additional comments:

Heritage assets

The application concerns the replacement of the 1974 college library, with associated connections and alterations to the 1896 Bodley Library and the 16th century (and later) buildings of First Court and Second Court.

The buildings surrounding Entrance (First) Court with the south-east range of Second Court are grade I listed. The 1974 library and adjoining Edwardian section are part of the listed building but of minimal significance. The site is within the grade II Christ's College Historic Park and Garden and the historic core of the Central Cambridge Conservation Area.

Further details of the site's development and significance are included in the heritage statement. The statement also refers to listed building works outside the scope of this application, and does not include subsequent revisions made to the chimney height and internal layout (consented under 25/02162/LBC).

Proposals

The replacement of the 1974 library has previously been approved and continues to be supported in principle. The building makes a generally negative contribution to the significance of the above heritage assets. The current proposal is smaller overall than the earlier approved scheme (refs: 11/0495/FUL and 11/0516/LBC, renewed under refs: 16/0405/FUL and 16/0406/LBC), omitting the basement and Bath Court roof and thereby avoiding these harmful impacts.

The proposed library is overall considered a high-quality building that would improve the current arrangement and provide numerous advantages in terms of landscaping,

accessibility and sustainability. The new building would be substantial in relation to the size of the plot, with a greater presence than the existing library both within and outside the college. The design has skilfully responded to the constrained context and has minimised adverse impacts through articulation of the facades and setbacks at the upper levels between the chimneys. The reduction in the height and refinement of the chimneys following the original submission (which supersedes the heritage and design and access statements) has avoided additional harm to the setting of First Court.

The four-storey stair tower is however large in relation to the adjacent Bodley Library which is of two storeys with a domestic scale. The stair's impact has been partly mitigated by a setback from Christ's Lane and through the lightness of its design and materiality. There would be an enhanced relationship between the new library and Bodley Library through the increase in space and an improved link between the buildings. However, on balance it is considered the mitigations have not fully overcome the impact of the relative scale and proximity of the stair tower, and this part of the scheme remains harmful to the listed building's setting.

When considered in relation to the existing poor-quality building, the proposed library would be an enhancement to the conservation area when experienced from within or outside the college. Its overall scale, including the taller elements, is considered appropriate to the historic and dense urban context which includes nearby buildings of comparable or greater height.

Changes to the levels and landscaping in Bath Court, which would largely affect modern features and fabric, and would provide enhancements to the space are not of concern subject to any archaeological considerations. The ramp to second court would cause minimal harm and is supported subject to further details.

Bath Court and the library are within the grade II registered park and garden but are not considered to contribute to its significance. The proposed building would have a minimal visual presence from Second Court, within the RPG, but the impact to its significance is considered neutral.

Heritage balance

The harm to heritage assets is considered to primarily relate to the setting of the Bodley Library, which forms part of the grade I listed asset 'buildings surrounding Entrance (First) Court with the south-east range of Second Court'. The harm arises from the relative scale and proximity of the stair tower.

The proposal includes heritage benefits, namely:

- An enhancement to the setting of the grade I listed building when experienced from Bath Court or Christ's Lane due to the increased space between the Bodley Library and proposed library at the lower levels;
- Wider enhancements to the appearance of Bath Court through the removal of redundant plant and fire escape, improved landscaping and the reopening of a blocked historic doorway to First Court;
- An enhancement to the Central Conservation Area through the introduction of an architecturally superior building;
- Sustaining the ongoing use and conservation of the grade I listed building by providing improved, accessible library facilities.

Conclusion

When considering the above heritage impacts with reference to NPPF paras 208, 212 and 213, the heritage benefits are not considered to fully outweigh the heritage harm. On balance, the harm is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale, and therefore NPPF para. 215 is engaged.