

THE OXFORD BRIDGE CLUB
147 Banbury Road
Oxford

Design Statement

147 Banbury Road is a large three storey semi-detached Edwardian house. It is at the northern edge of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. The attached property to the south, 145 Banbury Road, belongs to Williams College, an American university in Massachusetts and the house is one of four official residences for students who come to Oxford on the Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford. The property has been extended at the rear to provide ancillary accommodation for the students.

149 Banbury Road sits to the north of the property and outside the conservation area. It is a large block of three storeys to the Banbury Road and two storeys to the rear and has been subdivided into flats. The block is owned by the University of Oxford and the flats are rented to visiting academics, usually for periods of up to a year or less. Observed use of the ground floor rooms is that tenants tend to be absent during the day and curtains regularly remain drawn. The Victorian brick party wall between 147 and 149 Banbury Road belongs to 149 Banbury Road and falls within the conservation area.

147 Banbury Road was originally in private ownership as a dwelling. However, while residential remains a significant use in the surrounding areas the transfer of the larger properties to institutional use is very typical of the area and consistent with this trend in 1949 the whole property was bought by University College.

In 1950 Planning Permission was given to University College to convert the property into three flats.

In June 1967 Change of Use was granted for the ground floor flat to become a bridge club; the Oxford Bridge Club moved in the same year.

The club occupied the ground floor on a short leasehold from University College; this was renewed several times until Oxford Bridge Club purchased the entire property freehold in January 2005.

The Oxford Bridge Club sold the second floor flat in December 2005 and the first floor flat in February 2006, both on 125 year leases.

In December 1993 (ref NHF/1060/93) planning permission was granted for the construction of a large conservatory to the rear of the property. Construction was completed in 1994.

The conservatory has now reached the end of its life; it has serious structural problems and due to lack of adequate ceiling ties the south wall is starting to fall

outwards. The UPVC construction and inadequate glazing results in it overheating during the warmer months of the year, while during the colder months it is hard to keep the space warm. Its location to the rear of the original back living room has relegated what could be a very good space to a rather dark and ill-ventilated room.

The club would like to take this opportunity to improve the existing facilities and at the same time provide additional space for a growing membership. The proposal is to demolish the conservatory and to build a new single storey extension to the rear to provide accommodation for sixteen tables complying with English Bridge Union recommended layout. With the seven tables that would be lost by the demolition of the conservatory and the reduction of table numbers in the existing building this would give an overall increase of six tables. The re-organisation of the internal layout would result in a more adequate provision of sanitary and kitchen accommodation including the provision of a dedicated disabled WC. The current changes in floor levels within the club would be removed to enable any disabled users to move freely around the club.

The proposed extension would be constructed as a continuation of the original single storey rear extension. It would be constructed using bricks and red clay tiles to match the original. The new section of building would be of cavity construction to comply with current building regulations but with the use of snapped headers to give the appearance of a solid brick wall with a matching bond. It is proposed to remove the existing large dormer on the north side of the existing back extension because the valleys and location of the window do not align with the new proposed internal layout. The removal of this dormer and replacement with Velux windows will allow more light into the ground floor windows along this section of 149 Banbury Road.

To introduce adequate light in to the new playing area it is proposed that there should be four rooflights in the central section of the roof. It is envisaged that these should be as low to the roof as possible to minimize the impact that they have when viewed from outside.

The removal of the conservatory results in an internal courtyard which allows natural light and ventilation to enter all the rooms around the courtyard. This would be particularly important in the case of the rear living room which currently receives borrowed light from the conservatory and tends to be a dark and stuffy room that overheats in the warmer months. The removal of the accommodation further from the rear of the main house means that the rear patio doors to number 145 Banbury Road would have a more open aspect.

The proposed new block retains the alley to the north with direct access to the Banbury Road. Bike users would continue to use this alley for access to the rear patio area where new bike racks would be installed. The proposed kitchen area has direct access to the alley for the removal of rubbish. The club pays commercial rates for the collection of non- food waste in orange bags and organic waste in caddies. This will be stored in the rear porch and then

transferred to the front garden on collection day. The rear patio area would continue to have attractive planting maintained by members of the club, while the internal courtyard would also be landscaped with suitable shrubs or small trees.

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