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OXFORD

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EPISCOPO.

**Estates Services**  
**University of Oxford**  
**May 2013**

Abbreviations:

ESA – Estates Services Archives

OS – Ordnance Survey

OUA – Oxford University Archives

NPPF - *National Planning Policy Framework, 2012*

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**CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	7
1.1	Purpose of the Conservation Plan	7
1.2	Scope of the Conservation Plan	8
1.3	Existing Information	9
1.4	Methodology	9
1.5	Constraints	9
<b>2</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING THE SITE</b>	13
2.1	History of the Site	13
2.2	Construction and Subsequent History of 39a St. Giles'	16
<b>3</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	27
3.1	Architectural Significance	27
3.2	Historical Significance	28
3.3	Archaeological Significance	28
3.4	Functional Significance	29
<b>4</b>	<b>VULNERABILITIES</b>	33
4.1	Accessibility	33
4.2	Maintenance	34
<b>5</b>	<b>CONSERVATION POLICY</b>	39
<b>6</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	45
<b>7</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	51
	Appendix 1: Listed Building Description	51

Appendix 2: Conservation Area Description	55
Appendix 3: Chronology of 39a St. Giles'	59
Appendix 4: Checklist of Significant Features	63
Appendix 5: Floor plans	65



# 1

INTRODUCTION

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

39a was constructed before 1838, probably as a stable block to what is now the southern portion of St. Benet's Hall. It, along with the associated yard, was donated to the Bishop of Oxford in 1850 in order to serve as the Diocesan Registry. The site was purchased by the University of Oxford in 1932 and has been occupied by University-related activities since. It currently serves as an annexe to the Department of Computer Science.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Conservation Plan

The University 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 39a St. Giles'.

The purpose of this Conservation Plan is to update 39a St. Giles' 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 39a St. Giles' 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 39a St. Giles' (outlined in red, modern entrance hall outlined in green) and surrounding area. 39 St. Giles' is highlighted in blue. Orientated with north at the top of the image**

## **1.2 Scope of the Conservation Plan**

The plan will cover the interior and exterior of 39a St. Giles', a Grade-II-listed building located behind 39 St. Giles' in north-central Oxford. The eastern elevation of the building abuts onto 39 St. Giles'.

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. A brief list of the most significant architectural features can be found in **Appendix 4** and should be referred to when planning any repair or alteration work.

The house numbering in the surrounding area has changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see **Section 2.2** and **Figure 6**). Except where explicitly stated, the plan will **use the modern house numbering**.

### **1.3 Existing Information**

39a is a historical building of some significance, but it is not well known and there is little published material regarding it. That being said, there are some useful sources of information available:

The University Archives contain various historic plans, deeds, and correspondences regarding the building and these have kindly been made available for the composition of this plan.

Estates Services' own archives contain plans and correspondences regarding the building from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The original 1972 list description describes only the street frontage of the attached building, 39 St. Giles', and is of no help in indicating the features that were thought to make up the particular character for which this building was originally listed.

There are several published books and articles which discuss the development of Oxford and some which discuss the development of St. Giles' in particular.

Planning and listed building consent applications have been made during the building's recent history and these give a fragmentary indication of the changes that have occurred in the building in the last half century.

The plan 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 39a St. Giles' and attempts to address them with a view towards maintaining or 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**

39a St. Giles' and its environs are subject to various constraints imposed by Oxford City Council:

- HE.2 – Archaeology Area: Where archaeological deposits that are potentially significant to the historic 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.
- CP.3 – Limiting the Need to Travel: New development will be limited to accessible locations on previously developed sites.

- HE.9 – High Building Areas: 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.
- TR.3, TR.11, 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.
- HE.7 – Conservation Areas: 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.
- The City of Oxford Smoke Control Order No. 4: It is an offence to emit smoke from the chimney of a building, from a furnace, or from any fixed boiler if located in a designated smoke control area.
- CS1 – 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.



UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

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## 2 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

### 2.1 History of the Site<sup>1</sup>

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 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The University of Oxford itself has a long-standing tradition of exceptional education: Able to trace its roots to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, it is the oldest university in the English-speaking world.

The north of the city was the main focus for mediaeval suburban expansion, notably Canditch (which would eventually become Broad Street) and St. Giles'. St. Giles' was at least partly occupied by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and Beaumont Palace was established close to its southern end shortly before 1133.<sup>2</sup> There were tenements on the site of 61 St. Giles' by the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century and the whole street was built up thinly by the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, with those at the northern end retaining a rural character.<sup>3</sup>

The convergence of the two roads to the north (now the Woodstock and Banbury Roads) created a wide space down St. Giles', which was utilised as a green with a pond in the 15<sup>th</sup> century; it was probably not paved until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Oxford was in a state of decline followed by stagnation in the late mediaeval period, well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and outside of the main urban core



**Figure 2. Detail from 1588 engraving of Agas's 1577 map of Oxford. St. Giles' with North at the bottom of the image**

<sup>1</sup> A short chronology of 41 St. Giles' can be found in **Appendix 3**.

<sup>2</sup> Jope, E.M., 'Saxon Oxford and its region' in Harden, D.B., *Dark Age Britain* (London, 1956) 237, Fig. 53.

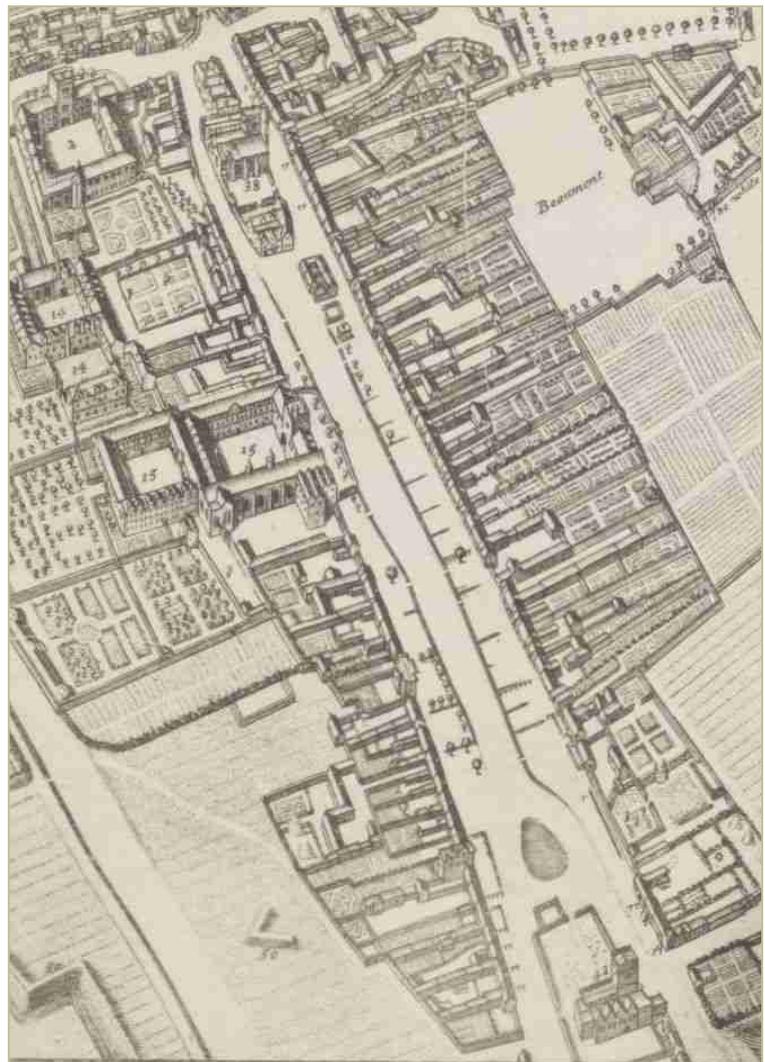
<sup>3</sup> Crossley, A., and Elrington, C.R., (eds.), 'Medieval Oxford' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4: The City of Oxford* (1979) 3-73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* St. Giles' was paved in three stages going northwards in 1672, 1674, and 1675; Clark, A., (ed.), *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, described by himself, Volume 2* (Oxford Historical Society, 1892) 278.

housing was spaced out with abundant vacant plots (**Figure 2**). Collegiate buildings were constructed along St. Giles' in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Cistercian St. Bernard's College had been founded on the eastern side of the street in 1437 but it was dissolved c.1542. St. John's College took over the site in 1555 and soon expanded. There was a large gravel quarry pit in what would become St. John's College's North Quadrangle in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

Oxford's fortunes changed from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, with its population rising from c.3,000 to c.10,000 by the 1660s.<sup>6</sup> Rather than the developed area dramatically growing, this rapid expansion was absorbed by building backwards along the length of narrow plots into what had previously been large garden spaces, as well as building upwards and filling vacant plots and gardens (**Figure 3**; compare with the well-spaced plots in **Figure 2**).<sup>7</sup> Oxford's early modern development peaked in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, with a moderate decline in population occurring during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The quality of housing in Oxford declined in this period and the houses of St. Giles' represent the largest extant concentration of high-status domestic construction from this time.

There were some notable institutional developments on St. Giles' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: The northwards expansion of St. John's College had a substantial impact on the eastern side of the road; the Martyrs' Memorial was constructed at the southern point of the road in 1843 to a design by George Gilbert Scott; and the University Galleries (now the Ashmolean Museum) and the Taylor Institution were constructed at the southern end of St. Giles', facing the Martyrs' Memorial and running onto Beaumont Street, in 1841-45.



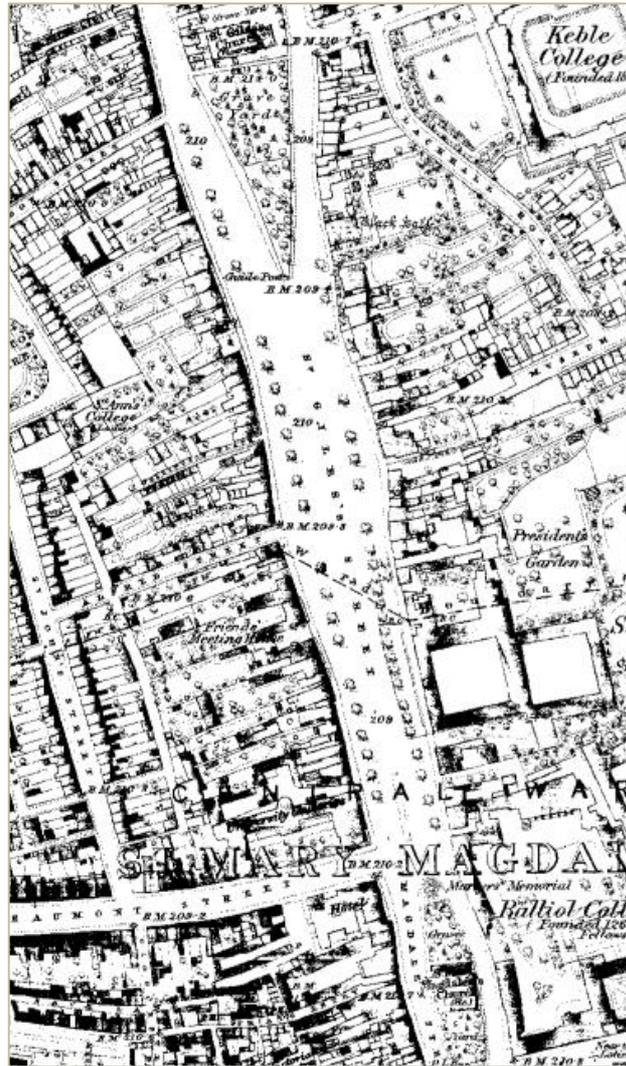
**Figure 3. Detail from Logan's 1675 map of Oxford. St. Giles' with North at the bottom of the image**

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence, S., 'Excavations in St. John's College, Oxford, 2003' in *Oxoniensia* LXX (2005) 325-333.

<sup>6</sup> Tyack, G., *Oxford: an Architectural Guide* (Oxford, 1998) 116-17.

<sup>7</sup> Supra. Note 4.

Oxford's population expanded five-fold between 1801 and 1901 and this precipitated extensive development around the city.<sup>8</sup> The majority of the suburban expansion to the north of the city took place to the north of St. Giles' in St. Giles' Field, a 500-acre stretch of land acquired by St. John's College in 1577.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps because of the quality of the housing already present, St. Giles' was saved from a great deal of new residential construction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though some did occur, notably the group of 34-38 St. Giles' at the northern end of the street: stone houses of an Italianate character constructed in the late 1820s/early 1830s. The Beaumont Street/St. John Street development was constructed at the southern end of St. Giles' in c.1828-37 (Figure 4). This included the construction of Alfred Street (now Pusey Lane) connecting the western side of St. Giles' with St. John Street. Alfred Street housed coaching stables (presumably related to the Birmingham and other coaches running north from St. Giles').<sup>10</sup> 66-67 (now the Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies) were constructed abutting the early-18<sup>th</sup>-century 65 St. Giles' for George Wyatt, an ironmonger, in 1869.<sup>11</sup> Domestic construction on the street in this period can be characterised as stone construction of a high standard. In some cases this was new stone frontages to older timber-framed buildings.



**Figure 4. Detail from 1878 Ordnance Survey map of Oxford. St. Giles' with North at the top of the image**

<sup>8</sup> Tyack, G., *op. cit.*, 214.

<sup>9</sup> Hinchcliffe, T., 'Landownership in the city: St. John's College, 1800-1968', in Whiting, R.C., (ed.), *Oxford: Studies in the history of a university town* (Manchester, 1993) 85.

<sup>10</sup> Osmond, A., 'Building on the Beaumonts: An Example of Early 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Housing Development' in *Oxoniensia* XLIX (1984) 314.

<sup>11</sup> Crossley, A., and Elrington, C.R., (eds.), 'Modern Oxford' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4: The City of Oxford* (1979) 181-259.

St. Giles' became increasingly busy with traffic in the twentieth century providing access to the city from the north. The wide street also provided the only ample car-parking space close to the increasingly-developed University Science Area to the east. In 1923 St. John's College asked the local authority to impose a 10mph speed limit on the road due to traffic and parking related to the Science Area, and in 1925 a formal car park was established with a paid attendant.<sup>12</sup> The southern portion of St. Giles' saw development throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the periodic expansion of the Ashmolean Museum and the northward extension of the Taylor Institution in 1938. Pusey House was constructed on the corner of Alfred Street and St. Giles' in 1911 to 1926. This was initially to a design by Temple Moore but his son-in-law, Leslie Moore, took over as architect upon Temple's death in 1920. Part of the site now houses St. Cross College.

Since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, St. Giles' has formed the boundary between the city, including the majority of the collegiate university, and the North Oxford suburb: Its 18<sup>th</sup>-century houses contrast with the eclectic mix of mediaeval and Victorian construction in the city centre and the Victorian Gothic enclave of the northern suburb.<sup>13</sup> The northern spread of the University in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century has meant that St. Giles' has become an important link between the city and the northern colleges (e.g. Somerville, St. Anne's, St. Hughes's, St. Anthony's, and Lady Margaret Hall), as well as the University offices at Wellington Square, and the science departments of the Keble Road triangle. The University has extended along St. Giles' itself, with many of the historically-domestic buildings now housing University departments and annexes, as with numbers 65-67 and 41 St. Giles'. The ongoing development of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter immediately to the north will shift the balance of the University somewhat northwards, further heightening the importance of the relationship between St. Giles' and the University estate.

## 2.2 Construction and Subsequent History of 39a St. Giles'

It is unclear when 39a St. Giles' was first constructed. Prior to its acquisition by the Diocese in 1850 (see **below**), it served as a stable to the adjacent building (then 39 St. Giles' and now the southern part of St. Benet's Hall). These stables had been included in the lease for 38 St. Giles' (the northern part of St. Benet's Hall) in 1838, so the building was certainly in place by this point; however, the 1772 survey of Oxford (published by Harry Salter in 1923) lists a stable in this location, which may well have been 39a. A less clear source, Loggan's 1675 map of the city, shows a building of similar proportions in the approximate location of 39a, so the date could less reliably be pushed back this far (**Figure 3**).<sup>14</sup>

As mentioned above, by 1838, 39a was in place serving as a stable to the buildings to its north. These buildings (then 38 and 39 St. Giles', now combined as St. Benet's Hall) had been constructed in 1831 and were owned and leased out by Samuel Collingwood. Collingwood died in 1849 and left the southernmost of the two properties (then 39 St. Giles'),

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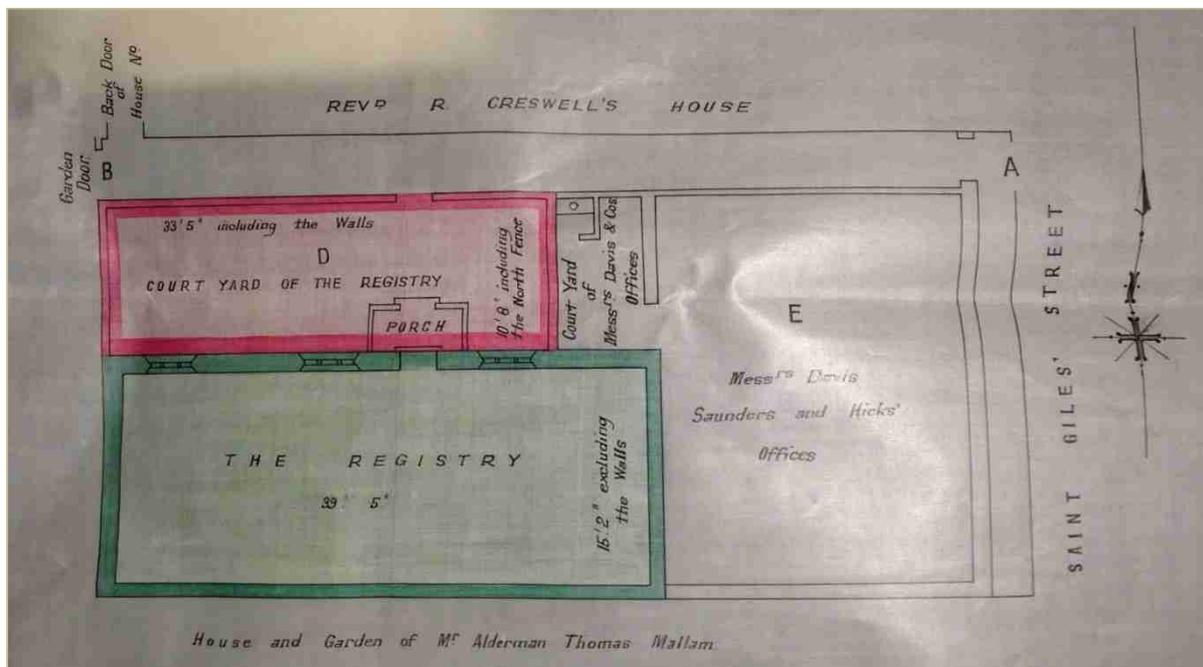
<sup>12</sup> Hinchcliffe, T., *North Oxford* (London, 1992) 190-191.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* 90.

<sup>14</sup> OUA, ref. UR 19/2/8-21; Salter, H.E., *Surveys and Tokens* (Oxford, 1923), which includes the 1772 survey of Oxford; and Oxford Historical Society, *Old Plans of Oxford* (Oxford, 1884) reproduces Loggan's map.

with the adjacent yard and stables, in his will to Rev. Richard Greswell. In the same year, James Morrell Snr. and Rev. Greswell drew up an agreement for Morrell's purchase of the stables and yard.<sup>15</sup> Morrell's brother, Richard, had recently died. Richard had planned to donate some money to the Diocese of Oxford for them to purchase a building to serve as a registry and muniments office, but had been unable to do so prior to his death. James Morrell subsequently sought to do so in memory of his brother. In 1850, Rev. Greswell conveyed the stables and yard (through the direction of James Morrell, who paid the purchase price of £375) to Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford. The agreement conveyed:

'ALL THAT the piece or parcel of land with the stone building erected thereon delineated and described in the plan which is upon these presents and therein colo[u]red green...And which building lately was the Stable with Loft over it belonging to the adjoining messuage or dwellinghouse of the said Richard Greswell...and together with an uninterrupted right of entrance and way at all times whatsoever of the clear width of 4 feet and 6 inches and of not less than 7 feet high in upon and throughout the passage from Saint Giles Street...'.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 5. Plan relating to the 1850 conveyance of 39a and its yard**

39 St. Giles' and its small yard (now occupied by a kitchen extensions) were also held by Rev. Creswell but were not part of this conveyance. It is not clear that the building on the site of 39 St. Giles' at this point ('E' in **Figure 5**), which the conveyance says Greswell was planning to adapt as 'offices or chambers' (though **Figure 5** suggests it was already being used as offices), was the extant one, which may be slightly later (it was certainly in place by 1861).

<sup>15</sup> OUA, ref. UR 19/2/8-21.

<sup>16</sup> OUA, ref. US 19/17.

**Figure 5** suggests that the stable building in place in 1850 was the extant 39a, for instance the placement of the windows and the porch are the same. This being the case, the building must have been substantially altered when the Diocese took possession. For instance, one cannot imagine a horse being taken through the current doorway in the porch, so this must have been reduced in size. Equally, the porch was carved with the extant inscription and fitted with the carved mitre at its apex. The hayloft was presumably removed at this point and it seems likely that this was when the iron staircase and balcony (extant until 1998) were fitted in order to convert it into a suitable storage space for the diocesan muniments. Presumably it was at this time that wooden cladding was first fitted to the internal walls, as the iron staircase was positioned with this being taken into account.

The former stable at 39a St. Giles' continued in use as part of the Diocesan Registry well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1920s it was being used as a secondary space, supporting the main registry building on New Road. In 1927, H.E. Salter wrote to the Vice-Chancellor advising him that the Diocese was planning to dispose of both its registry buildings, moving the records to a single, larger site after the current registrar, James Rose, who was in his 70s, died or retired. The University had purchased 39, 40, and 41 St. Giles' that year and the purpose of Salter's letter was to advise the University to make early overtures to the Diocese regarding 39a, in order to complete their holdings in the area in case they should ever plan to expand the Ashmolean northwards.

This proved unnecessary, as in 1931, Thomas Strong, the Bishop of Oxford, wrote to the Vice-Chancellor offering the sale of 39a to the University. The University had no functional use for the building and did not, as Salter had suggested, believe the property would have any impact on plans to develop the Ashmolean; however, even at this early stage there were plans for the University development of Wellington Square. It was thought that the location of 39 and 39a St. Giles' would be the most logical point for constructing a pedestrian road between St. Giles' and Wellington Square, and that the University should seek to control the property in the vicinity in case the development in this area should ever come to fruition.<sup>17</sup> There ensued in October to November 1931 a period of intense negotiation with the Bishop's property agents, who rebuffed the University's initial offer of £750, holding firm to a figure of £1,200, which was eventually paid.

As the University had purchased 39a in order to control development in the area rather than for any specific function, they were at something of a loss as to what to do with it initially. It was unoccupied as late as 1936 and probably until 1940.<sup>18</sup> There had been some initial discussion about extending 39 into 39a and converting the space into three rooms, but this never went ahead. Shortly after April 1940, a mains feeder cable was run from 39 St. Giles' to 39a. This seems to be the first mains electricity supplied to the building. It was planned to fit five tubular heaters in the building, but this was revised down to three for cost-cutting purposes. The conversion was designed to allow the building to be used by Professor Sir Cyril Norman Hinshelwood (winner of the 1956 Nobel Prize for Chemistry) for the storage of

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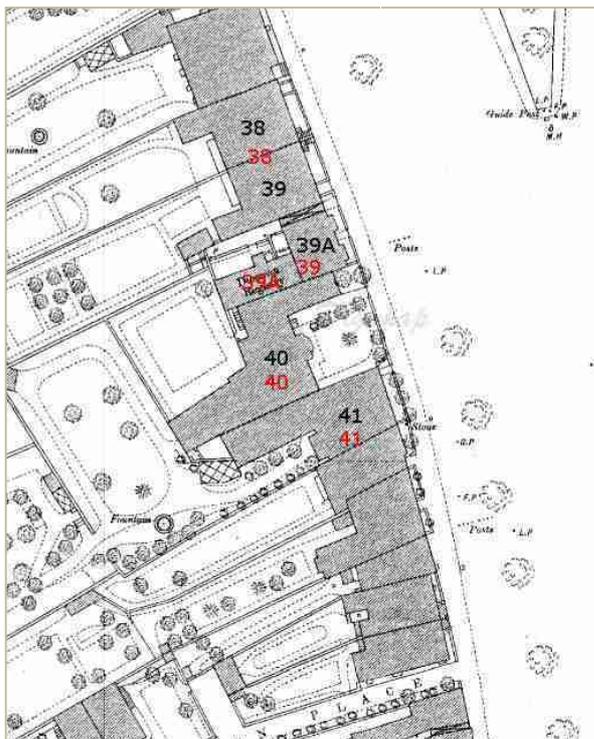
<sup>17</sup> OUA, ref. LA 3/OCP 272 A/2.

<sup>18</sup> OUA, ref. LA 3/OCP 272 A/3, LA 3/OCP 62/1.

his equipment. Presumably prior to this the building was heated using only the fireplace at its eastern end.

Hinshelwood does not seem to have been in the building for very long because in June 1941, Sir Arthur McWatters (the Secretary of the University Chest) wrote to R.W. Chapman (the Secretary of the University Press) to offer the building as a paper store for Oxford University Press. Chapman inspected the building, noting that it was dry and had a decent concrete floor, but thought it offered too little storage space to justify the staffing costs of maintaining a separate site.<sup>19</sup>

In 1942, E.W. Burney, the tenant at 39 St. Giles', with the University's Chest's permission cemented over the yard of 39a St. Giles'. She had complained that the area was barren and an unattractive site and was seeking to improve the appearance as viewed from her house.<sup>20</sup> It is not clear if 39a was in use by anyone at this point, but roof repairs were carried out at both 39a and 39 in 1951. This was followed by reroofing of 39a in 1958. An oil fuel tank, supplying 39, was fitted in front of the easternmost window of 39a in the same year.



**Figure 6. 1878 OS map orientated with north at the top of the image. Historic building numbers in black, modern building numbers in red**

It was in 1953 that the street numbers in this area were changed to almost their modern configurations (**Figure 6**). What had been two separate buildings, 38 and 39, were combined as St. Benet's Hall and jointly numbered 38. What is now 39 had previously been 39a (being located between the old 39 and 40) and was renumbered 39. The number 39a briefly became obsolete, with the modern 39a continuing to be known as the Old Diocesan Registry for some time.

The Institute of Commonwealth Studies occupied the building in 1957 as a teaching space for African language courses.<sup>21</sup> The Institute did not stay in the building for very long as in the summer of 1958 they were moved out to facilitate occupation by the Oxford University Gramophone Society.

The Oxford University Gramophone Society operated a record library for use by

its members, most of whom were also members of the University. It had been formally

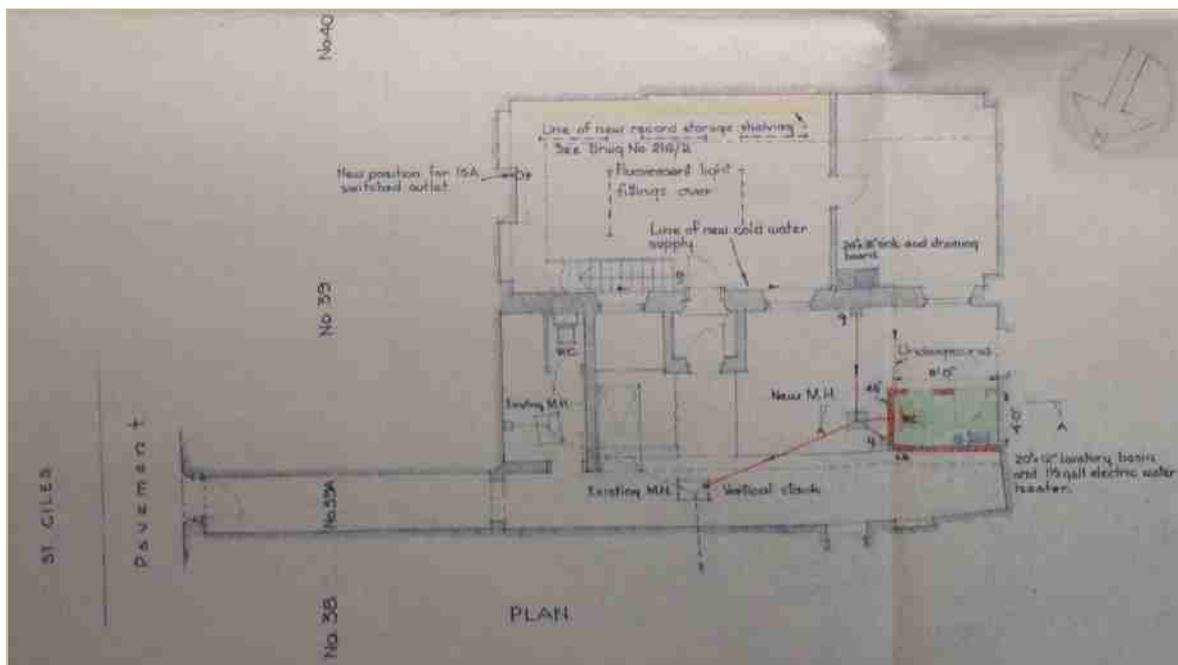
<sup>19</sup> OUA, ref. LA 3/OCP 62/1.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> OUA, ref. UR 6/GS/OU, file 1; ESA. The building may well have been empty for the entire period between Hinshelwood vacating it in 1941 and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies occupying it in 1957.

incorporated by University statute in 1940 and had been housed in the Clarendon Building. In 1947 it had moved to rooms held by the Music Faculty, with which it had an understanding though no formal relationship, at 33 Holywell Street. The Music Faculty's urgent need for space by 1958 had required the society to find new quarters and the University provided these at 39a St. Giles'.<sup>22</sup>

The Oxford University Gramophone Society's occupation of 39a St. Giles' necessitated some alteration in and around the building. A new, buff-brickwork WC enclosure was constructed in the northern part of the yard (this roughly corresponds with the northern part of the current entrance lobby). The electricity supply to the building was modernised, with a new 15A plug fitted beside the fireplace and fluorescent tube lighting installed. A cold water supply was fitted to the building for the first time, allowing the installation of a sink in the western part of the building against the northern wall. Extensive shelving was fitted to meet the needs of the record library.<sup>23</sup> The eastern part of the building had already been partitioned off by the time the Gramophone Society moved in, but it is unclear how long this partition had been in place. This partition reached the full height of the building and cut off access to the eastern part of the gallery.



**Figure 7. The 1958 alterations to the building with the new WC enclosure marked in red and green**

In the 1960s, as the University's redevelopment of Wellington Square became a more distinct possibility, there was further discussion about the demolition of 39a and 39 St. Giles' in order to create a pedestrian road between St. Giles' to Wellington Square. In 1964, The University even checked with the Local Authority whether either building was scheduled (the buildings

<sup>22</sup> OUA, ref. UR 6/GS/OU, file 1.

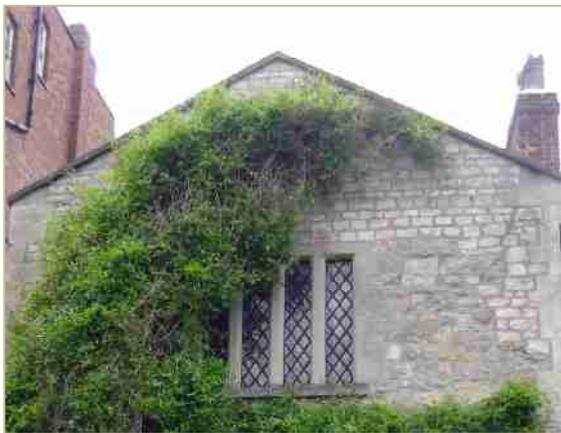
<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

were not listed until 1972); Oxford City Council noted that 39 was not scheduled but that 39a was on their supplementary list under Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1962.<sup>24</sup>

By 1970, the yard of 39 St. Giles', still clear and with its own boundary wall as late as 1958, had been replaced with the extant kitchen extension. The Gramophone Society fitted electric storage heaters in 39a in 1970 and in 1976 external stonework repairs were started using synthetic stone.<sup>25</sup>

The Oxford University Gramophone Society had been a financial success in its early years, but by the mid-1970s was a struggling institution. Subscriber numbers had been especially hard hit by the local public lending library, which offered cheaper rentals without a membership fee. Hebdomadal Council decided in 1977 to dissolve the society. A stay of execution was granted in the same year, when the society improved its finances through a combination of the kindness of its librarian (a 30-year veteran who elected to continue working without her salary, which had been the society's largest single expense) and a drive for subscribers; however, with the future of the society in doubt, and with the University identifying no further use for 39a St. Giles' (which had amongst the highest per m<sup>2</sup> running costs in the estate), it was decided to discontinue the ongoing stone repairs and any other repair work on the building for the foreseeable future.<sup>26</sup>

This situation continued until 1980, when it was decided, despite the future of the Gramophone Society still being in doubt, that stone repairs had to continue due to large



**Figure 8. Stone replacement on the western gable**

pieces of masonry falling from the building. Work on the western elevation was identified as the most urgent and began in 1980. These were extensive repairs which included the replacement of much of the gable end (**Figure 8**). The repairs to the western elevation were complete by 1981 and three eyebolts were fitted into this wall to secure a creeper, which had been temporarily removed for the work. Whilst the scaffolding against the building was still erect, roof repairs were carried out including the replacement of slates, flashings, gutters, and downpipes.<sup>27</sup>

In 1982, it was decided finally and definitively to shut down the Oxford University Gramophone Society and sell its catalogue. The imminent closure of the society led the University to discuss the future of 39a St. Giles'. It was estimated in April 1983 that £30,000-

<sup>24</sup> OUA, ref. LA 3/OCP 62/1.

<sup>25</sup> OUA, ref. UR 6/GS/OU, file 1; ESA.

<sup>26</sup> ESA.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

worth of repairs would be required in the near future in order to keep the building in a functional condition. The majority (£17,500) of this sum was for the restoration of the stonework on the northern elevation. Other costs included £3,500 for overhauling the windows, £4,000 for internal redecoration, £2,000 for rewiring, and £1,000 for paving the courtyard. The University wished to avoid these costs and considered selling the site to St. Benet's Hall, who were very keen to acquire the space, or perhaps leasing it as an art gallery. The future of the building was still undecided when the Gramophone Society vacated it in July 1982 and it was closed down, with its contents removed and its utilities disconnected.

The building was not empty for long. The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art was at this point in constant need of space to meet its needs. It had been leasing rooms at Somerville College on a year-by-year basis but these became unexpectedly unavailable in Michaelmas 1982. The University was able to offer the recently emptied 39a St. Giles' as a short-term solution; it only offered perhaps half the space that the Ruskin's rooms at Somerville had provided and the University had still not decided on their long-term plans for the building. Despite reopening the building, the University Surveyor did not begin the repairs that had previously been identified as necessary to keep the building in use. As a result, in 1983 an order was given to remove any loose stone from the northern elevation in the interests of safety.

The local authority's fire officer recommended that the partition at the eastern end of the building should be removed before the Ruskin School moved in, but this was not done. The students of the Ruskin School, desiring access to the eastern part of the gallery, which was blocked off by the full-height partition, cut a doorway through the partition. In February 1983, the Ruskin Master, Philip Morsberger, wrote to the University Surveyor asking that the doorway the students had cut could be cleaned up and finished and complaining that previously-inaccessible balcony on the eastern side of the partition was unsafe for use and needed to be repaired. He received a rather stern response from the University Surveyor informing him that this area was never intended to be used and that a doorway should not have been cut through, with the only solution being to block it up again.<sup>28</sup>

The Ruskin School vacated the building in the Long Vacation of 1985. St. Benet's Hall had made it clear during the Ruskin School's tenancy that they would be happy to take over the building should it become available, but the University confirmed at this point that it wished to retain 39a St. Giles' as a functional building. The building was offered to Computer Science to house its M.Sc. students. The University Surveyor only planned for a minimum of internal work, including laying carpets and such, deciding that a mezzanine should not be constructed at this point.

Having decided to retain the building for functional use, the University Surveyor was able to justify authorising the necessary external repairs that had been identified in April 1983. The

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

stonework on the northern elevation was heavily repaired and the courtyard, previously cemented, was paved in 1985.<sup>29</sup>

External redecorations, including repainting and puttying the windows and repainting the guttering and rainwater goods, was carried out in the spring of 1989. Roof repairs were carried out at the same time. In the summer of the same year, creepers were dug up and removed from the exterior of the building (not from the western elevation) and, in September, one of the stone mullions was restored. Further roof repairs were carried out in 1993.



**Figure 9. 9.1, left, the interior of 39a looking eastwards prior to the 1998-99 alterations. Note the staircase and gallery. 9.2, right, the northern elevation looking south-eastwards prior to the 1998-99 alterations**

The Department of Computer Science noted in February 1986 that they wished to vacate 39a St. Giles' as soon as possible, but that a shortfall of space meant that this was unlikely, at least until new buildings were constructed. An extension to Computer Science's buildings at 8-11 Keble Road was completed in 1993 and at this point the Department noted that they would be willing to give up 39a St. Giles' if there was a very pressing need from elsewhere but that they had spent a fair amount of money on making the building habitable, so they would prefer not to have to relinquish it. This position was cemented in 1998 when the department secured £350,000 of funding from the Department of Education and Employment for the conversion of the building to house computing laboratories.

The conversion took place from March to August 1999 and represented the greatest alteration of the building since it was acquired by the Diocese in 1850. The gallery and western

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

partition were removed and replaced with a full mezzanine, creating a true first floor, and a partition in a new position. A concrete, spiral staircase was fitted at the western end of the building. The worn internal wooden wall cladding was replaced and new complete internal redecoration carried out, creating comfortable work spaces. Externally, the 1958 toilet block was demolished and replaced with a new entrance lobby and WCs covering the entire western end of the yard. This covered the old western garden wall. The westernmost ground-floor window, which had already lost its original window and mullions, was replaced with a doorway onto the new entrance lobby. New mullions were fitted in the other ground-floor windows, which had also lost them at some earlier point. The external stonework was restored and cleaned throughout and distinctive stone ventilation grilles were fitted on the northern elevation.

Since its conversion the building continues to be used by the Department of Computer Science. A small kitchenette was fitted in the ground-floor room in 2013.



3

SIGNIFICANCE

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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 39a St. Giles’ was publically recognised by its designation as a Grade-II-listed building in 1972 (see **Appendix 1**).

#### 3.1 Architectural Significance

39a St. Giles’ is a distinctive building with substantial aesthetic value. The only portion of it visible from the street is the upper part of the southern elevation, which is just discernable above the kitchen extension of 40 St. Giles’. The entrance to the passage to the building from St. Giles’ is fitted with a mitre, presumably carved when the building was obtained by the Diocese in 1850. The eastern elevation abuts 39 St. Giles’ and is cannot be discerned externally. The northern and eastern elevations form the most significant elements of the building. Both elevations have been extensively restored throughout their existence, especially the gable of the western elevation.



**Figure 10. 10.1, left, the yard of 39a St. Giles’ looking westwards. 10.2, right, the ground-floor interior space looking westwards**

The western elevation, with its cloak of climbing plants, forms an important element of the peaceful garden of 40 St. Giles’. Equally, the northern elevation is the defining character of the courtyard. This yard is a pleasant and quiet space and can be regarded as something of a “hidden gem”, concealed mere moments walk away from the city centre. It is not an

architectural monument of the highest order but it is certainly attractive and a pleasant surprise for anyone entering the space (**Figure 10.1**). It is possible that 39a, a historic stable, predates the buildings surrounding it to the north and east. It is also older than parts of 40 St. Giles'. In this way it marks a vestigial element of the historical character of St. Giles' and the practice, exercised in this part of the city since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century of building backwards along plots to make best use of the available space. It is a pity that the eastern part of the northern elevation of 39a is obscured by the utilitarian kitchen extension of 39.

The interior of the building retains no significant fabric of a historical character. The chimney and fireplace have been rendered over and are contained inside fitted wall cupboards. The mullioned windows contribute to the character of the internal spaces, including the dormer window on the southern side of the first floor, but otherwise the interior is of a pleasant but entirely modern character (**Figure 10.2**).

### **3.2 Historical Significance**

39a St. Giles' has had a long and varied history. Its use as the registry of the Diocese of Oxford from 1850 until 1932 has had the greatest physical impact on the building prior to 1999, most notably in the inscription and carved mitre on the old porch. The porch's doorway also probably dates from this time. The use of the building by the Diocese has fostered the common misconception that it formerly served as a chapel.

There is some minor association value due to the building's use by the Oxford University Gramophone Society. This was an institution very much of its time which eventually became an anachronism. Equally, there is some limited value from its short association with the Nobel Prize-winning Professor Sir Cyril Norman Hinshelwood. The building is inscribed with the name of the Bishop of Oxford upon its acquisition by the Diocese in 1850, Samuel Wilberforce. Wilberforce, colloquially known as "Soapy Sam" for his evasiveness, was one of the great orators of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is most famous as the recipient of a legendary retort (the wording of which is still debated) from Thomas Huxley during their famed 1860 debate in the University Museum regarding Darwin's theory of evolution.

As mentioned above, the building has some illustrative value as it is representative of the practice of building backwards along plots to maximise the use of space, as historically practised in this part of Oxford.

### **3.3 Archaeological Significance**

39a St. Giles' is constructed on a site that was extensively occupied in the mediaeval and post-mediaeval periods (**Figures 2 and 3**) and it is within Oxford City Council's City Centre Archaeology Area. Occupation on the site can be traced at least to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and there may well have been a Saxon burh in the vicinity, though this has yet to be definitively

shown.<sup>30</sup> It is likely that there is significant archaeological material, with potential evidential value, preserved on the site.

### **3.4 Functional Significance**

The building provides a relatively small amount of functional space in a central Oxford location. It is not heavily utilised by the Department of Computer Science and is not currently integral to their operations, but represents a substantial investment of time and money on their part and does provide some flexible space should limited expansion be required.

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<sup>30</sup> Beckley, R., and Radford, D., *Norman Oxford archaeological resource assessment* (2011) 15. Available online: <http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/274338/6150885.1/PDF/-/6%20Norman%20Assessment%20%20Draft.pdf>, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

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## 4 VULNERABILITIES

### The ability of 39a St. Giles' to fulfil a contemporary function

39a St. Giles' was designed as a stable. Its historic fabric now consists entirely of the external structure, which effectively forms an open and architecturally-neutral space. The interior is wholly modern and consists of a staircase and two well-appointed office spaces, as well as the modern reception corridor with WCs. The current use of the building has been dictated by its modern refurbishment and not by the historic fabric and it is likely that the building could be returned to a more open state without disturbing the original material. That being said, the current usage does not pose a threat to the significance of the heritage asset.

The current function is not the only possible usage of the heritage asset, but it is important that it should retain a modern function. The external fabric of the building has only retained its significant character because it has remained in use and has been repaired and cared for. When the functional use of the building was in question in the early 1980s, repairs to the building were discontinued, and it was only when assurances were made about its future that repairs began again.

The building is aesthetically and historically significant, but is by no means a static monument. 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 significance is 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 39a St. Giles' to be accessed and enjoyed by anyone who has a legitimate right to use the building is important 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 the building has been improved in recent years. Access from the street is still achieved via the relatively-narrow passage from St. Giles', but this does provide level access.



**Figure 11. Access to the entrance corridor from the yard**

The yard is paved and mostly flat, but does slope slightly upwards towards the building (**Figure 11**). Access to the entrance corridor is level, with wide double doors, and provides level access to the ground floor. There are two unisex WCs, both having level access and one providing disabled facilities. The kitchenette facilities are located on the ground floor. The only area without disabled access is the first floor, which is accessed via a relatively-narrow spiral staircase.

It is unfortunate that the first floor is not accessible as ideally all users should be able to move freely around the building without disadvantage; however, the building otherwise provides an admirable level of disabled access for a building of its age and design.

## 4.2 Maintenance

The exterior elevations are the most significant elements of 39a St. Giles'. They are for the most part only visible from the yard of 39a or the garden of 40 St. Giles'. The external stonework has been heavily restored throughout the building's existence. For instance, the western gable end was almost entirely replaced in 1980-1, having reached a very poor state due to repairs having been put off whilst the fate of the building remained in question. The northern elevation has also been heavily restored at several points, notably in the early 1980s and in 1999 (e.g. **Figure 12**).

The ground-floor windows were heavily restored in 1999 and the windows in general have been overhauled on several occasions. The roof was replaced in 1958 and has been repaired in various stages since then. The fish-scale tiles on the roof of the porch are particularly attractive (**Figure 13**).



**Figure 12. 12.1, left, the northern elevation in 1998. 12.2, right, the northern elevation in 2013**

The external elevations are currently in a clean and attractive state, and this has been achieved through heavy refacing, repair, and substantial patching; however, they remain open to weathering and erosion, potential vandalism, and pollution; damage which could detract from the significance of the heritage asset.



**Figure 13. The tiles over the porch**

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5

CONSERVATION  
POLICY

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## 5 CONSERVATION POLICY

Having established the significance of 39a St. Giles' as a heritage asset, and having identified ways in which the significance of 39a St. Giles' 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 39a St. Giles'. It needs to be reviewed regularly, and revised as appropriate to take account of additional knowledge and changing priorities.

### 5.1 **39a St. Giles' 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 39a St. Giles' in a contemporary function is important to its continued significance. Limited alterations will inevitably 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 39a St. Giles' 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 39a St. Giles' 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 will have a major positive impact on its significance. As noted in **Section 4.1**, access to the building is relatively good for a building of its age but it 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 39a St. Giles' 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. Giles' and the surrounding area. Notably it must respect 39a St. Giles' location adjacent to listed buildings**

39a has some very minor impact on St. Giles', as the upper part of its southern elevation is visible from the street above the kitchen extension of 40 St. Giles'. More notably, the building abuts 39 St. Giles', which is covered under the same listing. The pleasant yard of 39a St. Giles' is formed by the conjunction of three separate listed buildings: St. Benet's Hall, 39 St. Giles', and 39a St. Giles'. The western elevation of 39a also serves as an important aspect of the pleasant garden of 40 St. Giles'. Any plans for alterations should take into account the relationship between the listed buildings within this area.

### **5.6 Conservation of specific factors contributing to overall significance**

39a St. Giles' possesses various features of some significance (**Sections 3.1** and **4.2**). 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 Any alterations to be made to the external elevations will respect their significance and the contribution they make to the setting**

The exterior elevations of 39a St. Giles' are its most significant features. The visual character of the northern elevation in particular should be maintained. If alterations are considered these should be undertaken only in the context of this significance and in line with **Section**

**5.1 and 5.1.1.** Further investigation should be conducted into the chronological relationship between 39 and 39a St. Giles' when planning any work at the eastern end of the building.

**5.6.2 Any internal work that may affect the external fabric will be conducted with care and a respect for the significance of the historical elements of the building**

The interior spaces of the building are of a modern character but interact with the surrounding historical material. The historical chimney is preserved behind plaster in the eastern cupboards on both floors. Any work that is conducted within the building that may affect the historical fabric of the external portions of the building, including the windows, should only be undertaken with a full understanding of the significance of the listed building 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 39a St. Giles' 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 beneath 39a St. Giles' or the surrounding area, 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 probable that there is significant archaeological material beneath 39a St. Giles' and its yard (see **Section 3.3**). 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 39a St. Giles' 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.



6

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- Planning applications available from <http://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/propertyDetails.do?activeTab=relatedCases&keyVal=000S0RMFLI000>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

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#### 6.5 Other Documents

- Listed building description courtesy of English Heritage (see **Section 6.6**).
- Historical plans, documents, photographs, and correspondences courtesy of Oxford University Archives (Refs: UD 19/2/9-21; LA 3/OCP 62/1-2; LA 3/OCP 272A/2-3; US 19/7; FT 1/9B/156 and 164; University Chest Correspondence File 342; and UR 6/GS/OU).
- Further plans, documents, photographs, and correspondences courtesy of Estates Services Archives (Ref. 231).

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accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

## 6.7 Image Credits

- Cover and chapter covers: Estates Services photographs.
- Figure 1: Adapted from Google Maps (see **Section 6.6**).
- Figure 2: Detail from Agas' 1577 map of Oxford.
- Figure 3: Detail from Loggan's 1675 map of Oxford.
- Figure 4: Detail from 1878 Ordnance Survey map (Crown Copyright).
- Figure 5: Plan from 1850 conveyance of 39a St. Giles' (OUA ref. UD 19/2/8-21).
- Figure 6: Adapted from 1878 Ordnance Survey map (Crown Copyright).
- Figure 7: Adapted from 1958 plan for alterations to 39 St. Giles' (OUA ref. LA3/OCD 62/2).
- Figure 8: Photograph by author for Estates Services.
- Figure 9: Estates Services Archive photographs from 1998 (Ref. 231).
- Figure 10-11: Photographs by author for Estates Services.
- Figure 12.1: Estates Services Archive photographs from 1998 (Ref. 231).
- Figure 12.2-13: Photographs by author for Estates Services.

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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:** 1047143

**Location**

39A, ST GILES 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:** 245836

---

## 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.

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## 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 GILES' STREET

1.

1485 (West Side)

No 39A

SP 5106 NW 5/510

II GV

2.

House. The arms of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford 1846-69, in a Garter, are over the North side doorway. 2-storeyed C19 ashlar in Tudor style with a projecting 2-storeyed crested bays and a stone slated roof. Above the bays are 2 gables, each with a 2-light stone-framed casement window in them. There is plain glass in the stone mullioned and transomed windows in the bays.

Nos 31 to 46 (consec) and Nos 49 to 56 (consec) form a group.

Listing NGR: SP5114406798

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## Selected Sources

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

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# Map

**National Grid Reference: SP 51130 06832**

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 - [1047143.pdf](#)



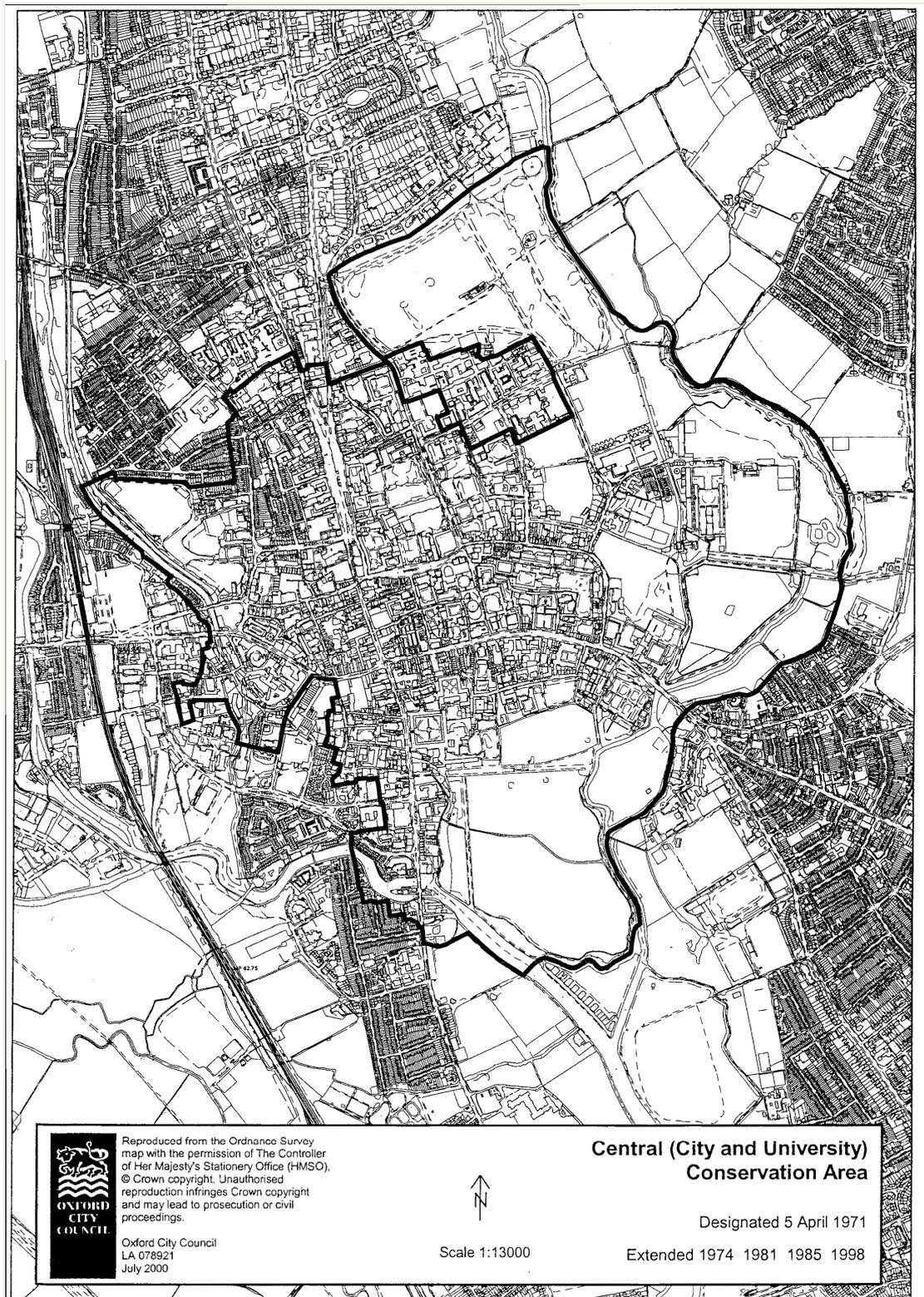
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## Appendix 2 Conservation Area Description



### 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 39a St. Giles'

Date	Event	Reference
1772	The 1772 Survey of Oxford mentions a stable in this area, which may refer to 39a St. Giles'	
1831	38 St. Giles' (St. Benet's Hall) was constructed as two houses, originally numbered 38 and 39 St. Giles'	
1838	Samuel Collingwood leases 38 St. Giles' (the northern part of what is now St. Benet's Hall) to Rev. Philip Bliss. The lease includes the stables (what is now 39a) and yard to the south of the adjoining property	UR 19/2/8- 21
1849	Rev. Richard Greswell inherits what was then 39 St. Giles' (i.e. the southern part of what is now St. Benet's Hall) in the will of Samuel Collingwood. This bequest includes the stable and yard to the south of the property (which had previously been leased to the tenant of 38 St. Giles')	UR 19/2/8- 21
1849	An agreement is drawn up between James Morrell and Rev. Richard Greswell for the future purchase of the yard and stables recently inherited by the latter	UR 19/2/8- 21
1850	Rev. Richard Greswell, by the direction of James Morrell who pays the purchase price of the property, conveys the stables and yard of his house (now the southern part of St. Benet's Hall) to the Bishop of Oxford for use as a muniments house for the Diocese	US 19/7
1927	H.E. Salter writes to the Vice-Chancellor advising him that the Diocese would soon be wishing to sell 39a and that it would greatly benefit the University's holdings in that area (shortly before they had purchased 39, 40, and 41 St. Giles'). He advises the Vice-Chancellor to make early overtures to the Bishop	LA 3/OCP 272 A/2
1928	Roof tiles fall from 39a into the garden of 40	LA 3/OCP 272 A/2
1930	A gale knocks slates off the roof, as well as the chimney pot and several bricks from the chimney stack of 39a	LA 3/OCP 272 A/2
October- November 1931	The Bishop of Oxford writes to the Vice-Chancellor stating his intention to sell 39a to the University, as the Diocese is seeking to consolidate their registry on a single site. A period of wrangling with the Bishop's property agents ensues, resulting in the University agreeing to a purchase price of £1,200 following an initial offer of £750	LA 3/OCP 272 A/2
April 1932	The University purchases 39a St. Giles' from the Bishop of Oxford for £1,200	US 19/17
1933	The University, having purchased 39a in order to control development in the area rather than for its own value, are at a loss of what to do with it. They consider extending 39 into it, in order to increase its rental value but this never goes ahead	LA 3/OCP 272 A/2
1936	39a is still unoccupied and has been since its acquisition by the University	LA 3/OCP 272 A/3
1940	An electric mains feeder cable is run from 39 to 39a St. Giles', providing it	LA

	with its first electric power. This was used to power three tubular heaters. This presumably relates to the use of the building as a storage room for the apparatus of Professor Sir Cyril Norman Hinshelwood	3/OCP 62/1
1941	Hinshelwood vacates the building by June. A new occupant for the space is sought and it is offered to the University Press as a storage space; however, they turn it down as it is too small to justify the staffing costs (night watchman etc.) of a separate site	LA 3/OCP 62/1
1942	The yard in front of the building, previously clear but unfertile, is cemented over by E.W. Burney, the tenant of 39	LA 3/OCP 62/1
1951	Repairs are carried out to the roof of both 39 and 39a	LA 3/OCP 62/1
1953	The street numbers change to their current configuration, but for 39a, which is still known as the Old Diocesan Registry	LA 3/OCP 62/1
1957-58	The Institute of Commonwealth Studies occupies 39a for language classes but are turned out in favour of the Gramophone Library the following Summer	ESA
1958	39a is reroofed	ESA
1958	An oil fuel tank is fitted in front of the eastern-most window of the northern elevation in order to service 39 St. Giles'	LA 3/OCP 62/1
1958	The Oxford University Gramophone Society move into the building. Alterations to facilitate their move include: the construction of an external WC enclosure in the yard; the installation of fluorescent tube lighting in the building; a new 15A electric socket; a new cold water supply and sink; and new shelving. The partition at the western end of the building is already in place when they occupy the building	UR 6/GS/O U, file 1
October 1959	The entrance door is replaced	ESA
1964	There is some suggestion from within the University Surveyor's office about demolishing 39a and 39 St. Giles' in order to create a pedestrian road between St. Giles' and Wellington Square, in anticipation of the planned development of the latter area. The Council notes that, whilst 39 is not scheduled, 39a is on the local authority's supplementary list under Section 32 of the Town and County Planning Act, 1962	LA 3/OCP 62/1
1967	The main entrance is repaired after a break in	ESA
1970	The kitchen of 39 is extended into the yard shortly before this	ESA
1970	Electric storage heaters are fitted in the building by the Oxford University Gramophone Society	UR 6/GS/O U, file 1
1976	Some defective external stonework is repaired with synthetic stone	ESA
1976-77	There is talk regarding closing the Gramophone Society due to its poor financial health. It is decided by the Hebdomadal Council to close the society in July 1977 and to discontinue any repairs to 39a in the time being. By Hilary 1977 it is decided to give the society a stay of execution	ESA
1980	Repairs have not been conducted to the building since 1977. Large pieces of stone are falling from the building and it is decided to continue with repairs despite any uncertainty regarding the future of the building. Repairs are	ESA

	conducted in particular to the stonework of the western elevation	
1981	Eyebolts are inserted into the western elevation following stonework repairs in order to secure a creeper temporarily removed for the repairs. Roof slates, flashings, gutters, and downpipes are replaced whilst the scaffolding is still in place	ESA
1982	With the imminent closure of the Gramophone Society further uses for 39a are discussed, including leasing it out as an art gallery. Ideally, the University Surveyor does not want a University department in there as the running costs are very high. There is even discussion of disposing of it, as it is estimated that £30,000-worth of repairs will be required in the near future	ESA
1982	The Gramophone Society is closed on 31 <sup>st</sup> July. It is decided that the building no longer has any functional use for the University and should be handed back to the University Chest, who may be expected to sell it to St. Benet's Hall. The building is closed down, its contents removed, its water supply drained, and its electricity disconnected	ESA
1982	The Ruskin School loses the rooms it is using at Somerville College and is in desperate need of space. 39a is assigned to them, despite overtures from St. Benet's Hall for the purchase of the building. Some internal alterations are made to make the building more habitable. The local authority's fire officer suggests removing the partition but this is not done	ESA
1983	The Ruskin students cut a door through the partition at the gallery level to give access to the western part of the gallery. The Ruskin Master then complains that this part of the gallery is unsafe and asks that it might be repaired. The University Surveyor replies that this part of the balcony was not intended for use and that the partition should not have been cut and that the simplest solution will be to block it again	ESA
1983	The stonework on the northern elevation is found to be in a bad state, with various areas spalling. An order is issued to remove any loose masonry for the sake of safety. The necessary repairs to keep the building functioning after the Ruskin School's tenancy is still estimated at £30,000 and has still not been undertaken due to the uncertainty over the building's future	ESA
1985	The Ruskin School moves out during the Long Vacation and the University finally confirms that it intends to keep 39a as a functional building	ESA
1985	The building is offered to Computer Sciences as a space for its MSc students to free up space for researchers in their main building. Only a minimum of internal refurbishment is undertaken, with the desired mezzanine being discounted	ESA
1985	The desired repairs, including necessary restoration to the stonework of the northern elevation and the complete paving of the court (previously cemented), are undertaken	ESA
1989	The windows are refurbished, with putties replaced and frames finished in white gloss. A stone mullion is replaced. The rainwater goods are painted in black gloss and various roof tiles are replaced. Creepers are removed from various external areas	ESA
1992	Computer Science is still using 39a as a seminar room and computer room. The balcony is being used as a chair store and is regarded as unsafe and the area on the western side of the partition remains inaccessible	ESA
1993	Roof repairs are carried out	
1998-99	Funding from the Department of Education and Employment allows the Department of Computer Sciences to renovate the building. The 1958	ESA

	external WC is demolished and replaced with the extant entrance block, which includes WCs in the approximate location of the 1958 enclosure. The westernmost ground-floor window is converted into a doorway to the new entrance hall. Stone grilles are fitted to the exterior walls for ventilation and the external stonework is generally repaired. The iron staircase and gallery (presumably fitted when the Diocese took over in 1850) is removed as is the western partition. A new partition is created, with a new spiral staircase at the western end of the building. The space is split with a mezzanine to create two teaching spaces. The interior walls are re-clad with an insulating material and the interior completely refurbished	
2013	A kitchenette is fitted in the ground-floor space	Dept. of Comput er Science, Pers. Comm.

## Appendix 4 Checklist of Significant Features

This checklist is intended for the use of those working or planning work on the site or buildings. It highlights features of architectural significance within 39a St. Giles'; these may be original features or new additions that nevertheless contribute positively to the character of the building. As this is a Grade-II-listed building any repair or alteration work to factors that contribute to the significance of the building will require listed building consent in order to avoid prosecution under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. **If planned work will likely affect any of the aspects featured in the list below advice should immediately be sought from the Building Conservation Team at Estates Services.**

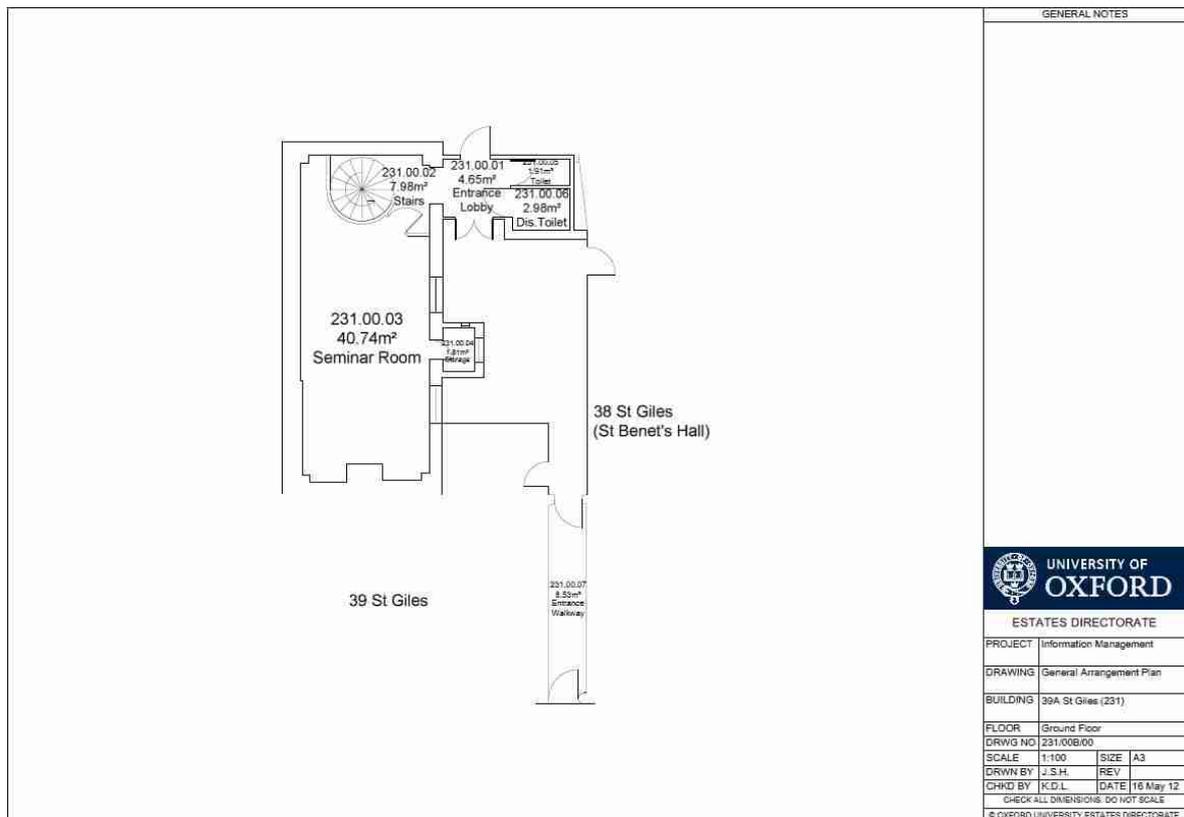
The checklist lists both general significant features that affect the building as a whole and which should be held in mind if working in any space, and specific features of particular significance that should receive special regard if working in these particular spaces. The Further Information column refers to the relevant page reference in the Conservation Plan proper.

<b>39a St. Giles', Building # 231</b>		
<b>SIGNIFICANT FEATURE</b>	✓	Further Information
<b>General:</b>		
External elevations, porch, chimneys, and roof		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
Windows throughout		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
Carved elements throughout		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
Yard including paving		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
<b>Specific Features:</b>		
<b>External Elevations</b>		
-Porch including inscription and carved mitre, modillions, and tiles		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
-Stonework on all elevations		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
-Windows throughout, including dormer to southern elevation		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
-Roofs throughout		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
<b>Internal Spaces</b>		
-Windows throughout		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41
-Fireplace and chimney		p.27-28, 34-35, and 40-41

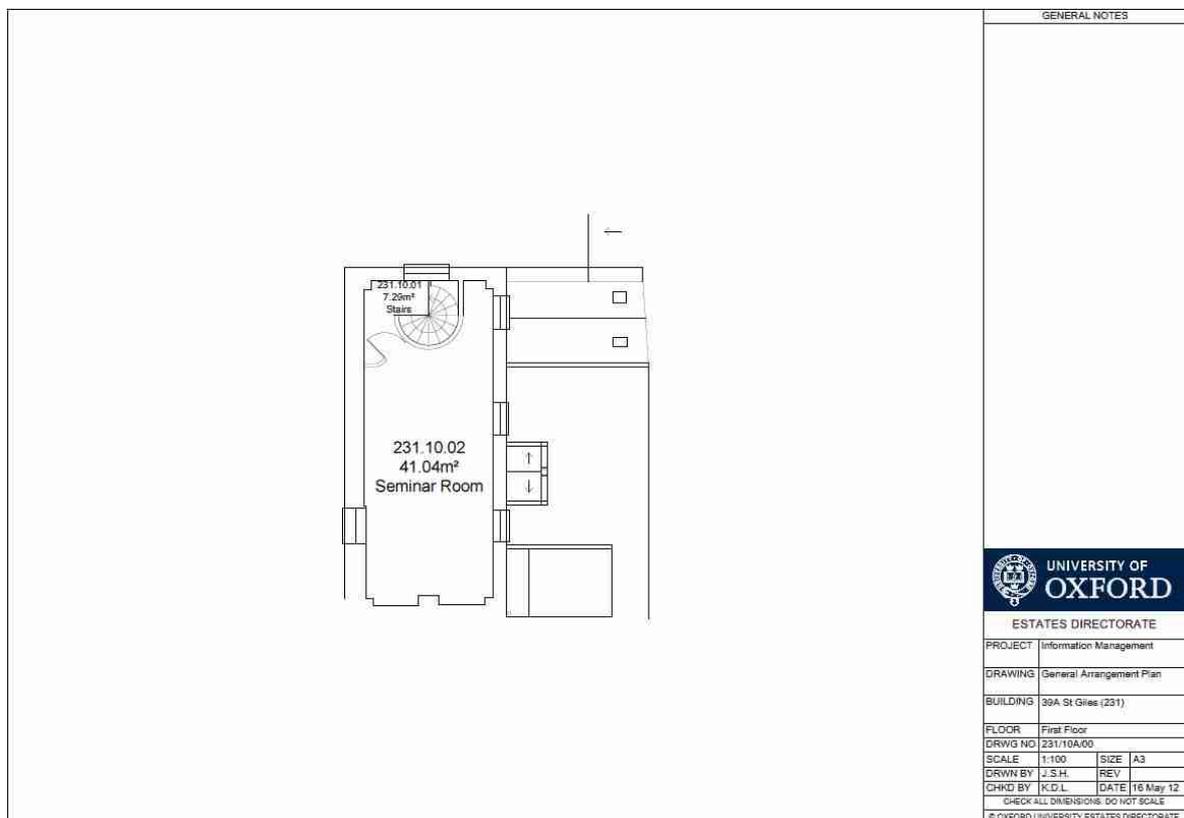
**PRIOR TO UNDERTAKING ANY REPAIRS OR ALTERATIONS ON THE ABOVE-LISTED ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES, CONTACT THE CONSERVATION TEAM AT ESTATES SERVICES ON (01865) (2)78750**

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## Appendix 5 Floor plans



### 5.1 Ground-floor plan



### 5.2 First-floor plan