

Estates

Vision: To become the greenest and most environmentally sustainable college in Oxford, with a stock of high-quality student accommodation and an estate that fully meets the needs of the college community.

The oldest parts of the main Queen's Lane site date back to the 12th century, with the Chapel and the Old Library being rare examples of late 17th-century college buildings.

More modern buildings contain accommodation and other facilities at the back of the site. Off the main site we have, for example, the William R. Miller Building, an accommodation block that was constructed in 2005, and 24 Norham Gardens, which was bought in 2015 and fully refurbished to provide new graduate accommodation.

This diversity of ages and styles creates a set of complex challenges for the annual maintenance of the Hall's estate, from needing to obtain historic building consent before any alterations are made to the oldest buildings, through to surveys of the concrete for younger buildings. The Hall is no different to many other colleges in this respect. What makes it distinctive and provides

a greater challenge, however, is the size of our estate compared to the number of our students and staff. Over time, with the increase in the number of applications and expansion of places that has taken place across the University in both undergraduate and graduate admissions, the Hall has grown to become the fifth largest college in terms of student numbers. However, it is one of the smallest in terms of physical footprint. In addition, we own no other land within or outside of Oxford on which we can expand, except for a limited opportunity at Norham Gardens.

Given our small footprint, it is perhaps unsurprising that our existing stock of rooms is insufficient to meet our needs for accommodation, teaching and

administration. This is particularly acute in terms of student accommodation and affordable accommodation for key staff. With growing student numbers (Figure 7), we have not been able to increase the accommodation provision of the college in line with demand. We can currently accommodate only 60% of our students, and very few undergraduates have the option to live in college accommodation (which has important educational and financial benefits, especially for less well-off students) for the entirety of their course. Only a few colleges in Oxford now fall into this category, which places us in the bottom third of colleges in terms of accommodation provision.



Refurbished graduate accommodation at 24 Norham Gardens with en-suite provision, completed in 2018



St Edmund Hall Chapel Choir singing Evensong in the College Chapel, April 2019

This lack of college accommodation is quite possibly a contributing factor to the decline in the number of applicants who make St Edmund Hall their first choice of college. In addition, the quality of the accommodation in some of our estate is poor, especially in the 1960s buildings (Besse and Kelly). As well as having a negative effect on our admissions profile, this also affects the number and pricing of conferences we can accommodate outside term. This, in turn, reduces the extent to which we can subsidise the cost to our students of studying and living in Oxford.

Another issue with the small size of our estate is that the focus over the years has, understandably, been on increasing capacity for accommodation,

with almost no dedicated, operationally up-to-date and coherent spaces created for key functions required for the running of the college. As a result, almost all the space occupied by staff responsible for the finance, tutorial, bursarial and development teams is in rooms originally intended as student bedrooms. This further reduces our stock of student accommodation.

Requirements for teaching and study space have also changed over the years, and likewise increased with student numbers. Many students now tend to learn in groups, and the spaces we currently have in college for this purpose are under considerable pressure. The college also has relatively few public spaces for cultural events,

from talks and drama to music and sport, and many of these have been low on the priority list for investment over the years and are in urgent need of upgrade.

Finally, an issue that we urgently need to address is the environmental footprint of our current estate. Much of our infrastructure is old and extremely energy inefficient, including very old heating and lighting systems, poorly insulated buildings and single glazed windows. We also have large expanses of concrete on the Queen's Lane site, some of which is now degrading in places. Steps have already been taken to minimise the visual impact of this, enhanced through the installation of a green wall on the Kelly building.

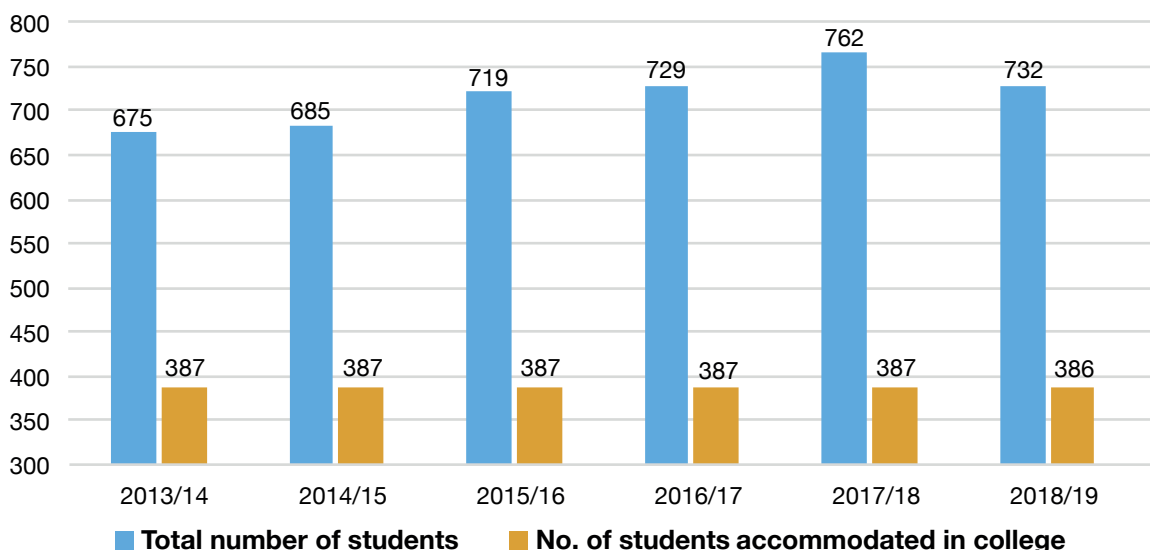


Figure 7: Student numbers at St Edmund Hall vs. number of students who can live in college

The newly installed green wall on the Kelly Building, May 2019





Looking to the future, a strategy for the estate therefore needs to include building new accommodation, improving and repurposing existing stock, and bringing in enhancements across the estate to reduce our environmental footprint. Specifically, we aim to be able to offer high-quality, affordable, college-owned accommodation to all our college community that require it, and, in particular, to be able to house all of our undergraduates in college-owned property. In addition, we aim to provide well-purposed teaching, administration and other office and meeting room spaces. Of our existing estate, we aim to upgrade dilapidated stock and ensure that our common (public) non-teaching and non-administrative

spaces, including our gardens, are attractive and commensurate with the Hall's cultural aims.

Finally, and as an important paradigm that will guide and inform all of the developments described above, we aim to greatly reduce our environmental footprint and net energy use. In rising to this challenge, one of the greatest facing future generations of students and staff alike, we aim to become recognised as the most environmentally sustainable and sympathetic (i.e. greenest) college in Oxford.



The William R. Miller building opened in 2004 and was funded by many generous alumni, including Mr William R. Miller (1949, Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE))

To achieve these aims, we propose to undertake the following actions:

1. within the next five years, refurbish the 32% of the estate (accommodation, teaching, administration and public spaces) that is currently in a poor and inefficient condition;
2. open up currently under-utilised spaces in college for teaching, administration and cultural activities including, for example, some of the rooms in the Principal's Lodgings, spaces in the library and crypt, and the Wolfson Hall;
3. build a new, approximately 90-bedroom accommodation block on college-owned land in north Oxford;
4. undertake an environmental audit of the whole college estate, with the goal of taking steps to reduce energy usage by 5% in each of the next five years, e.g. by improving insulation, reducing draughts and using heating management schemes;
5. examine all our activities in college that have an environmental impact and transition to more sustainable alternatives, e.g. reducing the use of single-use plastics, installing more green walls and improving levels of recycling; and
6. by 2030 become as close as possible to zero net energy use, e.g. implementing energy production through open loop geothermal energy, solar panels, biodigesters and other means.