WELLINGTON SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT

Stage 1 Engagement Report January 2025





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1 Report context & purpose

This report relates to the Stage 1 consultation on proposals for the central Oxford redevelopment known as Wellington Square, promoted by Oxford University Development (OUD), a joint venture between Oxford University and Legal & General. The scheme comprises the redevelopment of 25 Wellington Square, to provide a new academic facility, and refurbishing the Western Terrace on the west side of the square to form new graduate accommodation.

The first stage of engagement included both in-person drop-in sessions, advance online meetings and an online questionnaire. The purpose of the engagement was to meet with local businesses, residents and community members, discuss OUD's approach to the redevelopment, show initial sketches and ideas and receive feedback. A further stage of engagement will follow before a planning application is submitted in 2025.

Approximately 225 people were directly consulted in Stage 1, which took place in December 2024, including those who attended a drop-in session and/or submitted a questionnaire response.

This report has been prepared by Kevin Murray Associates (KMA) with inputs from other members of the OUD design team present at the events.



Discussions at the Stage 1 Drop-in Exhibition

2 Advance promotion

Advance promotion was undertaken in October and November 2024, to inform local residents, businesses and other organisations of the forthcoming Wellington Square consultation. A promotional flyer for the drop-in events was distributed by post to 665 addresses in the area surrounding Wellington Square, shown below. The flyer can be seen in Appendix 1.



Flyer distribution area, including 665 addresses

Over 30 invitation letters were distributed in person to businesses along Little Clarendon Street, inviting them to a business briefing event the morning of Friday, 6th December. KMA and OUD representatives spoke directly with businesses along LCS reminding them of the consultation events and answering any questions. Flyers were delivered approximately two weeks before KMA and OUD visited LCS businesses.

Flyers were posted along the shop windows of the drop-in exhibition venue, to help drive footfall into the shop unit. Information regarding the events was also posted to the OUD website and advance online briefing sessions were held with residents of St John Street and some members of The Civic Society.

It should be noted that Common Ground, a café currently located within 25 Wellington Square, also promoted the events on social media and in their café, which further increased outreach and awareness of the redevelopment.

3 Drop-in exhibitions

Two-drop-in exhibitions were held for the first stage of engagement. The timings were

- Friday, 6th December 2:00 5:00 pm
- Saturday, 7th December 10:00 3:00 pm.

Both events were held at 33-35 Little Clarendon Street, a vacant shop unit within the proposed building for redevelopment, 25 Wellington Square.

There was also a business briefing held on the morning of the 6th of December in the same shop unit. Two businesses were represented at the briefing and more attended the later public drop-in exhibitions.



Discussions at the Stage 1 drop-in exhibitions



3D model and exhibition panels for Wellington Square Redevelopment

The twelve exhibition panels were arranged in an arc across the shop unit, with a 3D model in the centre of the space, near the window, shown below. The panels covered themes such as the need for redevelopment, planning and heritage status, the proposed approach to redevelopment, key components and next steps. The full set panels can be seen at Appendix 2.



Images from the Stage 1 drop-in exhibitions

On arrival, visitors were asked to leave their email contact details, if they wished, in order to be kept updated about future events and progress relating to the Wellington Square redevelopment work In addition to the panels, there were tables and chairs for attendees to sit and fill out paper questionnaires, and ΩR codes on the exhibition panels to enable completion of the questionnaires digitally., if preferred.

The Stage 1 flyer, exhibition panel material, and survey were all made available online at https://oudl.co.uk/current-projects/#five.

Overall, 183 people attended the two drop-in events, 93 attendees on the 6th of December and 90 on the 7th of December. It is important to note that extreme bad weather, in the form of Storm Darragh, almost certainly contributed to a lower number of attendees on the second day. Over 186 questionnaires were received, in the form of paper or online responses.



More images from the Stage 1 drop-in exhibitions

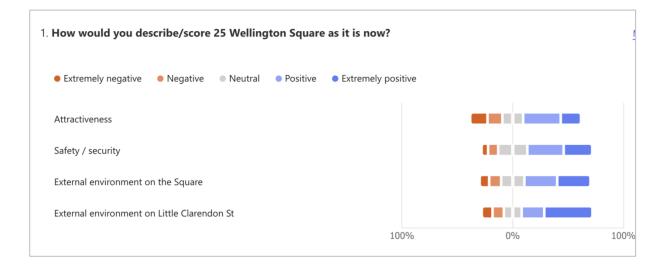
4 Questionnaire feedback analysis

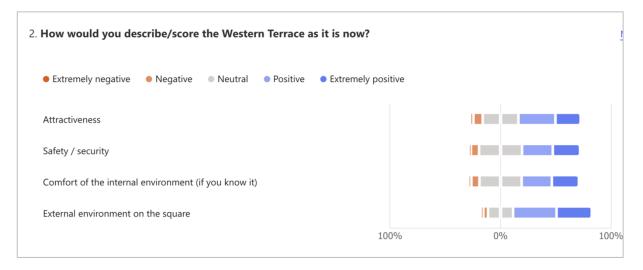
A total of 186 survey responses were received as part of the Stage 1 engagement process. 88 responses were paper copies filled out at the drop-in events, with the remaining 98 submitted online. The online version was accessible via QR codes on flyers or on the OUD website between 6th December and 23rd December. A copy of the questionnaire provided at the exhibition can be viewed at Appendix 3.

The following section sets out the key findings.

Existing environment

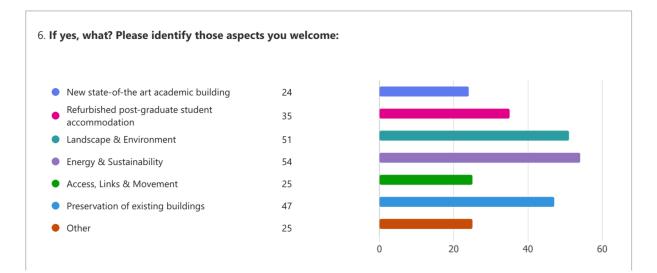
Responses concerning the existing buildings around Wellington Square are shown below, with the existing buildings and external environments generally viewed more positively than negatively. Though both the redevelopment spaces were viewed positively, 25 Wellington Square was viewed in a more negative light than the Western Terrace.





Redevelopment approach

65% of respondents were previously aware of the proposals to redevelop Wellington Square. 41% of people welcomed aspects of the redevelopment, with the leading elements that were welcomed being Energy & Sustainability, Landscape & Environment and Preservation of existing buildings. Approximately 65% felt negatively or extremely negatively about aspects of the approach to redevelopment and provided more information on this.



Issues and concerns

Those respondents who identified concerns about the approach to the proposals raised issues under the following headings:

Demolition & construction impacts

- Impact on Little Clarendon Street businesses during demolition/construction is there something to help with disruption, cleaning, construction, or lorries?
- Strong response (over 64% respondents) about risk to Common Ground, viewed as a vital community hub and cultural venue, one of few remaining in the city. There were suggestions that Common Ground and related businesses either be relocated or have space in any new development.
- The impact of the construction work, including heavy construction vehicles, on the properties/homes in Wellington Square, St John Street and Walton Street
- What happens to local traffic during construction? What will be the effect of loss of onstreet parking
- Concern about access to and use of Walton Street during construction phase not just for residents, but others too.
- Support for public art integrated within building and/or temporary measures eg on hoardings to ease disruption during construction. Consider restoring the string of lights across Lower Clarendon Street.
- The timetable planning and development seems too fast.

Public realm & vicinity of the redevelopment

- Impact on the public realm and environment of Little Clarendon Street an important and historic street with valued independent businesses, used by both town and gown.
- Public space must cater for the large pedestrian and cycle flows on Little Clarendon Street – and design out conflict between pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, street clutter.
- Public spaces at each end are welcomed, but too measly to be meaningful/interesting.
- Concern about sewage/rainwater disposal, as infrastructure is Victorian and may not be able to deal with new development.
- Inadequate provision of secure bike spaces/racks Dutch style bike parking facilities.
- Please install electric vehicle chargers.

25 Wellington Square (Phase 1 redevelopment)

- The encroachment of the new 25 Wellington Square building onto Wellington Square potentially overbearing.
- Not enough retail units shown in the proposed building.
- Which OU departments will be going into the new development?
- Will any of the housing be for OU staff or is it all for the students?

Western Terrace (Phase 2 refurbishment)

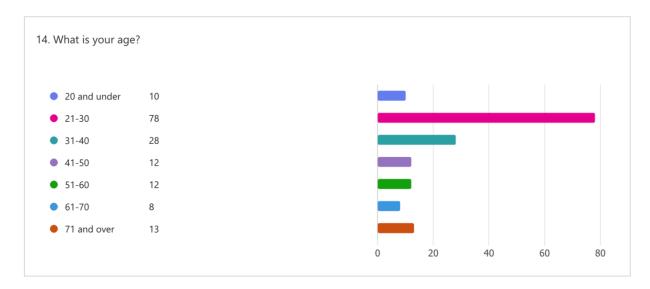
• Will there be a loss of front doors on the western terrace? This might compromise the character of the street and square, and their relationship. Please don't give it just one door.

General redevelopment comments

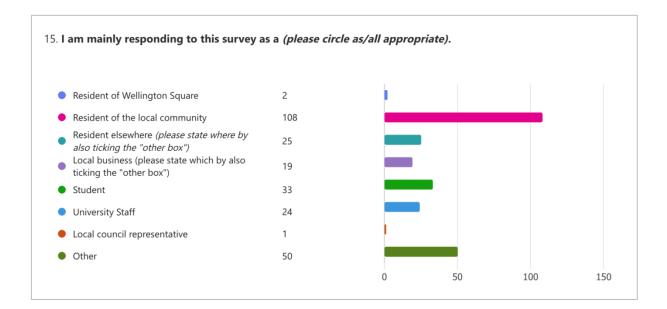
- The most welcomed aspects were the approaches to energy & sustainability and landscape & environment.
- To save a view that barely exists (towards the Radcliffe Observatory) seems like poor prioritisation, as this is not one of the classic view cones of the city.
- Use of grey water for toilets advocated.
- New build will mean higher rents.
- Request for more information about the future of the University building adjacent to 25 Wellington Square and opportunity to change entrance to OU offices.
- Thank you for the exhibition and seeking views at an early stage.

Demographics

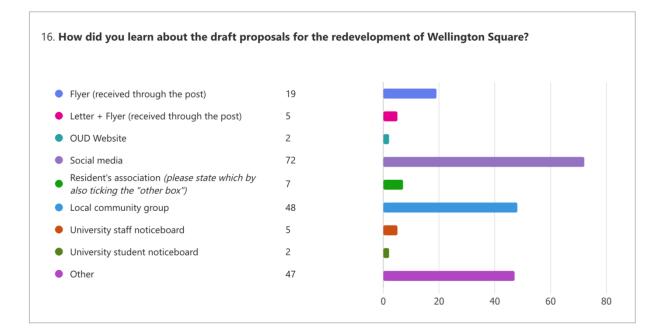
Stage 1 participation and respondents had broad age range and a gender representation of 53% of whom identified as female. There were approximately 48% of respondents in age bracket 21–30, much higher than normal, and potentially linked to the Common Ground interest and publicity.



The majority of those responding said they were residents of the local community. Charts showing this data can be seen below.



72% learned about the drop-in exhibitions via social media, particularly through Common Ground's social media pages.



5 Conclusions & Next Steps

In conclusion, we make the following observations about the Wellington Square Stage 1 engagement process:

- 1. There has been a reasonably high level of community awareness and engagement, with **225 people consulted**, either digitally or in person. 183 people attended the drop-in events over the 6th and 7th of December, including during inclement weather.
- 2. A **broad range of people were engaged** in the first stage of consultation, with a diverse spread of age, gender, community, business and university and non-university affiliation.
- 3. There were **several specific issues raised** in relation to the proposals for Wellington Square, primarily focused around:
 - The **impact on Little Clarendon Street** and its independent businesses, including 25 Wellington Square, most notably with the loss or relocation of Common Ground, seen as an important community space.
 - The aspiration for new public-facing development and public realm to **cater to both town and gown**, as it does currently, particularly on Little Clarendon Street.
 - The **potential encroachment of the 'new' 25 Wellington Square** into Wellington Square's greenspace and public realm.
 - The **impact of demolition and construction on local residents and businesses**, including on local infrastructure not suited to large heavy lorries, loss of vehicle and footfall traffic, an increased carbon footprint, and general disruption and cleanliness.

Following further review, design development and refinement, the planned next steps will include a further Stage 2 engagement session before a planning application is finalised and submitted.

Appendix 1: Events Flyer

THE WESTERN TERRACE

WELLINGTON SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND IDEAS EXHIBITION

FRIDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2:00 - 5:00 PM SATURDAY, 7 DECEMBER 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM 33-35 LITTLE CLARENDON STREET, OXFORD, OXI 2HU

Oxford University Development, the partnership between Oxford University and Legal & General, is proposing the redevelopment of 25 Wellington Square and the refurbishment of the Western Terrace. The proposal from OUD seeks to replace a life expired and poor performing building to create a brand new state of the art academic facility together with a sympathetically refurbished terrace to provide graduate student accommodation.

25 WELLINGTON SQUARE

These drop-in exhibitions will provide an opportunity to see visual displays, meet the project team and discuss the development. Come and join us and share your thoughts, concerns and ideas for the future of Wellington Square.

Please visit www.oud.co.uk for more information and progress updates.

Appendix 2: Drop-in exhibition panels







Appendix 3: Questionnaire

Wellington Square Redevelopment Engagement Questionnaire



December 2024

This is an engagement feedback questionnaire for those who have seen the exhibition panels relating to the Wellington Square Redevelopment, either in person or online at <u>www.oud.co.uk/current-projects/</u>. The closing deadline for responses is **Monday 23rd December.**

1. How would you describe/score 25 Wellington Square as it is now?

Please circle the appropriate number where 1 = extremely negative, 3 = neutral, 5 = extremely positive.

Attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Safety/security	1	2	3	4	5
External environment on the Square	1	2	3	4	5
External environment on Little Clarendon St	1	2	3	4	5

2. How would you describe/score the Western Terrace as it is now?

Please circle the appropriate number where 1 = extremely negative, 3 = neutral, 5 = extremely positive.

Attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Safety/security	1	2	3	4	5
Comfort of the internal environment (if you know it)	1	2	3	4	5
External environment on the Square	1	2	3	4	5

3. Were you aware of the proposals to redevelop Wellington Square and surrounding site? – please circle as appropriate

Yes No Don't know

4. Do you consider the approach for the redevelopment of Wellington Square to be:

Very negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive
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5. Is there anything that you particularly welcome about the emerging proposals for the Wellington Square?

Yes

Don't know

6. If yes, what? Please identify those aspects you welcome:

No

New state-of-the art academic building Refurbished post-graduate student accommodation Landscape & Environment Energy & Sustainability Access, Links & Movement Preservation of existing buildings

Other? Please specify

7. Is there anything that gives you concern about the emerging proposals?

Yes No Don't know

8. If yes, what gives you concern?

9. Any other comments

Do you have any other comments or suggestions relating to the proposed Wellington Square redevelopment project?

ABOUT YOU

Your name:					
Your email address: (By sharing your email address, we will keep you informed about future stages in the planning and design of Wellington Square, including feedback opportunities, exhibitions and online information).					
Your postcode:					
What is your gender?					
What is your age:	20 and under 41-50yrs 71 and over	21-30yrs 51-60yrs	31-40yrs 61-70yrs		
l am mainly respor	nding to this survey	as a (please circle a	s/all appropriate):		
Resident of Wellington Square		Resident of the local community			
Resident elsewhere (please state where)					
Local business (please state which) Student					
University Staff		Local council representative			
Other (please specify)					
How did you learn about the draft proposals for the redevelopment of Wellington Square?					
Flyer (received through the post)		Letter + Flyer (received through the post)			
OUD website		Social media			
Residents' Association (please state which) Local community group					
University staff noticeboard U		University student noticeboard			
Other (please specify)					

Thank you for sharing your feedback

Data privacy statement:

All personal or contact details are held securely by Kevin Murray Associates for the purposes of consulting on this project only for OUD, in line with data protection best practice. They are not shared with any other party. The details are destroyed 1 year or after the planning application is lodged, whichever is sooner. All comments are recorded for the purposes of this project only and are anonymised and aggregated, personal data and responses will not be associated to each other.