The H B Allen Centre

Keble, founded in 1870, was the first Oxford college of the modern era. It is now at the forefront of the collegiate University. With support from visionary donors, we are taking another major step forward in anticipation of our 150th anniversary in 2020, by creating The H B Allen Centre.

The Centre will be established on a site which is at the heart of the University, at the crossroads of the sciences, social sciences and humanities. The vision embraces a major centre for our graduate students, and new facilities to support the programmes of the College’s inter-disciplinary Advanced Studies Centre and other research and spin-out activities.

This Keble development will be named in honour of Miss Heather Allen, founder of The H B Allen Charitable Trust. Miss Allen, who died in 2005, was a philanthropist with multiple interests. The Trustees thought it appropriate to make a landmark grant that will stand as a fitting and enduring memorial to her philanthropy.

The College acquired the site, formerly the Acland private hospital, from the Nuffield Hospital Trust in December 2004. The strategic importance of the site cannot be over-estimated. Occupying 0.68 hectares, it is located only 300 metres to the north of the existing College. Immediately to the west is the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ), a 4 hectare site that is being developed to provide major new facilities for the University, including the Mathematical Institute, the Blavatnik School of Government, the Faculty of Philosophy and the University’s Humanities Divisional Office. Immediately to the east is the Science Triangle, the home of engineering science, computer science, and materials science.

A building scheme has been designed by award-winning architect the late Rick Mather which will be one of the most exciting and significant Oxford building projects of this century. RMA’s scheme uses principles proven at Keble’s main site; the building hugs the perimeter creating a sixth quad for the College. The ingenious landscaping draws a thread that connects the Banbury and Woodstock Roads, allowing level pedestrian access between them and to the communal facilities that open onto the gently varying ground level. Sunken gardens are excavated so that as with the O’Reilly Theatre in the Sloane Robinson Building, lower levels of accommodation, such as seminar rooms and research spaces, are filled with natural light.

“I am delighted to have identified a project at my old College which has the potential to provide the best possible experience for graduate students coming to the University and to add world-class facilities for accommodation and research to complement those on the existing Keble site.”

Mr Peter Shone
a Trustee of the H B Allen Charitable Trust
Facilities

Colleges offer graduate students a very important dimension of their experience in Oxford. Within the H B Allen Centre they will find the very best that Oxford can offer. By bringing all Keble’s graduate students onto one site with top-quality accommodation and exceptional supporting facilities in an environment designed to foster research collaboration there will be an intellectually enriching experience for all.

The new site will provide space for the programmes of the Keble Advanced Studies Centre (ASC), other University research teams and also potentially for spin-out companies.

The ASC programmes are flourishing, attracting visiting researchers and collaborators from universities across the world and bringing vibrancy to the College research community. Further details about the research objectives can be found at http://www.keble-asc.com/home. It is intended that further collaborative groups will be formed as funding becomes available.

The Mobile Robotics Group led by Keble Fellow, Professor Paul Newman is developing and applying mobile robotics in a variety of contexts in collaboration with industry and has been resident at the site since April 2014. Leading in one of the most high-profile areas of technological research development, the Group’s researchers are developing autonomous pods and the RobotCar, and they are applying their technology to advances in surveying, inspection, warehousing and space exploration http://mrg.robots.ox.ac.uk. Oxbotica, the recently formed spin-out company from the Mobile Robotics Group, is also located onsite. http://www.oxbotica.com.

The development will provide the following facilities for graduates, researchers and visitors

• 231 en suite rooms graduate rooms arranged in self-contained flats, each with a spacious communal kitchen/dining room
• 3 apartments for officers of the centre
• 2 graduate common rooms
• administrative offices
• café with seating for 120 and further seating on adjacent terraces
• gym
• lecture theatre with seating for up to 120
• seminar rooms and a large exhibition/performance space
• up to 24 en suite rooms for academic visitors
• porter’s lodge
• landscaped quad and perimeter grounds
• over 200 bicycle parking slots
• approximately 600 m² of research/office/teaching/communal space arranged on four floors in the Woodstock Road Building (in the north-west corner of the site)
• 1,500 m² of flexible research/office space, all with natural light and views to other parts of the site, located at the lower ground floor level extending across most of the site (subject to a variation to the original planning consent).
Supporting the Campaign

Based on a start date for the major construction works of 1 July 2016 and planning for occupation in October 2018, the total cost of the project is projected to be around £60m for construction, fit-out and completion. The College has already funded the land purchase (an additional £10.75m) and raised £35.3m in gifts and pledges for the construction project. Of this £25m has been pledged as a capital grant by The H B Allen Charitable Trust, with generous support from many other alumni and friends.

Having generated over 50% of the construction cost from philanthropic sources the College has arranged long-term fixed-rate debt funding, the cost of which will be fully serviced out of the surplus cash flows of the completed project.

We continue to seek further donations to maximise the philanthropic contribution to the venture so that some of the future revenue streams can be devoted to supporting the academic aims of the College.

In addition to the £35.3m raised for the redevelopment project, since 2008 £6.8m has been raised to fund academic posts, research projects and graduate scholarships. The Campaign Vision for 2020 has therefore received tremendous support of almost £42m.

We hope that many more alumni and friends of Keble will want to join those who have already made a commitment to our Campaign for 2020.

This and other gifts are an extraordinary demonstration of support for Keble in the context of the University’s Oxford Thinking fund-raising campaign. The Trust’s commitment to the project will enable it to proceed to completion well in advance of the College’s 150th anniversary in 2020 and is at least comparable with the benefactions which contributed to its foundation.

Sir Jonathan Phillips
Warden