



Lincoln College  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

## **The Turl Street Mitre renovation**

### **Providing modern accommodation in the heart of Oxford**

The renovation of the Mitre accommodation is one of the largest and most complex projects ever undertaken by Lincoln College. Working with TSH Architects, the development has involved the modernisation of a landmark Oxford building. This week will see the completion of this very complex project; in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, we are delighted that we have been able to keep to our original timescale and budget.

#### **History of the buildings**

The Mitre is a complex of buildings that includes the inn on the corner of the High Street and Turl Street, the adjacent buildings to the west and north, and Turl Yard to the rear. The College acquired the property in 1475 as part of a benefaction from Thomas Rotherham, although the building itself is much older, with some parts dating back to the thirteenth century.

As Grade II\* and Grade II listed buildings, much of the Mitre is of historical and architectural significance, but it is the inn that is the oldest part of the site. Underneath the inn there lies a network of medieval vaulted cellars from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Other important historical features include the buildings' sixteenth- and seventeenth-century timber panelling, the stone fireplaces, and the decorative plasterwork. The surviving fabric of the Mitre illustrates the evolution of the building as a prominent Oxford inn. In its heyday, it was frequented by both locals and students, and was famously depicted by Lincoln alumnus Osbert Lancaster in his illustrations to Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*.

In 1969, the rooms above the Mitre were acquired by the College and turned into student accommodation, along with a couple of rooms for Fellows, and an alumni guest room. For 50 years, our undergraduate students and a few Fellows have called the Mitre home.

#### **The renovation project**

In July 2018, the College embarked upon a complete renovation of the site with a view substantially to increase the number of en-suite bedrooms and create two new accessible bedrooms, as well as upgrading the overall quality of the accommodation and improving the buildings' energy efficiency. The refurbishment has created 54 en-suite bedrooms, 2 accessible bedrooms, 13 further bedrooms as well as accommodation for resident academics. A new entrance and Lodge have been created in Turl Street, along with a communal room and reading room.

All of this has been done while preserving the listed buildings and their unique features and restoring the historic elements where possible. The rooms retain their quirky character and original features, but have been modernised with new and improved furnishings and fittings.

These considerably improved rooms will be home to our students during term time. In the vacations, they will be available as guest rooms to visitors, providing comfortable and convenient accommodation in central Oxford.

This has been an immensely complicated project, taking into account the Grade II\* listing and the many historical features of the building, and is the most expensive construction project Lincoln has undertaken. The overall cost of £16m has been funded through borrowing, and from a large number of very generous alumni donations. We are grateful to all those who have supported the project and delighted that it has been completed on budget, and, in the circumstances, on time.

‘The Mitre came into Lincoln College’s possession in 1475, but has only been used for student accommodation since 1969, when the hotel that occupied the site closed. After fifty years of student use, the different buildings, many of them historic and listed as Grade II\* or Grade II, with fine original features, needed complete restoration and refurbishment. The College has now brought this extremely complex and important project to a successful conclusion and ensured the continuing use of the site for future generations of students’.

– H.R. Woudhuysen, Rector

‘The Turl Street Mitre will provide student accommodation in term-time and guest accommodation in the Summer. We are thankful to our alumni and friends of the College whose generosity in the funding of this major renovation has made it possible and to Benfield & Loxley, TSH Architects, Ridge and others who have performed so well in completing this project in difficult circumstances’.

– Alex Spain, Bursar

With thanks to: Benfield and Loxley, Donald Insall Associates, Gleeds, Method Consulting LLP, Ridge and Partners LLP, SFK Consulting, TSH Architects.

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A refurbished bedroom overlooking Turl Street



The new Reading Room, above the entrance arch



The Rector receives the keys from Sara Murray, Director of Benfield and Loxley



The new entrance to the Turl Street Mitre



A new walkway through the rear of the building