

Structural Repairs and Refurbishment to Wessex Hall Gate Lodge

Stephen Jenkins

Why did we do this?

The property is a Grade II Listed Gate Lodge located on the perimeter of Whiteknights Campus. It had been standing empty with significant structural damage since 2019. The project was undertaken to repair a heritage building and bring it back into beneficial use.

Aim/Approach:

To generate a robust and reliable long-term rental income stream for the University, while fulfilling the University’s obligations as custodian of a Listed building and demonstrating our commitment to the preservation of heritage properties within our portfolio.

Objectives:

- **Stabilise the structure:** The building had experienced long term structural movement, which by August 2019 had made it unsafe for occupation.
- **Refurbish the building and bring it up to modern standards of insulation:** While this was done to current standards, traditional and environmentally conscious materials were used to reflect the building’s Listed status.
- **Bring the building back into use:** To produce a rental income stream and to protect the building for the future.

Evidence and Insights

- The property was deemed unsafe for occupation.
- The property had been subjected to repeated acts of vandalism and break-ins, which necessitated boarding up the windows and doors. This negatively impacted the appearance of the Campus perimeter and required the deployment of University Security resources to maintain security.
- The antisocial behaviour posed a substantial risk of causing fire damage to the property.
- There was a considerable risk of negative publicity arising from local heritage interest groups regarding the property's poor condition.
- The possibility existed that the local authority may have exercised its statutory powers to compel the University to undertake necessary building maintenance. Delaying action until the University was compelled to intervene could have also resulted in negative publicity.

Timelines

Stage 1 – Structural Repairs – Spring 2025



Stage 2 – Refurbishment Works – Summer 2025



Outcome

- A Campus heritage building brought back into beneficial use.

Team and Key resources

1. Property – Stephen Jenkins, Edmund Smith, Abbi Bloomfield
2. External Partners – Thames Valley Surveying, Michael Awbrey Barrow, Contract Trading Services Ltd.