

HERTFORD  
2030



HERTFORD  
COLLEGE  
LIBRARY



**A library** [is] a  
precious granary  
stored against  
intellectual famine

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Alain LeRoy Locke was the founder of the Harlem Renaissance and the first African-American Rhodes Scholar to be admitted to Oxford. He was accepted by Hertford in 1907 after being rejected by five Oxford colleges.

# HERTFORD 2030



In 2021 we asked our students, staff and alumni why Hertford is such a special place to live and learn. Their answers gave us Hertford 2030, our aspirations for the period ahead. These include excellence in research and teaching, underpinned by world-class facilities.

The new library is the centrepiece of this ambition. As we approach the 150th anniversary of the refoundation of the college, we must ensure that our estate offers generations of students the opportunity to excel and to prepare for the future. The restrictions of the pandemic have reminded us how important this is for our community.

Our current library is not fit for purpose. It is time to change that. We can't do it without you.

Hertford is an extraordinary part of who we are. Please be part of this once in a generation project to make it extraordinary for those who will come here in the future.



Tom Fletcher CMG, Principal (Modern History, 1994)

No one will write books once they reach heaven, but there is an excellent library, containing all the books written up to date, including all the lost books and the ones that the authors burned when they came back from the last publisher.

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Evelyn Waugh, author and journalist, matriculated in 1922.

## Introduction

Hertford brings together the best that Oxford has to offer: a welcoming college with a commitment to fair access; a strong community that stimulates students and academics to reach their greatest potential; and a lively, engaging environment where members are encouraged to challenge the world around them. A Hertford education develops enquiring minds from all backgrounds and prepares students for life, work and citizenship. At the same time, our academics are engaged in transformational and pioneering research, pushing back the boundaries of knowledge whilst addressing global and local issues.

Our library is the centre of our academic community and the engine of knowledge exchange. However, the current building, last updated in the 1960s, does not adequately serve our students nor properly protect our books and archives. Staff and reader facilities are inadequate and cramped, and we do not have enough capacity for our modern or our historic collections.

We have ambitious plans to change that. The new building will be a living space, with step-free access to all floors and room to grow the collection. There will be space for traditional quiet solo working alongside areas where students can work together and talk through ideas. Access to online as well as print resources will be futureproofed, and there will be facilities to enable students to create digital projects beyond the traditional essay. Researchers will be able to consult our special collections in a state-of-the-art, temperature-controlled room and we will have the space to store and display our historic archives.

What will make the Hertford library special is that it has our values at its heart: access, academic excellence and sustainability. Like Hertford it will be open and welcoming, a place of opportunity. And in the Hertford spirit, it is a unifying, collaborative project for the whole Hertford community.

‘**The library** is one of the pillars of Hertford life. Investing in the library is not only academically beneficial but it’s also an investment in student wellbeing. After all, many of us spend 8 hours a day there!’

J Rosser (Engineering, 2018)



**Fellow Librarian Professor Emma Smith provides an overview of the new design.**

## Access and Wellbeing

The library welcomes all and is key to Hertford’s ethos of openness and access; it is a space where all students are on an equal footing. And if the COVID-19 pandemic taught us one thing, it is the importance of communal space: Hertford’s students reported how much they missed the opportunity to study outside of their own four walls. The new design recognises this, offering different environments to match individual learning styles to help our students flourish. Communal tables will sit alongside secluded cubby holes, study carels and other nooks and crannies.

Importantly, the new library will be fully accessible, with a lift to all floors that will also allow access to the Hall for those with limited mobility, for the first time in Hertford’s history.



## Heritage

Currently, we cannot promote our archives and resources as well as we should. Our BATTERY Books, for example, from the 17th to 19th century are fantastic documents, full of detail about college life, and give a unique insight into the development of the early halls of the university. Our historic books capture the intellectual ferment crucial to the formation of the Royal Society, in which college Fellows were key founder members. Our new design will reunite our collection under one roof and display it, connecting the college's past, present, and future. For the first time, we will have the facilities to conserve these collections and, crucially, show them off to students, researchers, and the general public.

## Resources

Rumours of the death of the book are premature: access to physical books and journals continues to be a key part of academic life. But e-resources have increased in importance, and a modern library needs to enable hybrid working across print and digital

resources. Our plans allow for continued growth in the print collection, across well-lit and organised shelving. We'll also have future-proof technology so that students can work together and collaborate in the digital sphere.

To him for whom the  
passing-bell next tolls,  
I give my physic books.

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John Donne, poet, scholar, soldier and secretary, later a cleric in the Church of England. Donne and his brother matriculated in 1584, at a time when Hart Hall was an unofficial shelter for Catholic recusants.

# Sustainability

We have set ambitious sustainability goals for ourselves with the aim of achieving carbon net zero and biodiversity net gain by 2030. This is embedded in the library project: the design will improve the thermal performance of the building and manage solar gain where possible, and the new basement will utilise an air source heat pump to reduce operational carbon emissions. Enhanced ecological measures such as swift boxes, new planting and upgraded garden spaces, will support our efforts to achieve biodiversity net gain.



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## The Design

The best way to make use of our wonderful medieval site and to preserve Oxford's unique spire-scape is to dig down. Our main reading room in the new library will be underground, but a cleverly designed window will maximise daylight and transform what is now a dark and crowded space into a light and airy reading room. The much-loved front quad will remain almost without alteration.

Behind the frontage, we have the chance to reopen the eighteenth-century chapel that was awkwardly transformed into the library when the new chapel was built early in the twentieth century. This double-height space will make a wonderful airy entrance and exhibition area. We will make use of the gracious rooms in the Lodgings range that look out onto Catte Street, connecting our library spaces visually with the Bodleian, the world's greatest library and our nearest neighbour. And we have a plan for a roof terrace which will look out over Radcliffe Square, capturing a new angle on one of the most beautiful urban views anywhere. We look forward to welcoming you up there!



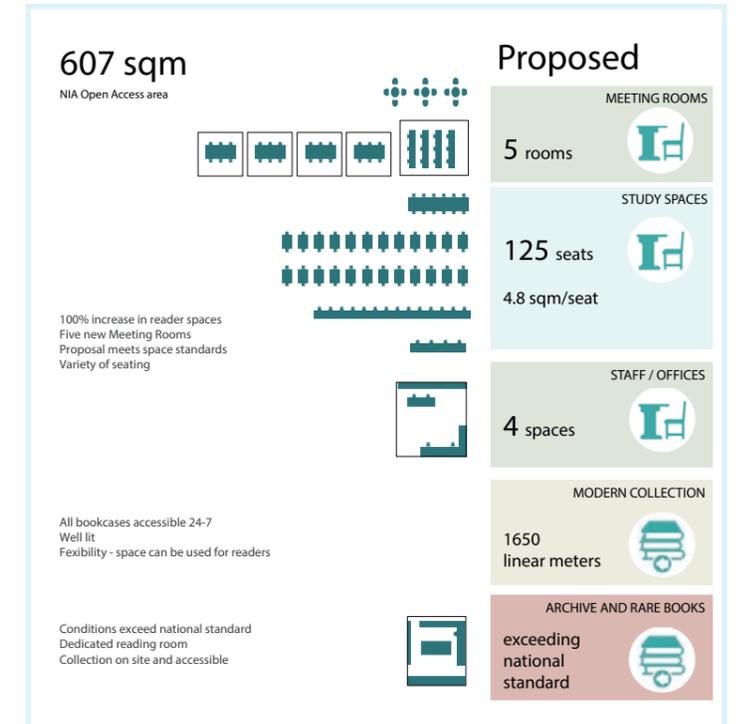
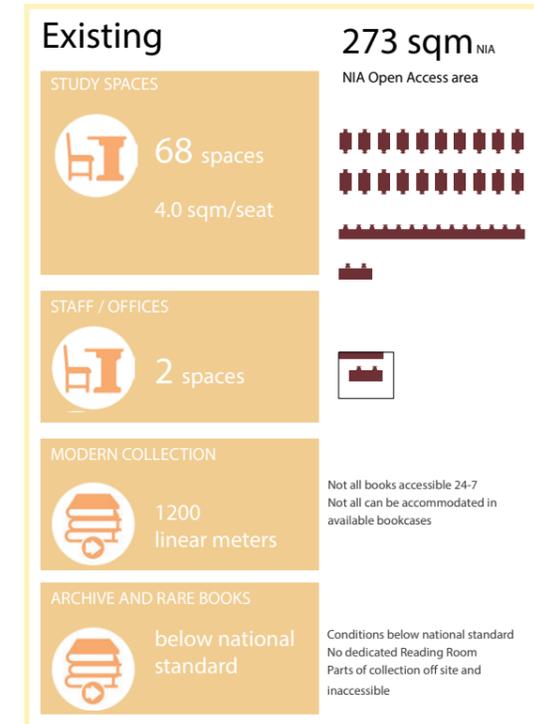
The library is a phenomenally valuable aspect of my Oxford experience. It is such a special place and has such a kind, friendly community. Hertford wouldn't be Hertford without it!

Jaya Rana (English, 2019)

# Opportunities to support

Hertford's refoundation in 1874 was made possible in large part due to the benefaction of Thomas Baring. This tradition of philanthropy has continued as the college has grown throughout the years, and we are grateful to all our donors for everything that their generosity has helped to achieve. The library redevelopment will be a genuinely collaborative project, and we are seeking support from members across the Hertford community to realise our ambitions. If you remember the library as your Hertford haunt – or perhaps if you feel you didn't spend as much time there as you might have done – we'd love to hear from you.

The library will cost £16m to build, and we aim to raise at least half of this from philanthropic donations. Every gift, whether large or small, will make a real difference. Donors to the Library will be publicly recognised either on the college Donor Wall (for gifts over £1,000) or our interactive virtual Donor Book, a recreation of the original book from Magdalen Hall (for gifts up to £1,000). Additionally, there are opportunities to fund a specific area of the library. Gifts can be made tax efficiently in the UK, US and beyond, and can be spread over a number of years.





# Thank you

We are grateful for your interest in Hertford's library renovation. For further information or to discuss in more detail, please get in touch.



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