

BEESTON + DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

Dedicated to Will O'Shea
(1946 – 2022)

Please accept the below **OBJECTION** by Beeston and District Civic Society on behalf of our Trustees, and our membership (currently 161 members).

However, it is **also** representative of the signatories on our:

a) **online petition** at <https://www.change.org/save-oban-house> (357 signatures, as of 11 April 2022), and

b) **signed-in-person hardcopy petition**, (currently around 100+) both of which we shall submit to Broxtowe Planning Committee to be attached to our submission.

Many thanks,

Tamar Feast (Ms)
(Acting Chair)

While we **support** Manor Surgery's quest for new, larger premises, and **support** Oban House, 8 Chilwell Road as the location for their new leasehold, **we do NOT support** tearing down Oban House, **OR the design of the new building initially put forward.**

Beeston and District Civic Society **OBJECTS** to this application for the following reasons:

1. THE DEMOLITION

We object to the demolition of Oban House in the strongest terms.

Oban House could convert to make a unique frontage for the Surgery to lease.

The proposed Pharmacy at entrance-level could be a stunning feature, seen by all those 'passing through' on public transport.

By bringing a much-admired heritage building back into use through renovating it and extending it at the rear, its owners would not only have a highly valuable, impressive landmark building to lease to Manor Surgery – they would also have the full support of Beeston Civic Society and the local community behind them.

1.1 Heritage Impact – Designated Heritage Assets (Conservation Areas)

Oban House stands in **St John's Grove (StJG) Conservation Area (CA)**; overlooks **Beeston West End Conservation Area (BWE)**, and is in a setting opposite St John's Parish Church, a **Grade II Listed Building** (Listing 126 3823).

While Oban House is not Listed, or a designated Heritage Asset, it does contain many of the features of the Designated Heritage Asset it sits within.

Oban House is in the St Johns Grove Conservation Area and has been since the conception of the area. Of the key characteristics mentioned in the StJG Conservation Appraisal, Oban House **has nearly all of them:**

- Retaining high proportion of original, painted timber sash windows
- Bulwell sandstone wall boundary
- Mature pollarded trees
- Semicircular Windows
- Red brick tiles
- Limestone window and door surrounds, decoratively carved.
- Roof covering in Welsh Slate
- Terracotta chimney pots, with crown tops.
- Recessed, semi-circular doorway
- Dentilated and ornate moulded brick eaves
- Ornate moulded brick string courses

Its special interests also include:

- Heavy mature tree and hedge cover creating visual and aural buffer
- Large late 19th Century dwelling with variety of architectural detailing characterising high quality appearance of the area.
- Mature, leafy garden with well defined boundaries.
- High quality boundary walls.

Therefore, we feel:

To demolish Oban House, fell mature trees and reduce its boundary wall would remove the valuable, high amenity building within the CA. In addition,

- It would **NEGATIVELY** contribute to the boundary treatment and character of StJG
- It would **NEGATIVELY** contribute to the boundary treatment and character of BWE in direct proximity.
- It would **NEGATIVELY** impact and damage the character, vista and setting of our Grade II Listed Parish Church.

The StJG Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 5.0 indicates: "*newer developments incorporate designs and materials unsympathetic to the historic character and layout of the area*" are **erosive factors affecting the area**, and that: "*Piecemeal loss of the traditional architectural materials and features*" constitute a **threat to the character of the conservation area**.

Removal of a one of only two buildings in this boundary of the CA, and a building which contains these characteristics, therefore, represents a significant harm, and is **a threat to the character of a Designated Heritage Asset i.e. the StJG conservation Area**.

In 1993 Broxtowe Borough Council could see the benefit of taking up the protection of these areas which comes under section 69 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* [the Act] and *Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* [PPG 15]

“Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to designate as a conservation area any ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ . Designation introduces a control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area’s special interest. Designation further enables a control over the lopping or felling of trees; advertisement control and a restriction on development rights. Local planning authorities can also withdraw certain permitted development rights, such as the replacement of windows and doors and the alteration of boundary walls, by the imposition of an Article 4(2) direction, if they feel these minor alterations would erode the special character or appearance of the area .”

1.2 Applicant’s Heritage Impact Statement

1.2.1 With reference to the applicants’ Heritage Impact Statement: *Heritage Impact Assessment 22.2.22:*

“6.11 Although Oban House contains elements that are deemed neutral or harmful to the appearance of the conservation area, it is assessed overall as a positive building and contributes to the character and appearance of the designation. The demolition of the building would therefore result in the loss of a positive structure which would lead to a degree of harm to the conservation area. This harm is deemed to be less than substantial.”

However, NPPF, Section 16, para 196: “Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.”

The planning statement says the demolishing the building would create “less than substantial” harm and would not adversely affect the significance of the heritage assets – it would. **The harm would be substantial as there would be a total loss of one Asset.**

In addition, BCS feels that the new building, as proposed, **does not have a positive visual impact.**

1.2.2 *Heritage Impact Assessment 22.2.22:*

*“6.13 Re-use of Oban House as part of this provision has been considered. However, the limited size, configuration of the accommodation and difficulty in effectively extending the property, together with the constraints imposed by the proximity to the neighbouring properties, resulted in this being discounted as a viable option. The required accommodation necessitates three floors of **floor area covering a larger footprint than Oban House** and this has not proved possible to achieve through the retention of the building. Therefore, regrettably, the decision to propose the demolition of the building is the only option if the much-needed medical building is to be provided.”*

The proposal to demolish Oban House and replace it with a new build property will result in the **loss of 398 sqM of floor space:**

"Application for Planning Permission Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Planning Portal Reference: PP-11005744 Planning ref **22/00166/FUL**

Use Class: B1(a) - Office (other than A2)

Existing gross internal floorspace (square metres):1900"

Gross internal floorspace to be lost by change of use or demolition (square metres):1900

Total gross new internal floorspace proposed (including changes of use) (square metres):1502

Net additional gross internal floorspace following development (square metres): -398

This appears a backward step when Oban House could provide sufficient floor area, albeit not the size and style required for the proposed use.

The interior can be re-purposed, and an extension built at the rear, fitting on the same footprint as the proposed building. This will not encroach on the neighbouring property any more than the proposed structure. With the design of the extension being of a modern design will go against the *Conservation Area Key Characteristics* as described.

1.2.3 *Heritage Impact Assessment (22.2.22):*

"6.14 Therefore, the decision is carefully weighted between the harm to the conservation area through the loss of the building and the benefit of the medical accommodation to serve the expanding population of Beeston. The site is ideal for the proposed use and a site search found no other suitable sites in the town centre given the use specific requirements that include parking, including disabled parking, ambulance access, town centre location, access to non-car modes of transport and the site area required to provide the needed accommodation and parking. It is concluded that the need for the medical facilities, the lack of a suitable alternative site and the positive contribution the proposed building would make to the conservation area, which is discussed below, outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designation through the loss of Oban House."

It appears that several sites have been looked at in the Beeston area, but for some reason the outcomes were always too late when sites found, A person's inability to facilitate a prospective site should not provide sufficient basis on which to prejudice the people of Beeston by removing a Heritage Asset.

The Manor Surgery applied for a two-story extension to their existing premises but was unfortunately refused by the planners Ref: **03/00131/FUL** and the reason, "*would neither preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area*". The Manor Surgery being in the West End Conservation Area.

1.2.4 Restoring and re-purposing heritage stock, to extend its economic viability, can contribute to real growth for an area. There are a range of inspiring examples across the country of developments that have used the existing historic building stock to create attractive and usable places that meet the contemporary needs of the community, while crucially retaining local identity.

This process of renewal and re-use is ongoing, with recent examples being noted where historic buildings are being **sympathetically restored** into offices and residences.

Precedent

There is a precedent which overrides that constraint in the property adjacent to the NW boundary being 4, Devonshire Avenue lying within the Conservation Area which incorporates a new modern structure alongside the existing Heritage building. **(17/00629/FUL)**

This would not only keep Oban House as a positive Heritage Asset but allow the inclusion of the Medical Centre as proposed.

1.2.5 Beeston as an urban settlement dates back in its current form to the Medieval period; however, what really distinguishes the town landscape is the 18th to 20th century character of the area. The town centre streets all feature modern buildings alongside high-quality and well-maintained historic structures, creating an environment that is not only attractive to the viewer but maintains a sense of place, rooted in the history of the town, to the residents, workers, and visitors of the area.

NPPF recognises that built heritage assets are an “*irreplaceable resource*”, which should be “*conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations*”. Historic buildings clearly have an important role to play in defining a sense of place by creating visually interesting and locally distinctive built environments.

1.2.6 The Local Plan (LP) also stipulates:

*“3.11.5 In looking to protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets **there is the opportunity to help deliver on other objectives, such as economic development and tourism.** The care of our historic environment has to be carefully balanced with current economic and social needs. **Carefully managed change can help preserve the significance of the heritage asset and also deliver viable uses consistent with conservation objectives.**” (our emphasis)*

We believe strongly that the retention and enhancement of Oban House would constitute an exemplar development striking such a balance. Indeed, it goes on to almost specifically describe the opportunity we have in the next point –

“3.11.6 This could include bringing an historic building back into use which has a benefit of reducing the overall amount of natural resources used, assisting regeneration and preserving or enhancing the character of the area in which the building sits.” (our emphasis)

1.2.7 Heritage Impact Assessment 22.2.22:

“6.22 In terms of the St John’s Grove conservation area, the prevailing character is of a linear layout with a strict grid of roads with buildings fronting onto the highway behind front gardens. Buildings are largely sizeable structures set in large grounds with a mix of imposing Victorian/Edwardian red brick and slate with an Arts and Crafts element through white render and a more cottage style. Oban House comprises the first element and responds to the semi-detached property to the west. However, these buildings form the boundary of the designation and although individually attractive buildings, they form the transition from residential to commercial and lack the domestic setting of the remainder of the conservation area to the north/northwest.

Many properties within the St Johns Grove Conservation Area have lost their original characteristic aesthetically pleasing attributes due to either demise or lack of forethought from planners and

residents alike. Whether residential or commercial the Heritage Asset should be viewed as a whole whether on the boundary of the Conservation area or not, "*Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision*".

1.2.8 The *Heritage Statement* has not taken into account the Historic aspect of the Asset.

There is a wealth of local heritage and community value attached to the past residents of Oban House, which reflect on the history of Beeston. **Full details of which have been researched by the Society, and are available to view in our heritage booklet on our website: <https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/saveobanhouse>**

(**For the purpose of comment record a summary is given at the end of this objection.**)

1.2.9 *Heritage Impact Assessment 22.2.22:*

"6.27 *To the west beyond the highway is Oban House. This building and the church are intervisible although the separation distance between them makes reading them together difficult.*"

Oban House and the Parish Church are easily and *immediately* read together – either when approaching for the South East, up Church Street towards Beeston Square, or from the West along Chilwell Road toward Beeston centre. They are seen simultaneously in the same setting – each looking out toward the other.



(Photos © Lewis Stainer)

As you can see, it is **possible to enjoy the view of Oban House and the Parish Church simultaneously** from the same vantage point – either in passing between them towards/away from

Beeston Square; on the grass in front of the Church, or from one of the collection of benches and picnic seats recently positioned both within, and on the boundary of, the Parish Church grounds. Indeed, one could well assume, this was the point in their positioning.

Oban House makes a **positive contribution** to the StJG conservation area. Its setting **enhances and contributes to the special character** of BWE conservation area.

Beeston has lost much of its history – its old buildings, layout and setting. Many heritage assets were lost even before they were recognised. It is therefore especially important to us to fight to retain and conserve that which we still have – such as Oban House. Once a building is gone, it is gone for good. Standards slip, and a precedent is set.

1.3 Professional Heritage Input at the Outset is Essential

When considering redevelopment of historic building stock, whether designated or not, it is essential to factor in professional heritage advice from the outset, to help guide designs and reduce delays and unnecessary costs. Works such as Heritage Statements, Statements of Significance and Historic Building Recording can all help identify and understand heritage assets better, allowing for key elements of a buildings history to be used as an opportunity to build into the future development of a site.

Broxtowe Borough Council does not hold an “Heritage Environmental Record” (HER). It does not have a Heritage Officer.

Unfortunately, Broxtowe also has no Local Heritage List (LHL), as is recommended in *NPPF, Chapter 16: 192/3*,

“192. **Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record.** This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:

- (a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and
- (b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

193. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.”

We have lost many heritage assets while we wait for strategy to be created to afford our built heritage additional and stronger protections. In lieu of this List being in place at this time, the Society would hope permission for demolition **be refused**, to prevent further erosion of the number and quality of Beeston’s Heritage assets until such time as the NPPF requirement for a LHL be met.

2. DEVELOPMENT + THE NEW BUILDING

2.1 The Design

2.1 The building as proposed does not represent a building conducive or sympathetic to the setting or special character of the Conservation Area it sits within.

2.2 We feel the proposal uses the wrong typology references – the new building is more *ecclesiastical* than *medical* and competes with the church. The proposal needs to be more sympathetic and ancillary to StJG.

It appears that the new building design takes its *entire reference* from the Parish Church - inasmuch as it appears to **be** a church. To reflect and reference solely a building which the applicants' Heritage Statement states is "*difficult to read together*" with the site seems counterintuitive.

2.3 It makes no attempt to adopt the key characteristics of its neighbouring buildings in the Conservation Area it is within, beyond the use of red brick.

The StJG Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 5.0 indicates the **key characteristics** of StJG is described thus: (* denotes featured at Oban House)

"Traditional architectural materials and features:

- Sandstone boundary walling*
- Red brick boundary walling with blue brick details
- Wrought iron railings
- Stone setts along footpaths and around footpath trees
- Stone kerbs
- Orangey-red machine made brick*
- Decorative terracotta ridge tiles and finials
- Large carved limestone date-stones*
- Limestone window and door surrounds, some decoratively carved
- Roof coverings of red plain tile or natural Welsh slate*
- Cast iron rainwater goods*
- Terracotta chimney pots, many with crown tops*
- Tile hung walls
- Circular windows*
- Recessed, semi-circular arched doorways*
- Dentilated and ornate moulded brick eave details*
- Ornate moulded brick string courses*
- Painted timber sash windows*"

And states that: "*newer developments incorporate designs and materials unsympathetic to the historic character and layout of the area*" are **erosive factors effecting the area**, and that: "*Piecemeal loss of the traditional architectural materials and features*" constitute a **threat to the character of the conservation area**.

The new building **doesn't not contain these characteristics**, and is therefore **a threat to the character of a Designated Heritage Asset – StJG conservation Area**.

2.4 The new building as proposed **does not have** a positive visual impact.

2.5 The 3D context images are somewhat disingenuous, as the adjacent buildings are not modelled properly. Just extruding them as blocks makes the proposed building appear less large in comparison. The adjacent buildings have pitches on them and the eaves are lower. There are also no contextual street scene elevations.

3. SUSTAINABILITY

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) estimates that 35% of the lifecycle carbon from a typical office development is emitted before the building is even opened. It says the figure for residential premises is 51%.

Repurposing for Carbon Capture: Re-use + Recycle

"It is now estimated that up to one third of the total carbon emitted from buildings is released during the construction and demolition process – this is a significant source of emissions that is often overlooked when working towards making a new build property 'environmentally friendly'.

It is now clear that thoughtful re-use of existing building stock helps to offset some of the carbon emissions, removing the need for the demolition of existing structures whilst avoiding what would otherwise have been expended during a new build development.

Historic England have also written how buildings must be recycled and reused to help tackle climate change (<https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/recycle-buildings-tackle-climate-change/>).

In its basic terms, the bricks within the walls have already been fired, the raw materials extracted, the machinery used, and the construction / supply chain utilised and embedded into the construction of the existing building.

To start again requires a duplication of a great deal of the energy and pollution costs that have already been expended. A recent edition of Heritage Counts (Historic England) on re-use and recycling to reduce carbon capture gave wide coverage on how continuing to use and re-use historic buildings as an asset, as opposed to a constraint, can reduce the need for new carbon-generating construction activities, thereby reducing the need for new material extraction and reducing waste production (<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/hc2019-re-use-recycle-to-reduce-carbon/>).

Another opportunity is in the direct reuse of the existing fabric and materials. Dependent on the condition of a building, it can be possible to not only reuse the building shell, but features such as windows, roofing, floors, all of which may survive and be reusable. Furthermore, modern technologies can also be employed within the design and refurbishment of older buildings that help to further decrease the carbon footprint of a development.

As the UK aims to move towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, this will increasingly be a consideration in construction. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has put together a

very interesting discussion on the various steps in considering the reuse of a building (<https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/reusing-old-buildings>). "

(The above courtesy of AB Heritage Consultancy)

This takes the understanding of the significance of the asset into account to help guide how best to secure the long-term future of the building and how to identify viable future changes.

4. THE ALTERNATIVE

We believe Oban House COULD be renovated to accommodate the needs of the owners, the leaseholders, and retain the heritage asset for Beeston, and have many architects, property developers, and construction professionals contact us who second this opinion.

The planning application makes a passing reference to the 'possibility of retaining Oban House' being considered very early on in proceedings. However, BCS believes the possibility should be explored by way of full viability assessment, rather than cursory glance – with serious regard for the setting and community value of the heritage assets impacted by the project.



Oban House

870 sqm executed
288sqm to the back – ground 1st and attic
258sqm at 1st and 2nd cantilevered over access
170 sqm to the side – connecting stum and access point
317sqm to existing building
Total = 1900sqm



The planning statement says demolishing the building would create less significant harm and would not adversely affect the significance of the heritage assets - it would.

The proposal suggests that the front portion of the site would be the Pharmacy area, with two spaces to the ground floor, and one large to first floor. There would be a side entrance for the Pharmacy. The existing building would accommodate this. It currently has front and side entrances, and the interior could be knocked through to create the floorspace required.

The rear portion of the property could be developed with a more contemporary reflection of the character of the Conservation Area, much as can be seen in the award-winning example of a sympathetic extension of period property in the same CA: 4 Devonshire Avenue. This building now constitutes a multimillion-pound family property (images below by Swish Architects, from [zoopla.com](https://www.zoopla.com))



APPENDIX

Heritage Summary

The outstanding structure is one of only a few heritage buildings remaining in the centre of Beeston. It is structurally superior and more valuable in respect of materials and workman skills than almost anything that can be purchased today.

Oban House is not a listed building, Asset of Community Value, or on a Local Heritage List – as we don't yet have one (we're planning to work on this in the very near future – for this building and other heritage assets not yet designated – but our priority at the moment is saving this building). It is in a Conservation Area though.

St John's Grove Conservation Area (StJG); overlooks Beeston West End Conservation Area (BWE), and is set opposite St John's Parish Church, a Grade II Listed Building – each sharing a view of the other.

Who Built It?

Built c.1890, by Francis ('Frank') Wilkinson (1847 – 1897) an eminent local mill owner, builder, businessman and entrepreneur. Wilkinson built Anglo Scotian Mills (ASM) on Wollaton Road (which are now Grade II Listed), and Chilwell Road. Oban House was to be a superior dwelling house for manufacturers and industrialists of the burgeoning middle class.

'Plot three' of land bought as part of St John's Grove owned by R.Lowe was sold to Wilkinson, who devised to build on it. Original plans are lost, so there is no certainty about who the architect for Oban House was. It is thought to likely be James Huckerby, a local architect living in The City, Beeston. At the time he was already working for Wilkinson, and was responsible for other buildings in the area including the rebuilt ASM in June 1892. There is a possibility that Wilkinson himself could have designed or co-designed, Oban House – as it was certainly within his skill and inclination to do so. Due to fires at his mills (the last April 1892, and the mill was not fully insured) there were some serious financial constraints on his business at the time.

After the Mill fire in 1892, the house was mortgaged in 1893. Frank Wilkinson died in 1897, and the mortgage was foreclosed. His brother, George, had now taken over the family business, and Oban House was sold to new owners.

The Building: Exterior

Some of Oban House's exterior original features include:

- Original, smooth red brickwork.
- Dentil moulding in eaves and string courses.
- Carved stone window frames and doorways.
- Rounded windows.
- Rounded entrance door.
- Dutch gable.
- Painted timber sash windows.
- Decoratively capitalised Columns flanking the double entrance doors, and keystone arch.
- Gilded, decorative fanlight.
- Slate roof.

- Bulwell stone boundary wall.
- Pollarded mature Lime trees.
- Mature trees and established hedgerow to the rear.
- Original doors and windows to **OUT** buildings.
- Decorative iron finial on Dutch gable.
- Crown topped terracotta chimney stacks.
- Cast iron rainwater goods.

The Building: Interior

Some of Oban House's interior original features include:

- Minton tiled entrance floors.
- Marble fireplaces.
- Leaded lights in internal windows, and doors.
- Original plaster ceiling roses and mouldings.
- Dentil cornices.
- Carved stone **archways** and corbels.
- Painted timber sash windows.
- Cellars.

Community Value

Since it was built by one of Beeston's most famous and revered polymaths, Frank Wilkinson, as a superior dwelling house for the growing number of industrialist professionals of Beeston, Oban House has served Beeston as the home, and workplace, of those who have worked to serve our community.

Reuben Reader between 1894 – 1913, local mechanical engineer, Freemason, businessman, and father. Reuben stood for election, and donated funds to charitable organisations and local projects to better infrastructure and housing. He had a large family, and employed many servants over his years in Oban House, as attested by advertisements for staff throughout his stay at the house.

Reader was a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IME). His company, Reader & Sons of Phoenix Engine Works, Cremorne Street, Nottingham were makers of high speed stationary steam engines and electrical generating sets. Often installed on vessels such as Salthouse, a photo of which is on display at National Maritime Museum, Liverpool.

Reuben was associated with the great and the good in Industry at the time, including **Samuel Fothergill Watson**, who served an apprenticeship at E. Reader & Sons between 1891-1893. In 1898 Watson became managing director to E. Reader & Sons, and was holding this position at the time of his death on 16 January 1915, at the age of forty.

Robert Paling between 1913 – 1924, a lace maker, and family man, Paling and his wife Rebecca did a lot of work for the local community, including organising Beeston's famous May Festivals – a big event in Beeston during Victorian and Edwardian times. In 1913 they even hosted an event at Oban

House afterwards, with more than 100 guests, to thank them for their help with the Festival. Oban House served as HQ for the Volunteer Regiment during WW1, as Paling was a Commanding Officer - there are many adverts for volunteer buglers and drummers for the battalion band, all of whom were to apply to Capt. Paling at Oban House.

Dr Winifred Alice Melland Thompson 1926 – 1967, Dr Thompson was Beeston's first female GP. For some years she remained Beeston's only female GP. She lived and worked at Oban House for forty years, as it was her home and her Surgery. Dr Thompson would have witnessed a lot of change in Beeston during her time in Oban House. Not least WW2, and the introduction of the National Health Service. Many people in Beeston today have memories of Dr Thompson, who was known to 'lock up shop' to run to deliver a baby, or leave your prescription under the plant pot in the garden, and well known for her love of 'Scotty' dogs. She features extensively in the newspapers of the time in stories about dramatic events or cases – violent crimes, accidents or deaths because she supported the other twelve practices in the area – especially during wartime. She moved from Oban House when she sold it to the Council. But she didn't move far - to Bramcote. It was a great shock to the community when she died as a result of being hit by a car while crossing the road. She was 94. In her will, Dr Thompson left provision for the care of her beloved Scotty dogs, and a generous bequest to her maid with whom she'd remained close to for many years. It is our belief that Oban House should have a Blue Plaque to Dr Thompson, as she more than qualifies.

When Dr Thompson sold Oban House to **Beeston and Stapleford Urban District Council in 1967**, it became the area headquarters for Social Services. Adverts in local press appeal for Foster homes for children in care, and Oban House is cited.

How many children in care during the '70s will have Oban House and its distinctive entrance and interior etched in their memories – hopefully at the start of happier times for them, with care and loving homes? One advert states:

"A foster home is required for a 15-year old girl who will be starting work at the end of the summer school term. – If interested please contact Area Children's Officer, Oban House, 8 Chilwell Road, Beeston, NG9 1GN EJ. Telephone Nottm 256267".

Bridgeway Consulting Ltd 1999 – present

Bridgeway bought Oban House in 1999, when it had been in the Conservation Area since its conception in 1993.

In their letter to Beeston and District Local History Society (BaDLHS), their Director speaks of the sympathetic renovations they completed, "we will continue our policy of not changing the structure or appearance of the building."

They mention Oban House, with a photograph, on their website bridgeway-consulting.co.uk/about-us

"As the company expanded, in 1999 we moved to Oban House in Beeston. Originally occupying two of the three floors, company growth once again meant that we would need to expand into the top floor.

We remained in Oban House until 2008 where the future expansion of the company required even bigger premises."

bridgeway-consulting.co.uk/about-us

Bridgeway leased office space, and floors of Oban House to local non-profit organisations and community services. Some of the leaseholders and venue hires have included:

- **Voluntary Action Broxtowe**
- **Beeston and District Local History Society**
- **Barnardo's**
- **Beeston Shopmobility**
- **Broxtowe Labour**
- **Heritage Open Days**
- **Beeston Civic Society**
- **Friday Vintage Tea Room**
- **Parenting Takes a Village**
- **Greening Beeston**

We think this represents a significant slice of Beeston's heritage, and its community heritage. And, with owners support there'd be much more research that could be done to appreciate the fuller picture of Oban House and its place in Beeston's past. Please don't tear it down.

Heritage Building Demolition in the News...

Amid the escalating climate crisis, *Will Hurst* introduces the AJ's campaign to prioritise retrofitting existing buildings over demolition and rebuild.

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/introducing-retrofirst-a-new-aj-campaign-championing-reuse-in-the-built-environment>

"This staggering fact has only been properly grasped in the construction industry relatively recently. We've got to stop mindlessly pulling buildings down."

Architects' Journal managing editor Will Hurst

Don't demolish old buildings, urge architects <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53642581>

'Inspirational' buildings shortlisted for RICS West Midlands awards

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-61036194>

Climate change: Construction companies told to stop knocking down buildings

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58667328>

The case for ... never demolishing another building

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2020/jan/13/the-case-for-never-demolishing-another-building>

‘Buildings must be reused, not demolished’

"The [construction](#) sector needs to have more consideration for the carbon footprint of its buildings, adopting a ‘whole life carbon’ (WLC) approach that reviews the carbon emissions produced across the entire life cycle of a building.

That is the claim made by architects from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), which have stated the [afterlife of buildings](#) and cost of their disposal should be taken into account just as much as their construction.

RIBA is calling for a more rigorous assessment of the carbon impacts of buildings from the supply of raw materials, their transportation, the construction process, the use of the building, followed by its demolition or disposal."

<https://www.futurenetzero.com/2021/07/09/buildings-must-be-reused-not-demolished/>

French architects Lacaton & Vassal have bucked the trend by renovating a 1960s apartment block rather than demolishing it.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/may/12/grand-parc-bordeaux-lacaton-vassal-mies-van-der-rohe-award>

**Dedicated to Will O’Shea
(1946 – 2022)**