

# st. catherine's college phase I oxford

client Master and Fellows of  
St Catherine's College  
value £3.9m Phase I and  
various refurbishment works.  
date Completed 1994  
awards + Brick Development Award  
Commendation 1996  
+ Civic Trust  
Commendation 1997

Phase One of a development plan for St Catherine's College comprises 54 study bedrooms, each with en-suite shower rooms and ancillary accommodation by way of music rehearsal and computer rooms, arranged around three staircases in pavilion form, together with two guest suites. The site is to the north of the Grade I Listed main College designed by the distinguished Danish architect, Arne Jacobsen.

The integrity of the College is extended by a brick plinth wall which encloses an entrance quadrangle and aligns with the river forming an edge to the College and enclosing the existing car park. The three pavilions envelop the wall in an orthogonal arrangement.

Thus, a dynamic tension between the grain of the river and that of the College is acknowledged with the west facing study bedrooms having an intimacy with the water, and the east facing bedrooms floating over the wall and forming a covered walkway connecting each staircase. This tension is extended between the transparent, expressive semi public staircases and the solid, static private common areas/study bedrooms.

Similarly, the coarse enclosing concrete structure defining each cell contrasts with the precise tactile quality of the stainless steel/curtain walling infill.

The restoration of the Jacobsen interiors of the

Junior Common Room embraced the covering of a former converted courtyard with a new circular monocoque roof designed to impose minimum loads on the existing structure and enclosing a new lecture theatre.

*"These new buildings are attractive, unpretentious and show how an architect can add to the work of the 20th Century 'greats' without toadying or trying too hard... the abiding quality of this new range of collegiate buildings is its rightness."*

J Glancey, *The Independent*  
March 1995

