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# Review of the Permanent Private Halls associated with the University of Oxford

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*Report to the Council of the University*



University of Oxford

*July 2007*

Review of the Permanent Private Halls  
associated with the University of Oxford



### **Membership of the Review Panel**

Chairman: Sir Colin Lucas, Warden of Rhodes House

Dr Susan Gillingham, CUF Lecturer and Tutor in Theology, Worcester College; Chair of Theology Faculty and member of the Theology Faculty Board

Dr Christopher Haigh, CUF Lecturer and Tutor in Modern History, Christ Church; Chairman of the History Faculty Board

The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby, Chaplain and Tutor for Graduates, Corpus Christi College; Reader in Church History, Faculty of Theology; Junior Proctor 2004–05

Secretary: Mr Alasdair MacDonald, Vice-Chancellor's Office

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To review the status, work and missions of the Permanent Private Halls in the context of the University Statutes which state that "Every Permanent Private Hall shall be under the supervision and control of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors."
2. To review the organizational and governance structures of the Permanent Private Halls, including their current and long term financial position and strategy.
3. To review the mechanisms operated by the Permanent Private Halls for promoting the excellence of their academic activities, in the context of the University's Corporate Plan, Statutes and Regulations. In particular to review with reference to the overall objectives of the collegiate University:
  - i. the arrangements for ensuring an exceptional education for undergraduates and graduate students, characterized by close contact with distinguished scholars;
  - ii. the quality of access and admissions at graduate and undergraduate level;
  - iii. the arrangements for academic and pastoral support and guidance;
  - iv. the mechanisms for the appointment of academic staff;
  - v. the contribution made to the University's research agenda, and the environment provided to support the research of academic staff.

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# Review of the Permanent Private Halls associated with the University of Oxford

## Introduction

1. This review of the Permanent Private Halls, under the chairmanship of the Warden of Rhodes House, was approved by Council's General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 3 July 2006. The establishment of the review was reported to Council on 10 July 2006. The Permanent Private Halls were invited each to submit a self-evaluation document by the end of Michaelmas Term 2006, and in addition made a joint submission to the review panel. Their joint submission may be found at Annexe B.
2. The panel made half-day visits to each of the Permanent Private Halls during Hilary Term 2007, reviewing facilities and holding meetings with their Master, Fellows, other academic and administrative staff, and students. In addition they met with a number of other members of the collegiate University, and spoke with the Chair of the Theology Faculty at the University of Cambridge. A list of those so interviewed is at Annexe C. Taking into account the visits and interviews, the panel has met on sixteen occasions. It has also had access to a range of written material, including the report of the Humanities Divisional Review of Theology (February 2005), and submissions from the former Head of Humanities, Dr Ralph Walker, and the Chairman of the Law Faculty, Professor Timothy Endicott.
3. The report contains a number of recommendations. They are set out as part of its text and are also gathered together at Annexe A.

## Origins of the Permanent Private Halls<sup>1</sup>

4. Private Halls (as distinct from Public Halls such as St Edmund Hall, Magdalen Hall, St Alban's Hall, etc.) came into formal existence as bodies licensed by the Vice-Chancellor in 1854. The purpose was to open the University with its professorial teaching and its Public Examinations to poorer students who could not afford one of the colleges. In 1868, the University reluctantly authorised students in lodgings and not members of any College or Hall to matriculate also – the so-called “Unattached students”, later known as “Non-collegiate students”. Non-collegiate students were progressively incorporated into a collegiate form during the course of the twentieth century. Private Halls, however, had a more uncertain existence and the last one without a clear religious identity closed in 1918.
5. Nonetheless, in the later nineteenth century the form did suit Christian churches seeking access to Oxford whilst preserving their own religious identities, whether Catholic or Nonconformist or with a particular tradition within the Church of England. The University eventually regulated the Private Halls through amendments to the Statutes. On 14 May 1901, a new section was introduced into Stat. Tit. III which, while recognising the right of a member of Convocation to establish such a Hall, required him to obtain a licence from the Vice-Chancellor with the consent of Convocation (thus, the “Licensed Master”); further, it maintained a limit of twenty students in each Hall, enforced residence requirements and termly reports on their observance, and subjected all such Halls to the “supervision and control of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors”.
6. On 5 February 1918 the University went a step further. It added to the same Statute a provision for the establishment of a “permanent Private Hall”, provided that it was not established for profit, that the Master was an MA appointed by the governing body of the Hall and approved by Convocation, and that Convocation gave consent to the establishment of the Hall. The existence of Permanent Private Halls derives from this Statute.

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<sup>1</sup> On all this, see M.G. Brock & M.C. Curthoys (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. VII, *Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, Part 2 (Oxford, 2000), pp. 120–1, 193–208; *Addenda ad Corpus Statutorum Universitatis Oxoniensis* part 2.

7. The differences between the 1901 arrangements and the provisions of 1918 were essentially twofold. First, the licence was accorded to the Hall and not to the Master: this is what made the institution “permanent”. Further, the assumption was that a Permanent Private Hall had a governing body, whereas no such thought was visible in 1901. Second, in 1901 the Master could be admonished or his licence suspended by the Vice-Chancellor, but his licence could be revoked only by a Court of Inquiry; in 1918, by contrast, though the nature of admonition and suspension continued unchanged, revocation of the Hall’s licence was now a matter for the Vice-Chancellor with the consent of Council and Convocation.

8. At the same time, however, two essential elements remained the same between the two documents. The first was that all Private Halls were under the supervision and control of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors. Second, the relationship between their students and the University was maintained:

(they) shall have in relation to the University the same privileges and obligations as if they had been admitted into a college or Public Hall, and all Statutes of the University in which mention is made generally and without distinction of Colleges and Halls shall be deemed to include and apply to the members of Private Halls.

The right of students from outside the Colleges was clear in the changes of the mid-nineteenth century. However, it is from this clause that derives the right of the Permanent Private Halls to matriculate students.

9. The first two institutions of the new kind (Campion and St Benet’s) were given licences almost immediately by act of Convocation on 14 May 1918. The other five Permanent Private Halls existing at the time of this Review acquired their licences significantly later: Greyfriars (1957), Regent’s Park (1957), Blackfriars (1994), Wycliffe (1996), St Stephen’s House (2003).<sup>2</sup>

### Characteristics of the Halls<sup>3</sup>

10. The seven Halls have, to a greater or lesser degree, moved from their original conception, especially in the last few years. All are characterised by a religious origin and a Christian ethos. Nonetheless, they cannot easily be seen as a single, undifferentiated group.

11. In religious terms alone, three are Protestant (Regent’s Park (Baptist), Wycliffe Hall (Church of England), St Stephen’s House (Church of England)) and four are Roman Catholic (St Benet’s Hall (Benedictine), Greyfriars (Capuchin Franciscan), Blackfriars (Dominican), Campion Hall (Jesuit)). There is formal collaboration between the Catholic Halls in the shape of a Heads of House Committee. The Heads of all the Halls meet together each term.

12. The Protestant Halls all have origins as theological colleges and still retain the training of ordinands in their expressed mission. However, they give differing degrees of emphasis to this. Thus, in their mission statements, St Stephen’s House puts ministerial formation as its principal activity, Wycliffe Hall has it as a “core activity” among other interests, and Regent’s Park lists the preparation of “some students to serve as ordained Baptist ministers” as one of its objectives.

13. From their beginning, then, the Protestant Halls have had a teaching vocation. The degree to which individual Halls have moved from their initial focus varies. Wycliffe Hall remains entirely focused on Theology in both undergraduate (the large majority of the students) and postgraduate students studying for degrees in this area, as is also the case of their non-matriculated students. St Stephen’s House is in much the same position but has begun to add a cohort of Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students.

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<sup>2</sup> Ripon College, Cuddesdon, is not a Permanent Private Hall but together with St Stephen’s House is able to matriculate an agreed number of students for degrees of the University for the purposes of ministerial formation.

<sup>3</sup> Quotations in subsequent passages are drawn from the individual submissions from the Halls.

Regent's Park gives approximately one third of its undergraduate places to Theology and the rest to degrees in other Humanities and Social Sciences subjects.

14. The training of Roman Catholic priests, by contrast, generally takes place elsewhere. The Catholic Halls are each owned by their Order (or, in the case of St Benet's, by Ampleforth Abbey). In origin at least, these Halls served as outposts of their Orders where members could reside whilst pursuing their studies in Oxford. Thus, St Benet's was established so that Benedictine monks

could be matriculated as undergraduates to study secular degrees (...) while maintaining full monastic observance of the Divine Office and a regular life.

15. Although all the Catholic Halls retain this essential character, none limits itself now to the members of its own Order. St Benet's and Campion give membership to secular priests and/or members of other Orders. All accept lay people as students. Campion simply has each year a very few laymen "who are associated with the Society (of Jesus)". Blackfriars will take in "lay men and women, of varied religious affiliation or none". In both cases, the numbers are small and comprise both undergraduates (though in recent years only one at Campion) and postgraduates. By contrast, both Greyfriars and St Benet's admit between ten and fifteen lay students each year to read undergraduate degrees. In these latter cases, however, postgraduate numbers are small – respectively, two (and two "recognised students") and six (of whom two are church sponsored). There are differences between the two institutions – Greyfriars takes visiting students from overseas and both men and women whereas St Benet's admits only men, and does not take visiting students. Since 2003 Greyfriars has had a lay Warden. What St Benet's says of itself is true also of Greyfriars: "Laymen are now in a heavy majority".
16. The Permanent Private Halls do, however, also group in ways that do not reflect their particular religious identity. First, by activity. Regent's Park, St Benet's and Greyfriars form a group where matriculated junior members (who are largely school leavers) study a fairly broad range of disciplines beyond Theology in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Blackfriars too belongs to this group, but the numbers involved are too small to be significant. St Stephen's and Wycliffe form a group largely given over to mature students reading Theology as part of their preparation for Anglican ordination. Campion is almost entirely self-contained as an institution of the Society of Jesus. Second, they group by size of student body. Here, Regent's Park stands apart with a large and quite diverse body (c.160); it is followed by Wycliffe (c.127, excluding a sizeable body of visiting students) and then Greyfriars (c.45), St Benet's (c.44) and St Stephen's (c.40), which are thus comparable. The others are small – Blackfriars has about nine matriculated students (of whom commonly about four will be full-time undergraduates) and Campion has ten or eleven (of whom, currently, only one is studying for an undergraduate degree).
17. The relatively large Regent's Park presents itself as little different from a small college except in respect of its Christian character and its training of Baptist ministers:

The College aims to offer a social environment and social facilities which are similar to those offered by a college (...). It thus offers the same kind of experience of JCR and MCR life as would be found anywhere in Oxford, and its code of social life (for non-ordinands) is the same as elsewhere.

It may be thought to resemble Mansfield or Harris Manchester before they became formally colleges of the University. Campion and Blackfriars, on the other hand, have remained very close to being simply houses of their Order, although Blackfriars has the more formal research structure and admits enough non-members of the Order as matriculated students to mark the difference from Campion. Nonetheless, it makes explicit that

it does not seek to provide the type of social facilities and events which a younger member might expect.



18. What all the Permanent Private Halls have in common, whatever their denomination, is their emphasis on the Christian character of their institutions and thus of the context in which education is delivered. For example, the Christian element is mentioned specifically by Regent's Park in each of its four listed aims (and even more firmly in its Statutes); St Stephen's describes itself "as a community committed to recollected Christian living"; Greyfriars states that "it aims to imbue its life and activities with the Franciscan ethos of brotherhood and service" and describes its mission as being "to witness to the Gospel in the University of Oxford"; St Benet's emphasises that "lay candidates (...) should be supportive of monastic life and appreciate monastic values and communities" and it sets its learning opportunities within the context of "the essential dialogue between Catholic faith and culture and the secular world". It may follow that students in a Permanent Private Hall are expected to be members of the Christian faith. However, this is not necessarily the case: both St Benet's and Regent's Park are adamant that this is not a criterion:

It offers, but does not impose, opportunities for its students to link religious faith with the culture of all periods  
(*Regent's Park*)

it is a common misconception that members of the Hall must be Catholic, but that is, of course, not the case  
(and religious affiliation is not part of the material available to the Hall during the annual admissions exercise)  
(*St Benet's*)

At the same time, nonetheless, St Benet's also stresses that applicants for admission should be fully aware of "its specifically religious character, and accepting of the relationships that this implies".

### Particular issues addressed by the Review

19. The terms of reference of the Review are informed by a number of concerns – arising to a significant extent from ignorance of the general arrangements of the Permanent Private Halls – that have currency within the collegiate University. These include concern over the admission of students at undergraduate and graduate level. This concern may be divided into a number of separate strands: (a) whether there are confessional considerations that play a part in the application process at those Halls admitting undergraduates; (b) whether, given that the Halls are not the first choice of a large majority of applicants for undergraduate places, the nature of such institutions is wholly apparent to them before accepting the offer of a place; and (c) whether, given the wide range of degrees offered by the Halls, including the BTh, the quality of students admitted to the Halls is comparable to those admitted elsewhere in the collegiate University.
20. A second concern is that of the quality of the undergraduate – and graduate – experience at the Permanent Private Halls, given their overall size, the size of particular subject cohorts, and the relative financial weakness of the Halls. Members of the panel were particularly concerned to establish that students at the Permanent Private Halls were neither disadvantaged in any way, nor in receipt of an inferior experience in academic or social terms.
21. Other issues to be addressed included the transparency, strength and stability of governance and administration in the Halls, the relationship between the Faculty of Theology and the theological colleges, and the strength and academic quality of the senior members of the Halls, given the variety of ways in which the Halls constitute or define their fellowships.
22. Following the process of the review, the panel considers it likely that a number of the views expressed about the Permanent Private Halls by other members of the University are derived in part from a lack of knowledge of their operations and their very "separateness" from the mainstream of the University. This report seeks partly to address those matters.

### Formal relationship with the University

23. The relationship of the University to the Permanent Private Halls is currently governed by Statute V, sections 7–11. This statute prescribes that the licence granted to a Hall “shall include regulations for the membership, governance, and location of the hall and the rights, privileges, and obligations of the hall and its officers”. It follows, therefore, that whatever the particular arrangements a Hall’s own documents establish, the University has the right to modify them as a condition of granting a licence. The panel makes recommendations based upon that position.
24. Further, the statute prescribes that every Permanent Private Hall shall be “under the supervision and control of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors”. However, the statute does not define the nature and extent of this supervision and control. The panel makes a recommendation designed to clarify this.

### Governance of the Halls

25. As things stand at present, there is no single model for the governance of the Permanent Private Halls. However, each has a structure that ensures a strong role for its parent Church or Order in its affairs.
26. As far as the Protestant Halls are concerned, the Governing Body of Regent’s Park (that is, the executive body of “Administering Trustees” of the College) is appointed by an external consultative Council. The composition of that Council includes a substantial number of ministers or appointees of Baptist organisations (or the United Reformed Church or the Congregational Federation) and, in turn, it must appoint a Governing Body of whom half must come from the membership of the Council. At Wycliffe, the (external) Council, which exercises supervisory control over the Hall and is effectively the body of trustees, is composed of fifteen people of whom five must be clergy of the Church of England and five communicants of that Church, and all of whom must subscribe formally to the explicitly evangelical purposes of the Hall. St Stephen’s House has only one body of governance – the Committee of Management (more usually known as the House Council). However, this is divided into voting and non-voting members and among the former are representatives of the General Synod of the Church of England and of the Society of St John the Evangelist. All members of the House Council must be communicant Anglicans.
27. As for the Catholic Halls, although the presence of separate institutions of their parent Orders may make internal relations slightly complicated at Greyfriars and Blackfriars, matters are in general simpler. These Halls are essentially under the control and supervision of their Orders:

The Hall is owned by the English Province of the Capuchin Franciscan Order, and is subject to the Constitutions of the Order (*Greyfriars*)

The Board of Governors of the Permanent Private Hall shall be the Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers (*Blackfriars Hall’s “Constitutions”*)

It is conducted in accordance with the rules of governance of the Society (...). The Hall does not have statutes (*Campion*)

Only St Benet’s has a slightly less direct relationship to its Order inasmuch as its owner is Ampleforth Abbey rather than the Benedictine Order, and its governance link with the Abbey is intermediated by the St Laurence Education Trust, set up for this purpose.

28. The panel recognises that the Permanent Private Halls are institutions that are characterised either by their ecclesiastical context or by their organisational character. Their governance arrangements are powerfully determined by that character. The panel believes that the Permanent Private Halls do have a useful place in the larger University academic endeavour. It can see no reason to advocate the ending of the University’s relationship with them. At the same time, it thinks that where discrepancies of substance exist between the

formal organisation and educational assumptions of the Halls and the collegiate University, these should be eliminated. It appears to the panel that this review has demonstrated sufficient reasons to revisit the formal relationship between the Permanent Private Halls and the University forthwith. Therefore,

**Recommendation 1**

*The University should continue to license the Permanent Private Halls, but should attach conditions of licence that should be met by the existing Halls, and in the case of applications for new Halls.*

**Recommendation 2**

*The University should immediately review the terms of the existing licence of each Permanent Private Hall, and, where appropriate, attach new conditions.*

29. At present, Council Regulations 12 of 2002 determine (a) the conditions under which a licence may be granted; and (b) the prescribed duties of the Master in respect of the University, especially concerning numbers of matriculated students, fee payment, the education of undergraduates, and discipline. The panel believes that these Regulations are insufficient. Therefore, it recommends:

**Recommendation 3**

*The University should amend the Council Regulations for the Establishment and Maintenance of Permanent Private Halls in order to take account of the other recommendations of this review.*

30. The panel notes in particular that Section 7 of the Council Regulations 12 of 2002 states that “The Master of a Permanent Private Hall shall have power to make by-laws for the conduct and management of his or her hall which are consistent with the statutes and regulations of the University”. While the panel believes that this power should be preserved in new Regulations, it thinks it should be strengthened. The panel recommends, therefore:

**Recommendation 4**

*The University should require that the by-laws of each Permanent Private Hall are consistent with the statutes and regulations of the University, particularly in respect of the employment of staff, equal opportunities, harassment, and the protection of freedom of opinion and speech.*

31. Furthermore, the panel’s examination of the self-evaluation documents provided by the individual Halls and its visits to them established that there are significant disparities between Halls in terms of the engagement of teaching staff in their governing bodies. The review panel believes that there should be a considerably greater say in the running of their institutions for the stipendiary academic staff, as in other parts of the collegiate University. In addition, it is not confident that all the Halls have the appropriate structures for the consideration of matters of academic discipline or the resolution of complaints. Therefore,

**Recommendation 5**

*The governance arrangements of the Permanent Private Halls should contain adequate representation of the stipendiary staff in the decision-making processes of their Hall.*

**Recommendation 6**

*All the Halls should review their governance structures to ensure they have clear mechanisms and appropriate structures for the resolution of complaints or disciplinary issues, and that these conform to those established elsewhere in the collegiate University. Where these structures are not in place, the Halls should move quickly to establish them.*

32. It is evident that the Permanent Private Halls derive considerable benefit from their licence from the University. The University in turn should expect that the Halls do not depart from their stated mission

without consultation and that their academic work, especially teaching, remains clearly a part of the University's collective vocation. Furthermore, the University should expect that the Halls shall conform to and promote those values to which the University holds, namely the values of liberal education conducted in a spirit of free and critical enquiry and debate. The licence should not be viewed as an entitlement to move outside these parameters. Moreover, the panel is strongly of the view that the delivery of qualifications validated by another institution of higher education is not compatible with the privilege accorded by the licence to matriculate students for Oxford degrees.

33. The panel is also concerned about the establishment of independent units within the Permanent Private Halls that teach for qualifications validated by another higher education institution or external body. There is potential for confusion and damage to the University's reputation. The panel considers that the existence of such a unit should be cause for the review of a licence, to ensure that the University's reputation and values are not compromised, and that this matter should continue to fall within the annual enquiry of the supervisory committee whose establishment is recommended below. Therefore,

**Recommendation 7**

*The University should have cause to re-examine an existing licence:*

*(a) if in the case of the four Catholic Halls there is any modification within their statutes that diminishes the commitment or other support of their Order;*

*(b) if in the case of the Protestant Halls, there is cessation of recognition by the Church as an institution for ministerial formation;*

*(c) if any Hall shall be shown to be departing from the values of a liberal education conducted in the spirit of free and critical enquiry and debate to which the University holds;*

*(d) if any Hall, or unit within or associated with a Hall, shall teach for a certificate, diploma or degree, other than those recognised or delivered by the University of Oxford (with the exception of any accreditation awarded to visiting students from overseas);*

*(e) if the financial circumstances of any Hall shall give cause for belief that it cannot sustain the teaching and support of students at an acceptable level either at the time or within a foreseeable future.<sup>4</sup>*

34. As licensor, the University should make sure that it is properly informed of the character and conduct of the Halls. It is in this context that the statutory duty of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors may best be exercised. Therefore,

**Recommendation 8**

*There should be a supervisory committee appointed by the Vice-Chancellor which shall make an annual report to Council through the Educational Policy and Standards Committee (or its successor). Such a report should cover academic matters (including admissions), and administrative and financial matters, and make recommendations for regulatory action if appropriate. The Senior and Junior Proctors should both sit on this committee.*

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<sup>4</sup> This matter is discussed in more detail below, at paragraphs 111–114.

### Administrative structure of the Halls

35. Beneath the governance structures, the arrangements for administering the affairs of the Halls vary according to the size and resources of the institution. For the larger institutions, Regent's Park resembles that of the colleges of the University. If the composition of its Governing Body is particular (see above), its functions are similar and there is also a Fellows Meeting, akin to a Tutorial Board. There is a full range of Officers, including a Treasurer and a Bursar. Wycliffe Hall is comparable with a termly meeting of tutors but administration is largely executed by the Senior Management Team. This latter has the right of attendance at the policy-setting Council alongside an elected representative of the tutors, although none of them has a vote.
36. Among the smaller institutions, matters are less developed. St Stephen's House is run generally by the House Council, together with a few officers. At Greyfriars, the Definitors (the five officers of the Province) "operate as the Governing Body of the Hall" and though the lay Warden has now joined them, they retain power over major decisions. In practice, the day-to-day business of the Hall is entrusted to the Warden and his officers who meet fortnightly. St Benet's is administered by a "Sub-Committee" (of the St Laurence Education Trust) meeting three times a year. In effect, the Hall is run by the Master supported by an Education Committee and a House Committee on which sit principally Fellows and Officers. Blackfriars is run by the Regent and three other officers who collectively are known as the Moderators, chosen in accordance to the Order's rules (thus, the Regent is the Province's Regent of Studies and the others are the officers of the Order's Studium which is co-located but not coterminous with the Hall). The Lectors (teaching members of the Order) convene termly as an academic board. As for Campion, "it does not need and does not have a complex governing structure" – essentially, it is run by the Master and Bursar with a consultative council.
37. Students have a significant voice in the running of Regent's Park, three student officers being voting members of both the Council and the Governing Body (except in matters concerning paid members of staff). At St Stephen's, one student officer is a voting member of the House Council and another is a non-voting member. Two student officers are non-voting attendees at the Sub-Committee at St Benet's and three of them are full members of the House Committee. At Greyfriars, the JCR President attends part of the fortnightly meeting of the Hall's officers.
38. A number of the Permanent Private Halls have taken significant steps to review both their arrangements and their strategies in the last two or three years. As far as internal arrangements are concerned, both Wycliffe Hall and Greyfriars have been undertaking a review during the course of the panel's work. Blackfriars revised its "Constitutions" in 2006, while St Benet's, which up to 2004 had been administered informally by a multi-tasking Master, reorganised responsibilities in that year and, in 2006, produced a formal "Instrument of Government" for itself. In terms of compliance with public regulatory requirements, these changes ought to be beneficial.
39. The larger Halls (Regent's Park and Wycliffe) have in place fully developed management structures. Regent's Park adopts the general collegiate model of Fellows as officers (with a Senior Tutor doubling as Admissions Tutor, and a Fellow Bursar); Wycliffe has a clear allocation of responsibilities and reporting lines, based upon a classic organisation of college committees. At the other end of the scale, Campion has simply a Master, a Tutor for Graduates, a Bursar and a Home Bursar.
40. The other Halls have a less well-developed administrative structure. At Greyfriars the Warden is on contract for only thirty-five weeks a year and the Senior Tutor and the College Secretary are part-time. Moreover, the Bursar, until her recent resignation, was also, and above all, the Bursar for the Province (the Hall is aware of this weakness and has appointed a Bursar's Assistant). There have been recent changes at St Benet's that have strengthened its structure, particularly through the addition of a full-time College Secretary, and the unsalaried Dean and Deputy Dean/Librarian. However, the Master still is also Bursar and Admissions

Tutor and the recently established post of Senior Tutor is part-time. St Stephen's House, in addition to the Principal, has two full-time academic staff and three part-time. Its Senior Tutor is a matriculated graduate student. There is also a full-time bursar. The Principal's PA, a full-time post, undertakes a number of roles, including that of admissions secretary.

41. Hence administrative provision in the medium and smaller sized Halls is considerably lighter than in the larger Halls and in the Colleges of the University. During discussions with members of the University, it has been put to the panel that there has been a number of cases where students in these Halls have received either no or inadequate or plainly wrong advice about regulations and requirements. It appears equally that disciplinary arrangements are sometimes inadequate. The Proctors have reported that the most numerous queries have arisen in relation to examinations, though not necessarily out of proportion to the size of the Halls.
42. This issue is considered by the panel to be a matter of resource as much as expertise. In the smaller Halls, there is less financial capacity to provide administrative staff who are able to advise on the wide range of issues that present themselves to students. There is also (and this is not necessarily a problem confined to the Halls of the University) a lack of opportunity for professional development of such staff, or the physical infrastructure that would enable them to undertake their duties at an optimal level. Although there has been considerable reform in the Permanent Private Halls in recent years that has been designed to improve the administration of academic business, it appears to the review panel that there is evidence that some Halls still have difficulty in keeping up-to-date with University regulations and other mechanisms or requirements. This situation does not appear satisfactory to the panel, which believes that it presents risks for student members.

#### **Recommendation 9**

*The Permanent Private Halls should collectively maintain a single administrative office to ensure that student administration, insofar as it affects the students' relationship with the University and its administration, is managed with more efficiency. The remit of the office should include managing issues that arise over the Long Vacation.*

#### **Student numbers**

43. The figures reported to the panel by each Permanent Private Hall are tabulated in Tables One and Two, at Annexe D. They represent the total numbers of junior members in each of the last three years. Undergraduates are categorised by degree subject (although this category also includes graduate students taking the two year BA) and postgraduates are categorised by type of degree. The numbers are relatively stable over the last three years. The statutory maximum numbers of Home/EU students matriculated for the BA, the BTh, the BFA, or a second BA, are detailed. Numbers of visiting students are also listed in each table. At the end of Table Two will be found figures for those members of Halls studying for qualifications other than those offered by the University.
44. Although there is no single model, these tables make a number of things clear:
  - i. All are involved in undergraduate teaching although the variation in size makes meaningful comparison difficult (Campion has had only one undergraduate each of the last three years). In general, however, five Halls (Regent's Park, Wycliffe Hall, St Stephen's House, Greyfriars and St Benet's) engage significantly with undergraduate teaching. However, Wycliffe and St Stephen's deal only in Theology degrees. Regent's Park has a substantial commitment to this subject, but it is only a small part of the undergraduate teaching at Greyfriars and St Benet's. Thus Regent's Park, Greyfriars and St Benet's are



characterised as having a (mostly lay) undergraduate population over quite a broad front of subjects, predominantly in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

- ii. As for postgraduate students, Regent's Park, Wycliffe and St Stephen's House essentially take them only in Theology, except that St Stephen's House has begun to take general PGCE students in numbers relatively large to its size. Greyfriars and St Benet's have very few postgraduates and, at the former, they are not limited to Theology. Campion's student population is almost exclusively postgraduate, studying a range of subjects not at all confined to Theology, as the Hall's vocation is to prepare students for work in higher education, especially in developing countries.
  - iii. In terms of students, therefore, Regent's Park and Wycliffe appear as institutions with quite a number of common characteristics with the collegiate University. However, Wycliffe's exclusive commitment to Theology sets it further apart than is the case of Regent's Park and that, leaving size aside, is true also of St Stephen's. Greyfriars and St Benet's are different, being essentially small general undergraduate institutions. Campion, by contrast, is essentially a graduate and research institution, a character emphasised by the number of visiting scholars and visiting graduate students present each year. At Blackfriars, on the one hand there is the Thomist research vocation of its Aquinas Institute and the scholars it attracts; on the other, there is a population of visiting students as well as the non-University teaching activity of the Studium within the Dominican complex in Oxford, of which the Hall is but one part.
45. Nonetheless, it is essential to take note of the distribution of undergraduates in the three Halls that teach across a broader front of subjects. Table One reveals a fragmentation of the undergraduate body across a significantly large number of degree courses. Both Greyfriars and St Benet's have concentrated largely in Classics, English, Modern History (and its Joint Schools at Greyfriars), Theology, as well as Law (at Greyfriars) or PPE (at St Benet's). A larger number of subjects are taught at Regent's Park. Generally speaking, however, the numbers are small in each subject. Only in English at Regent's Park and Greyfriars and in Theology at Regent's Park are there annual intake numbers above one or two or three.
  46. Finally, Regent's Park, Greyfriars, Wycliffe Hall and Blackfriars each recruit a significant cohort of visiting students at undergraduate level. While these students are not matriculated in the University, they do pay a fee for access to some University facilities and thus their experience can in some degree impact on the University's reputation. At Blackfriars they represent up to three times the number of matriculated undergraduate students in a year and therefore must constitute the bulk of the Hall's teaching commitment. The visitors at Blackfriars come from eight partner colleges in the United States and have an intensive one-year course in some Humanities subjects organised by the Hall. There is a very significant visiting student presence at Wycliffe Hall, drawn from a number of institutions – largely confessionally cognate – in North America (see below at paragraph 98).
  47. Fragmentation of the undergraduate body is a particular concern of the review panel. Small cohort numbers within subjects in the Halls admitting general undergraduate students are due to a number of factors, not least the pattern of opportunistic admission forced upon the Halls by virtue of their recruitment of undergraduates who choose the Halls as second choice behind their first choice of College. The panel recognises, in part, the argument that has been put to it that small subject numbers within each Hall constitute a different but no less valid student experience and that it may potentially be as stimulating and rewarding as the larger subject-based cohorts within Colleges.
  48. Notwithstanding this argument, the panel does have serious concerns regarding the size of the subject cohorts. In the first place, it believes that very small cohorts risk complete atomisation in a situation where students are frequently sent to outside tutors. In the second place, it believes that if the argument is to be made for the virtue of a vertically integrated small community across years (both for formal and for

informal learning), then there must be a real opportunity for this to operate. After its site visits, the panel is not convinced that there is sufficient provision of facilities on-site in a number of the Halls for this to be the case. The panel recognises the financial implications of housing students on or close to site, but it believes that the force of the Halls' argument about student experience is much diminished without such provision. Therefore,

**Recommendation 10**

*The Permanent Private Halls should not admit to undergraduate study a subject cohort whose annual size is unsatisfactory or incapable of achieving critical mass. Entering cohorts should not be less than three in a FHS (including joint degrees where one half is not necessarily in a subject for which the Hall admits undergraduates to read as a single FHS).*

49. However, the review panel considers that in exceptional circumstances, and only where viable, smaller subject communities might be formed from different year-groups, and for that there should be certain conditions. Therefore,

**Recommendation 11**

*A Hall may admit a smaller entry in a subject where there are conditions to ensure proper integration of different year groups by means of*

*(a) the provision of an adequate infrastructure for student interaction within the premises of the Hall; and*

*(b) an adequate provision of living accommodation in or close to the premises of the Hall, available to a substantial proportion of students beyond their first year, so that a collective identity across year-groups can be stimulated readily.*

**Recommendation 12**

*In terms of the general population of undergraduate students, provided that the two conditions set out above are maintained, each Permanent Private Hall may apply for permission from the Vice-Chancellor to exceed or alter the number of Home/EU students that it may admit to BA, BTh, BFA, or for a second Honour School, as set out in Council Regulation 12 of 2002. Council and the Educational Policy and Standards Committee should examine any such application having regard to the general structure and distribution of the student body across the collegiate University and the academic strategies of the University.*

**Undergraduate admissions**

50. It is the issue of undergraduate admissions that is most pervasive in terms of the anecdotal material that exists about the Permanent Private Halls. It is commonly asserted that the Halls admit undergraduate students who are either inadequately qualified or who come to them by some route other than the standard method of collegiate admissions. It is possible that collegiate University opinion inclines to this view because a majority of their undergraduate students come to the Halls having failed to gain a place at other Colleges.
51. In their self-evaluation documents, almost all of the Halls commented on their admissions policies and practices (although Campion with its one undergraduate student was not considered by the review panel). Wycliffe Hall, St Stephen's House, Greyfriars and St Benet's have all stated that their students are admitted under the usual conditions and through the ordinary entrance procedures, although during institutional visits it became clear that in the past at least, there had been a small number of occasions when students had been admitted after the UCAS round and the December admissions exercise. However, except in some of the courses leading to some of the University qualifications in Theology, there is no evidence to suggest



that undergraduate candidates are currently being accepted who would not, under other circumstances, be accepted on grounds of academic merit by other admitting bodies in Oxford.

52. All the Halls have indicated that, in general, they are content with the provisions of the Common Framework on Undergraduate Admissions for future admissions exercises, although recognising that in a number of areas, such as the redistribution of students between Colleges, it may serve them less favourably than the existing system of informal redistribution by faculty members. Hence the Halls have some concern that candidates – or more particularly the Halls themselves – may not be dealt with justly in College allocations or redistribution decisions.
53. Nonetheless, the panel does believe that the criteria and procedures of the Common Framework are not implemented in domains relating to ordinands, where other considerations are in play. This is discussed below.
54. Another common perception has been that admissions decisions are determined to some extent by the confessional nature of the Halls and the applicants. Only a small minority of applicants – fewer than 100 per year – name a Permanent Private Hall as their institution of first choice. Up to two-thirds of those placed at the Halls have not applied to them. There have been, in the past, some instances reported of candidates being offered places at Halls without first being interviewed by them, with evidence that at least some candidates were unclear as to the nature of the Hall in question.
55. However, all the Halls, particularly those that recruit most heavily for undergraduate students, are now at pains to point out to applicants the nature of their institution, and that to a greater or lesser extent social behaviour may be governed by a common subscription to Christian values and ethics (as set out earlier in this report). The review panel examined this matter with each of the Halls, and is content that, certainly in terms of preparedness for the students' experience at each Hall, no student could be unaware of the nature of the Hall to which they had been admitted. Some students do indeed seek out particular Halls as institutions that would best suit their own ethical or confessional viewpoint, and place that institution as their first choice College. Others, however, having failed to gain a place at their College of first choice, are content to accept a place at a Hall in order to gain an Oxford degree. Notwithstanding this, almost all undergraduates with whom the review panel met were enthusiastic about their Hall and about their Oxford experience.
56. In sum, the review panel has examined the undergraduate admission practices of the Permanent Private Halls, and is content that these are currently consistent with admissions practice elsewhere in the University (subject to the points made below on ordinands) and will conform to the Common Framework. It is content that those admitted as undergraduates are made aware of the particular characteristics and ethos of the institution, and are students of at least the same capability as undergraduates admitted elsewhere in the collegiate University. While the confessional nature of a Hall might determine the willingness of undergraduates to apply to that Hall, the review panel has not found evidence that the issue of confession plays a part in that Hall's own decision-making process for admissions. Therefore,

### ***Recommendation 13***

*The Permanent Private Halls should continue to recruit and matriculate students for undergraduate degrees of the University of Oxford, on the same basis as the Colleges of the University under the Common Framework. Given the time constraints in which they have to operate during the December admissions exercise, the Halls should be able to call students back for interview in early January.*

### Undergraduate teaching arrangements

57. The teaching of undergraduates revolves essentially around the question of how and by whom they are taught, and in particular how much teaching can take place inside the Hall. There is much variety between institutions, and practice is much affected by the size and resources of individual Halls. There are two institutions whose students are concentrated in Theology courses: Wycliffe Hall and St Stephen's House. Wycliffe Hall states that teaching for the BA "follows the normal university pattern of lectures and tutorials, the latter involving some tutors from Wycliffe Hall and some from elsewhere", that the BTh is "conducted mostly by Wycliffe Hall tutors", and that there are course directors for each course. At St Stephen's House, the three full-time tutors, plus the Principal and Vice-Principal, constitute the core staff teaching the Theology courses, together with a set of regular tutors retained for the purpose. Three of them, with the Senior Tutor, act as course directors for the undergraduate and postgraduate courses for which St Stephen's admits. There is formal assessment of students at the end of each term.
58. Of the three Halls whose undergraduates undertake a broader range of subjects, it is clear that each has made a considerable effort to ensure a stable teaching environment for their undergraduates despite the generally small size of the institutions. Each has Fellows and Lecturers. Some of the Lecturers are on the establishment and others are Fellows or Lecturers at other Colleges. Each Hall has someone in these categories in each of the degree subjects for which they admit. Both Greyfriars and St Benet's each have a Director of Studies in these subjects. They are responsible for arranging teaching and monitoring progress for students. In all Halls with undergraduates there are the usual mechanisms for reporting on the progress of students during the course of the academic year, and some version of a tutorial committee. Blackfriars too employs very similar teaching arrangements.
59. As far as the student learning experience is concerned, however, it is clear that the balance between internal and external teaching will vary considerably between subjects. To some extent, the dangers of losing sight of students working with tutors, with whom members of the Hall are barely acquainted, can be compensated for by using the same tutors on a regular basis. Indeed, there is nothing inherently wrong with students being sent out to be taught elsewhere in the University – this is the staple practice of the Colleges and enriches the intellectual horizons of students. However, everything is in the degree to which this becomes the principal vehicle of instruction for an individual undergraduate. St Benet's has "the services of about 70 external tutors for the various subjects read by undergraduates". At Regent's Park it appears on paper that Theology, Philosophy and Theology, English, PPE and Geography are well provided for, but that the arrangements for the other subjects are handled by individuals elsewhere within the University.
60. The extent to which teaching can be provided by Fellows or other members of each Hall's community is an issue that the review group felt to be of the utmost importance, chiefly as to whether the difference from the normative Oxford experience could be considered of special detriment to undergraduates. Final Honour School results would seem to suggest not, although the Halls do not compare particularly well in the Norrington Table. It is not uncommon, at many Colleges, for students to have tutorials or other instruction elsewhere. The undergraduates to whom the review panel spoke indicated overwhelmingly that they enjoyed the experience of attending tutorials and classes at other Colleges, indicating, in some circumstances, that in this way they were exposed to interaction with some of the University's most eminent academics within each discipline.
61. However, the panel was concerned at the fragility of the administrative procedures in some Halls, notwithstanding the dedication and expertise of Directors of Studies or similar officers in arranging external tuition. It had been put to the panel that, as an example, the lack of Fellows in Law at the Halls could be considered detrimental to the development of students as lawyers. This, coupled with small cohort numbers in some subjects – often only one or two per year – was thought by the review panel to have an

adverse effect on the student experience at those Halls that teach across a range of subjects. As has been considered elsewhere in the report, the panel did note the alternative viewpoint that vertical ties between years were possible in some subjects, but were not persuaded that this was sufficient counterweight to the issue of small annual cohort size.

62. Library support for students was also a matter of concern for the panel. Oxford is extraordinarily well-provisioned with library resources, both those provided centrally, and at a departmental and College level. Almost all Colleges have sufficient core texts for their undergraduate students in each subject, and on-line provision, access and facilities are plentiful. The Permanent Private Halls, as a group, tend to have less extensive library provision, although the collections in Theology are excellent in two of the Catholic Halls, Blackfriars and Campion. St Stephen's House and Wycliffe Hall have more than adequate provision, again principally in Theology and its related areas. Regent's Park too has more than adequate provision across the range of Humanities and Social Sciences subjects that it offers at undergraduate level, and a good and wide-ranging Theology collection. Of more concern is the level of provision at St Benet's. Greyfriars is the only Hall at which provision could be viewed as clearly inadequate; this is exacerbated by the Hall's location in the Iffley Road, and the difficulty of accessing central provision. At Greyfriars, with an undergraduate body of above forty, the review panel would have expected to see considerably greater expenditure on books and journals, although the financial allocation for library expenditure had only partially been taken up. This may be because the system of purchasing – essentially buying at the suggestion of the Fellows at the Hall – had not yet been fully developed.
63. All the Halls provide the essential IT infrastructure for students and staff, through Wi-Fi or Ethernet cabling, both in public areas such as libraries, and in private areas such as study/bedrooms. In most of the libraries there was an adequate number of terminals facilitating on-line access to journals and other publications. The panel had some concern over the extent of provision of other equipment such as printers, and, indeed, over the extent of adequate technical support provided by dedicated IT staff.
64. Finally, the panel felt that, in the case of St Benet's and Greyfriars, the lack of dedicated space for academic administration, and for tutorial teaching and seminars, is significantly detrimental to the academic experience of students. It simply accentuates the fragmentation of the student body and the absence of the potential virtues of a small community, as has been discussed elsewhere in this report.
65. In terms of formal outcomes, students from the Permanent Private Halls lay towards the bottom end of the Norrington Table. For example, in 2005/06, the Halls' scores ranged between 72% (Greyfriars) and 57% (St Benet's). The following table displays aggregated classified results for the last three years for those students undertaking Final Honour Schools (including Second BAs in Theology).

%	1st	2.1	2.2	3rd
Regent's Park	12	69	17	0
Wycliffe Hall	11	73	16	0
St Stephen's House	21	58	21	0
Greyfriars	19	69	9	3
St Benet's	4	85	11	0
Blackfriars	22	67	11	0

66. The panel concludes that the present arrangements for teaching, although well managed in some cases, appear in general to be too fragile. In particular, the academic business of some Halls depends too greatly on goodwill staffing. In addition to recommendations earlier concerning entry cohort size, the panel therefore recommends,

**Recommendation 14**

*In terms of the teaching arrangements at the Halls*

- (a) *there should be a Director of Studies for each of the subjects for which each Hall recruits; it is preferable that the Director of Studies should be located within the Hall, although it is recognised that this may not always be the case;*
- (b) *unless a member of the Hall's religious order (in the case of the Catholic Halls) Directors of Studies should receive an appropriate stipend, in order to be identified within the Hall as a responsible person able to devote significant and sufficient time to academic, intellectual and pastoral development of the students, including responsibility for admissions;*
- (c) *in addition, each Hall should have at least one stipendiary lectureship in each subject offered;*
- (d) *each Hall should maintain a library containing a collection of recent publications sufficient to provide core reading in the subjects in which it delivers teaching;*
- (e) *each Hall should have adequate provision of accommodation for academic administration, and of tutorial teaching and seminar rooms, and should also maintain an adequate IT infrastructure.*

**Graduate students**

67. The numbers of postgraduate students at each of the Permanent Private Halls is set out in Table Two at Annex D. As previously noted, Regent's Park, Wycliffe Hall, and St Stephen's House take postgraduates only in Theology, although there is a body of PGCE students at St Stephen's House. Campion Hall's student population is almost exclusively postgraduate. Greyfriars has a small number of postgraduates across subject areas, and St Benet's has only two, undertaking DPhils. Blackfriars too has a small number of postgraduates, working exclusively in Theology.
68. The number of postgraduate students as a proportion of the student body varies between the Halls. Regent's Park has a ratio of undergraduates to graduate students that is roughly in keeping with the overall figures for the University, with Wycliffe Hall having postgraduates as approximately a quarter of its student body. St Stephen's House, including eleven PGCE students in the current academic year, has approximately 50% postgraduates. The proportion of postgraduates at Greyfriars and St Benet's is much smaller: lower than 10%. Blackfriars and Campion Hall are marked as exceptions by the distinctive composition of their student bodies and their particular missions.
69. As with the rest of the collegiate University, postgraduate admissions are administered through the University's Graduate Admissions Office, with faculties and departments taking decisions on the applications before student dossiers are provided to Colleges and Halls, except in the cases of senior student BAs and the MTh (see below). Few applicants, with the exception of those (largely ordination candidates) placed at Wycliffe Hall or St Stephen's House, list Permanent Private Halls as their first choice (Campion Hall is clearly a further exception, as most of its students are already ordained Jesuit priests who are training to be scholars, and come to Campion through their order).
70. Few graduate students taking subjects outside Theology are placed at Permanent Private Halls, and although, as in all subjects at graduate level the balance of postgraduate work is undertaken within

departments, those Halls that take graduate students in subjects outside Theology are unlikely to be able to contribute much more than board and lodging. This is not necessarily a negative or particular point about the Permanent Private Halls: many postgraduates – particularly international students – are unaware of the collegiate system when they first decide to apply to Oxford. In some instances, especially in those Halls that offer a distinctive confessional approach, the sense of a shared ethical approach to communal living is an attraction to students and a source of some strength.

71. Only Regent's Park has a completely separate MCR, in keeping with the numbers of graduate students that are members of that Hall, with general student common rooms to be found at the other Halls. The impression gained by the review panel is that most graduate students, apart from those working within Theology and that are members of distinctive confessional communities, have a focus for their Oxford experience at a departmental or faculty level.
72. It has been noted above that St Stephen's House has a small body of eleven PGCE students in the current year. The University's Department of Education has negotiated with the Permanent Private Halls as a group that twenty additional places for PGCE students will be offered by the Halls from October 2007. This addition will coincide with the Department's offering a PGCE qualification in Religious Education, although the additional places at the Halls will not necessarily be for students in this subject. There will undoubtedly be PGCE students who will find in the Halls a congenial environment in which to live. In the case of St Stephen's House, for example, there is on-site provision of a number of flats suitable for married couples or families.
73. PGCE students have a markedly different experience from other postgraduates, with a significant part of their training being undertaken within secondary schools in the region. They are hence less likely to require access to the type of facilities available in Colleges, and will be at least as much departmentally focused as other postgraduates during their time spent in Oxford. The review panel welcomes the role of the Halls in catering for the needs of such students, and believes that they are able to offer them a supportive community. At the same time, the panel understands that the Department of Education, although pleased to have the additional places offered by the Halls, would prefer also to have college places to be available for its students to have greater interaction with JCR and MCR students, as well as greater engagement with senior members of such communities, who will have with them a common interest in education. It is possible too that the Permanent Private Halls may not always be able to offer sufficient mentoring opportunities for their PGCE students. Hence the panel is concerned that PGCE students, whether placed in Colleges or Halls, should not be viewed simply as an opportunity for additional income.
74. There is an issue too for graduate students in general. It seems to the review panel that, as is the case for undergraduates, if graduate students are to get maximum benefit from their experience at Oxford, there needs to be some kind of critical mass – either by subject area or in terms of overall numbers. Those Halls offering graduate places for students working in Theology would qualify under this criterion, as would those with smaller numbers providing a confessional environment. The panel is clear that, just as is expected in other parts of the collegiate University, there should be a quantifiable benefit to graduate students from the Halls to which they belong in return for the graduate fee.

#### **Recommendation 15**

*The Permanent Private Halls should give consideration to the distribution of graduate students across discipline, ensuring that there is critical mass, either by subject area or in terms of overall numbers. Best practice within the collegiate University requires that there should be a senior member of the Hall in the same discipline. Hence the Halls should conform to this practice.*

**Recommendation 16**

*PGCE students in a range of disciplines should have the opportunity to be placed in the Permanent Private Halls. Placement in the Permanent Private Halls should not be restricted to PGCE students in Religious Education, nor should PGCE students in Religious Education be restricted only to Permanent Private Halls.*

**The Church of England Theological Colleges**

75. The Protestant theological colleges present specific characteristics not shared with the other Halls and they are therefore discussed separately here.
76. Two of the seven Permanent Private Halls, Wycliffe Hall and St Stephen's House, have as their primary work and focus the formation of mature men and women for ordained ministry in the Church of England and other churches of the Anglican Communion. For most of these ordinands, this task of formation is done in conjunction with pursuing an Oxford qualification (Second BA in Theology, MSt, MPhil, DPhil, DipTheol, CTh, BTh, MTh). Regent's Park College is also engaged in preparing mature candidates for the Baptist ministry, although it is a minority activity within the College, which is largely concerned with the education of young undergraduates in a range of humanities and social science subjects.<sup>5</sup>
77. Ordination candidates raise particular structural and timetabling issues as they relate to two institutions, the Church (which is also the primary funder) and the University. To illustrate the scale of the process, the Church of England runs over fifty three-day residential "Bishops' Advisory Panels" (selection conferences) a year with as many as sixteen candidates at each. These Panels recommend to sponsoring bishops candidates for training for the priesthood, who are then funded jointly by central and diocesan funds. Many candidates do not attend a Panel until the spring or even early summer before they begin residential training the following autumn because of the initial discernment process conducted at diocesan level. The mismatch in the Church's timetable for vocational discernment and the University's timetable for admissions raises a number of issues.
78. It is the view of the review panel that this relationship between "church and academy" is a constructive one, has a long historic context for the University and has parallels with other professions that involve a "fitness to practice". However, the review panel has concluded that certain reforms need to be made to deal specifically with anomalies caused by structural issues between the institutions.
79. There is good practice in that Church sponsored candidates undertaking the MSt, MPhil, and DPhil as part of their training go through the normal University and faculty process for admission, with the Permanent Private Hall acting as their college society as graduate students of the University. In contrast, MTh candidates, although admitted through a gathered field system via the central Graduate Admissions Office and by a board of admissions tutors (from the Permanent Private Halls with Theology Faculty representation), are not processed by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Theology Faculty. This is an anomaly that gives the panel concern.

**Recommendation 17**

*The Permanent Private Halls that admit candidates for the MTh should work with the Graduate Studies Committee of the Theology Faculty to ensure that MTh candidates undergo a similar admissions procedure as candidates for the MSt, the MPhil, and the DPhil.*

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<sup>5</sup> Candidates for ordination undertaking Oxford qualifications are also present at Harris Manchester (Unitarian), Mansfield College (United Reformed Church), and Ripon College, Cuddesdon (Anglican), but none of these is a Permanent Private Hall. In addition, there are occasionally members of Roman Catholic religious orders and secular priests pursuing an Oxford qualification through one of the Roman Catholic Halls, but the majority of ordination candidates are matriculated through the two Church of England Halls.



80. Less good practice appears to be the case with the Second BA in Theology, and the BTh. Despite University policy which states that Second BAs should be part of the December round of admissions, this is clearly not happening in the Permanent Private Halls (and possibly, on occasion, not in the collegiate University as well). The BTh appears to have no gathered fields at all, no meeting of admissions tutors for the participating institutions to discuss the candidates overall, and no supervisory role provided by a representative of the Theology Faculty Board. Admission is entirely an “in-house” decision by the matriculating institutions without any reference to others. The review panel recognises the difficulties caused by the timetabling of the Church’s selection procedures but does not think this state of affairs is desirable or in keeping with the Common Framework.

**Recommendation 18**

*For the BTh*

- (a) *all admissions should use the system of gathered fields (recognising, in view of the selection procedures of the participating denominations that one of these should take place in the summer vacation);*
- (b) *candidates should be admitted through a meeting of admissions tutors from participating institutions; and*
- (c) *Theology Faculty representatives should be present at those meetings.*

**Recommendation 19**

*An admissions date for Second BAs in Theology should be instituted in Trinity Term, with a meeting of admissions tutors from participating institutions with Faculty of Theology representation to ensure that candidates are being admitted who meet matriculation requirements and are being compared within a gathered field.*

81. The review panel is aware also of unease, over a number of years, about the independent nature of the BTh. There are different versions of the BTh, taught within three of the Halls, and also at Ripon College, Cuddesdon. Teaching is delivered through in-house lectures and seminars, by members of staff employed by the Halls concerned. It appears to the panel that because the University matriculates students for the BTh, there should be a greater role for the Theology Faculty in terms of provision of lectures, tutorials, and examinations, and also greater differentiation between the CTh and BTh. Strengthening of the academic standard of the BTh could be accomplished by, for example, students matriculated for the BTh taking a number of papers from the BA syllabus.
82. Although this measure could be seen to increase the cost of provision for the BTh (with an impact on the level of the fee), some of this might be offset by reciprocal tutorial arrangements between the Halls and College tutors. Other administrative issues, such as lecture and examination timetabling, could be resolved through discussion between the Halls and the Faculty of Theology.

**Recommendation 20**

*The Faculty of Theology should assert a more direct responsibility for the quality and delivery of the BTh as a degree of the University, and the University and Halls should move to ensure greater transparency in the character of other diplomas and certificates that bear the validation of the University.*

**Recommendation 21**

*The Faculty of Theology and those Halls teaching for the BTh should establish a working party to consider the issue of strengthening the academic standard of the BTh, through common teaching of a number of papers which would be selected from the BA syllabus. There should be at least three common papers, one to be taken*

in Part I, and two to be taken in Part II of the course. The working party should also give consideration of the implications for teaching for the BTh at Ripon College.

**Recommendation 22**

*The Faculty of Theology should seek to prevent too great a transfer of responsibility for the teaching of the BA in Theology into the Halls, as this risks the diminishment of the student experience. Three of the papers should be taught by Faculty members outside the Halls, as is generally the common experience of students in Colleges.*

83. Both of the theological colleges among the Halls admit a small number of school-leaver aged undergraduates and both institutions have expressed an intention to expand in this area. The review panel has concluded that, just as the admission of recent school leavers would be inappropriate in one of the University's graduate colleges, so the admission of such young students into an overwhelmingly mature community of students does not provide the best learning environment for them or remotely replicate what is understood in the University at large as the collegiate experience of education. Wycliffe Hall and St Stephen's House are predominantly institutions for the theological education of mature students, largely engaged in preparation for professional ministry.

**Recommendation 23**

*The right of those Permanent Private Halls which are principally communities of mature students to matriculate school-leaver aged students should be withdrawn.*

**Recommendation 24**

*Given that this reduction in undergraduate numbers would have a critical effect on the size and shape of the Faculty of Theology and its access initiatives, the Faculty should appoint a co-ordinator for undergraduate studies whose brief would include the addressing of these issues within the context of the academic strategy of the collegiate University.*

**The role of the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education**

84. Wycliffe Hall collaborates with the University's Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE) to offer a part-time undergraduate level Diploma in Biblical and Theological Studies (DBTS), taken over the course of two years. Regent's Park too offers the DBTS, and also an Advanced Diploma in Biblical and Theological Studies (A/DBTS). The diplomas have two main strands, Ministry and Apologetics. The panel understands the courses to be valued by the highly motivated students undertaking them, in recognising the wider context of their faith. Teaching is undertaken at the two Halls, while the OUDCE, with extensive experience of part-time teaching, provides external examination and quality control. Although OUDCE has its own programme of theological studies, the Department has no involvement in the teaching of the diplomas, despite the fact that the Director of Studies at the Department works closely with both Halls. The panel believes that OUDCE should be more closely involved in the delivery and monitoring of these courses.

**Recommendation 25**

*Discussion with the OUDCE reveals discrepancies in the arrangements made for the delivery, administration, and costing of the DBTS and A/DBTS between the two Halls, and the panel believes that OUDCE should review these arrangements. Further, it should consider a greater involvement in the delivery of the teaching for the courses.*

85. The OUDCE was involved in the recent proposal by Regent's Park, St Stephen's House and Wycliffe Hall to offer a BMin, a matter that was drawn to the attention of the panel at the beginning of the review. There is some pressure for the Protestant Halls associated with the University to be in a position to offer such an



undergraduate degree because other institutions in the UK do so already. Although much of the teaching for the BMin would have been undertaken by the three Oxford Halls, there were proposals to have parts of the course delivered at the St Paul's Theological Centre at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton. The panel would have been concerned had such a degree – with teaching undertaken outside Oxford - been offered by the Halls as a matriculated degree of the University.

**Recommendation 26**

*Full consultation should be undertaken with the University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee, at an early stage, over any proposal to offer a new qualification within the Permanent Private Halls.*

**Student support**

86. The review panel was concerned particularly with the mechanisms by which students are supported in the Hall and their experience of what is termed elsewhere “college life”. Although the support structure within the Halls becomes progressively less elaborate the smaller the institution, it does not necessarily follow that the small institutions are less effective in caring for their students, since there are fewer students and informal personal contact is likely to be greater. Considerable emphasis has been placed, during the institutional visits and within the self-evaluation documents, on the supportive dynamics of smaller communities, where senior and junior members might mix freely over meals, where they are generally on good terms, and where it is possible to spot difficulties and emerging problems at an early stage.
87. The most developed system is found at Regent's Park. Not only does each student have a personal tutor and is organised into pastoral support groups (both exist also at Wycliffe and personal tutors exist at St Stephen's), but there is a Welfare Committee and a formal relationship with the University Counselling Service. There is an energetic and well-provided JCR, and a separate MCR, and regular meetings of their Presidents with the Principal to discuss college matters. Junior members are formally represented in the bodies that govern and manage Regent's Park. Finally, the students are issued termly with assessment forms concerning their teaching, as is the case at Wycliffe Hall.
88. At the smaller institutions, the provision seems much more informal, reflecting their size and the closer personal contact between junior and senior members. At Greyfriars, pastoral support is offered essentially by officers (including a Women's Officer and an Overseas Students' Adviser). St Stephen's and St Benet's both have handbooks for students.
89. There is, in general, due to the nature of the economy of the Halls, little in the way of additional bursaries or hardship funding available to students. Such financial support as is available does not compare well to that found in most of the other Colleges of the University.
90. The panel does, however, note that the efficacy of small institutions in respect of student support is as dependent upon the physical reality of a community as it has stated the academic advantages of a small institution to be.

**Student life**

91. Student experience in Oxford depends greatly on the extent to which students live as part of a resident community for at least part of their undergraduate years. The students to whom the review panel talked (and these were sub-sections of the student body in each Hall) clearly identified well with the small communities to which they belonged.

92. The provision of accommodation varies between each Hall. Regent's Park, for example, is able to provide rooms or flats for all first-year undergraduates and all finalists, while Blackfriars houses none of its undergraduates (all of whom are mature students). St Stephen's House has a large number of study-bedrooms, as well as some very good married student and family accommodation. St Benet's can offer rooms for its first-year students, as can Greyfriars. Wycliffe Hall too has significant amounts of accommodation. The rooms vary in quality, as they do throughout the collegiate University. The quality of common rooms and common areas varies also.
93. In Halls such as Greyfriars and Blackfriars, it was clear to the review panel that visiting students, albeit in Oxford for only a year, add a considerable level of vibrancy to the student community. In the case of Blackfriars, which has common table only for the members of its religious community, this effect extends beyond that institution, as its visiting students and undergraduates take meals at St Benet's, while its graduate students are able to dine at St Cross.
94. Student opinion on the quality of their experience at their Hall was favourable in the main, although it is clear that some choose to embrace a wider Oxford experience, undertaking social and sporting activities elsewhere within the collegiate University. There are informal and sporting links with Colleges (for example, Wycliffe Hall with Queen's) that contribute to this broader experience. A number of students reported that they felt completely comfortable in joining University clubs, rather than taking part exclusively in College activities, as might students at some of the larger Colleges.
95. None reported that the particular confessional nature of their Hall impacted on their experience unless specifically by choice. For example, in the Catholic Halls taking significant numbers of undergraduate students, only around 50% are Catholic. Wycliffe Hall and St Stephen's House, by virtue of their emphasis on vocational training, clearly have a confessional approach to student life.
96. Nonetheless, the panel does believe that, to an extent that it cannot measure, the students' daily experience of living in Halls is marked by a set of assumptions with which they may not be comfortable as individuals. The panel has received reports of cases where the disciplinary action that ensued has been consistent with that belief.

#### **Recommendation 27**

*Since the Permanent Private Halls are now part of the Conference of Colleges, their students should benefit from the rights of appeal that are accorded to students elsewhere in the collegiate University.*

#### **Recommendation 28**

*The Halls should ensure that they have explicit formal statements of the rules governing the conduct of the junior members of their communities.*

97. In sum, provision of facilities for students varies widely from Hall to Hall. Although the students seen by the panel were to a considerable extent content with their experience at Oxford, the panel has concerns that the provision is uneven between Halls, and is certainly uneven between most Halls and most Colleges. This is primarily a matter of resource. This review makes recommendations elsewhere that relate to the quality of the student experience.

### **Visiting Students**

98. It will be clear from the student number tables at Annexe D that visiting students play a significant role in the fabric and economies of a number of the Halls. In the current academic year, around eighty-six of a total of approximately 500 visiting students to the University are to be found in the Halls. Of this number, around sixty FTE visiting students (two cohorts of sixty students for one semester each) are recruited by

Wycliffe Hall alone. The numbers are less significant at Regent's Park and Greyfriars, but at Blackfriars the number of visiting students is twelve – three times as many as the other BA candidates studying there. At both Greyfriars and Blackfriars, the review panel saw that much of the dynamism of the JCR at those Halls is provided by such students. At Blackfriars and Wycliffe Hall,<sup>6</sup> a large proportion of visiting students are drawn from institutions that share the confessional stance of the Halls to which they send their students.

99. Just as with a number of colleges of the University, visiting students play an important part both in the internal economies and the social and academic contexts of at least two of the Halls. For example, in the last financial year for which accounts are available, at Wycliffe Hall, courses, conferences and visiting students provided 20% of the total income (against 60% of total income provided by other fees). At Blackfriars, visiting students contributed almost 90% of the income detailed under Hall fees. These are manifestly significant sums to the Halls concerned.
100. In Greyfriars, Blackfriars and Regent's Park, the visiting students are treated in a similar way to those within the rest of the collegiate University, sharing in tutorials and other teaching with matriculated undergraduates. In comparison, at Wycliffe Hall, although the visiting students are free to join in the social activities and share the amenities provided to other members of the Hall, they live elsewhere, and are taught through a lecture programme, across a range of subjects in the Humanities, by an organisation named SCIO – Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford.
101. There is both a practical issue for the University in having its Colleges and Permanent Private Halls take such a large number of visiting students, and an issue of reputation. Across the whole University, 500 visiting students represent a number of places equivalent to a sizeable additional cohort of matriculated undergraduates. This has an impact on any deliberation on “size and shape” of the University. The arrangements for teaching differ between Colleges and Halls, and it is not immediately clear that all visiting students benefit from the same standards of teaching as do regular undergraduate students. Such arrangements pose a reputational risk for the University, not least because the level of fees payable to the University alone (College and Hall fees are payable in addition) by visiting students is considerably higher than those for Home/EU undergraduates.
102. The review panel notes the significance of visiting students within the economies of three of the Permanent Private Halls. It believes that visiting students in general present a potential risk to the reputation of the University because external opinion finds it difficult to distinguish between courses specific to the University, and courses offered by Colleges and Halls. Therefore,

**Recommendation 29**

*In the matter of visiting students*

- (a) *the Permanent Private Halls should give attention to the needs of their visiting students, and ensure that visiting student programmes do not diminish the academic effort and other support for students matriculated for University qualifications; and*
- (b) *the University should review the extent of visiting student programmes across the collegiate University.*

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<sup>6</sup> Wycliffe Hall's visiting students are drawn from the HE institutions in North America that form the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The CCCU's website (<http://www.cccu.org>) states that its mission is “to advance the cause of Christ-centred higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth.” In a note on the context of US higher education, the website explains that “...there are about 4,000 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States alone. Approximately 1,600 of those are private, nonprofit campuses and about 900 of these colleges and universities are self-defined as ‘religiously affiliated’. However, only 102 intentionally Christ-centred institutions in the US have qualified for membership in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.”

### Academic staff

103. The review panel was concerned to examine the appointment procedures of Fellows of these Halls who have teaching responsibilities and whether there are means by which teaching performance can be monitored. Regent's Park has the clearest and most established procedure which closely resembles that of Colleges for positions not shared with the University – there is a process of advertisement and an appointment committee with an external member from the relevant Faculty; lecturers are appointed by the Principal but with the consent of the Fellowship. Much the same system exists at St Stephen's House, although for non-fellowship teaching posts the Hall will appoint graduate clergy whose pastoral experience is more extensive than their academic qualifications.
104. At Greyfriars, the appointment of Fellows is done on a relatively informal basis; most such appointments were made as the gift of the previous Warden. The positions do not attract a stipend beyond a modest termly retainer, and teaching is paid for on an hourly basis. A number of the Fellows at Greyfriars teach also at St Benet's, and there is formal collaboration in Classics under the same Director of Studies. The Fellowship at St Benet's too is non-stipendiary, with rights of common table only, and other teaching is delivered by a considerable number of academics from across the collegiate University. Fellows are elected by the St Benet's Hall Committee. According to its self-evaluation document, at Wycliffe Hall, academic appointments conform to a standard and model common to the rest of the University, and tutorial staff are appointed "on the basis of their ability and ... on their potential contribution to the work of the Hall...". At Blackfriars, the Moderators are assigned by the Order and they appoint the Lectors. The bulk of the permanent teaching staff are Dominicans, except for the Director of Studies in PPE (a Fellow of a College) and the Tutor in English.
105. The review panel considers that Directors of Studies or other officers attend carefully to the provision of tuition, both in Theology, and, where applicable, in other subjects in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Teaching staff at the Halls appear to be attracted by the confessional stance of each institution, although they are drawn from a number of denominations. Wycliffe Hall, for example, says of itself that its aim is "to be a centre of theological excellence, especially though not exclusively for those within the Anglican evangelical tradition". Larger Halls have a core of full-time teaching staff, while others often depend on a network of part-time or other academic staff, many of whom will hold positions at colleges or are otherwise members of the Theology or other faculties. The panel found it difficult to form a view on the quality of the academic staff that teach on a part-time basis for the Halls, even though in their self-evaluation documents, Halls did provide details of the research activity of their core academic staff.
106. Both Regent's Park and Wycliffe Hall have some mechanism of formal review and evaluation for their teaching staff (including student assessment). It is less clear that the other Halls undertake such evaluation on a regular basis. Of the core staff in Theology at the Halls, most appear to be research active. However, a number of the areas of research, and many of the resulting publications, have a confessional strand and the output is not published by mainstream academic publishers. At the time of writing, of the thirty-four members of the Theology Faculty within the Permanent Private Halls, only five had been entered for the 2008 RAE. Clearly the balance of activity in Theology is on the teaching side, and, as a number of colleges withdraw from offering Theology, more of the teaching load for the BA falls on members of the Halls.
107. Given the levels of research output by the Hall members of some faculties, the panel is not clear on the criteria for admission to those faculties, nor, indeed, on membership of faculties elsewhere in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This prompts the question of what arrangements are appropriate for membership of faculties by teaching staff who are not tenured members of the departments or colleges. It should be noted that the joint submission received from the Permanent Private Halls (Annexe B) suggests that any concerns over the quality of teaching that might exist could be met by inclusion within the regular

review process of the relevant faculty. That process, they suggest, should be extended to all College-only posts within the University and not just within the Halls.

108. The panel values highly and wishes to record the service of academic members of the Permanent Private Halls, and the importance of the roles that they play in wider University activities. This is especially the case in the teaching and examining of Theology. In this context, the panel also believes that greater regularity and transparency in the relationship would be advantageous to both the Halls and the University. Therefore,

**Recommendation 30**

*Those called upon to teach or supervise on behalf of a faculty or department should be members of the relevant faculty or department. This can be achieved either*

- (a) *by having been appointed to the staff of a Hall by a panel that contained a representative appointed by the faculty or departmental board, or*
- (b) *whose membership has been considered by a faculty/departmental committee.*

*Membership of a faculty or department should in all cases be accorded after an assessment by a departmental committee, unless the person was originally appointed by a faculty or department.*

**Recommendation 31**

*The University should apply this requirement generally, and membership of faculties and departments should be subject to more formal and rigorous scrutiny.*

109. The joint submission from the Permanent Private Halls indicates the desire that there should be a number of titular joint posts established by the University at some or all of the Permanent Private Halls. The submission notes that in the past there has been a small number of “special non-CUF lecturerships”, but that these have not been available for some ten years. The panel is sympathetic to such a desire, but would wish to draw attention to a number of difficulties that would attend the establishment or re-establishment of such posts. Primarily the difficulties rest on the issue of resource, as the University contribution would have to be found from the Humanities Division. Also important is the disparity in salary levels between those in the collegiate University in general, and those within the Halls. There is also the issue of equal opportunities, in that some candidates may feel constrained by the confessional stance of the Halls at which such appointments were to be held.
110. Hence the panel cannot recommend that University Lecturerships should be attached to any one Permanent Private Hall. However, it does believe that a possible alternative would be to allow those Halls that could demonstrate that they had complied with the recommendations of this review to bid for association with departmental lecturerships. The Halls should demonstrate that they are in a position to make the necessary stipendiary arrangements adequate for the maintenance of any such lecturership.

**Recommendation 32**

*The University should not consider the possibility of establishing joint appointments with any Permanent Private Hall unless the Hall in question should be able to demonstrate that it has complied with the recommendations of this review. Where this has occurred, the University should explore the possibility of allowing these Halls to bid for association with departmental lecturerships.*

### Finances of the Halls

111. The self-evaluation documents prepared by the Halls were submitted in Michaelmas Term 2006. At that time, a number of the Halls were able to provide 2005/06 financial statements (some were in draft format) while others submitted financial statements for 2004/05. The financial statements that were available were analysed by officers in the University's Finance Department. Four of the Halls showed deficits at an operating level, although two of the Halls were able to offset such deficits by exceptional property or investment returns; the other two remained in deficit at a retained profit level. Where there were deficits on operating surpluses, these were in the region of 5%–10% of turnover (with one outlier at around 18% due to an increase in repairs and maintenance costs).
112. However, the financial statements that were made available to the panel do point to the general financial fragility of such small institutions as the Permanent Private Halls, where variations in the number of students, or accumulated backlogs in repairs or maintenance can have significant impact, or where visiting students play an important role in keeping the enterprise afloat. Most of the Halls have little or no endowment income, and do not have an administrative structure that lends itself readily to development work (see Recommendation 7(e)).
113. A number of the Halls expressed the desire to expand student (generally undergraduate, but also graduate and PGCE) numbers as a means of stabilising their financial position. In the context of the subsidy (of around £10k per annum across all subjects) provided by the collegiate University for each Home/EU undergraduate, this seemed to the panel to be a remarkable aspiration. However, in many cases, teaching is provided by non-stipendiary staff on hourly rates, and the tuition or college fee attached to matriculated members would go some way to stabilising what can be seen at best as a fragile economy. Even in those Halls where there are stipendiary lecturerships and a larger number of full-time academic and administrative staff, such as St Stephen's House and Wycliffe Hall, salary scales follow approximately those for Church of England incumbents (together with some provision for housing). Though better paid, the Fellows of Regent's Park are paid considerably less than College Fellows. Elsewhere, there are few stipendiary fellows, or teaching (as at Blackfriars) is carried out to a considerable extent by members of the religious order.
114. It seemed to the review panel that without some additional financial resource being found on a stable long-term basis, a number of the Halls, particularly those where remedial action is required in terms of academic resources or infrastructure, will struggle to contribute to the academic strategies of the collegiate University.

#### **Recommendation 33**

*As part of the work of the supervisory committee (see Recommendation 8) the University should monitor the finances of the Halls, and where appropriate provide administrative support and advice.*

#### **Recommendation 34**

*Where the academic priorities of the Halls match the academic and development priorities of the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions, the University Development Office should provide appropriate resource and advice to enable the Halls to address their fundraising aspirations.*

## Conclusion

115. The Permanent Private Halls are, as this report has noted, a quite widely diverse group of institutions. Moreover, their relationship with the University and their internal functioning have not been systematically scrutinised for a very long time. As a result, they have grown mysterious to the general population of the collegiate University in many respects. One purpose of this report is to make them more understandable.
116. Inevitably, the eye of the reviewer is drawn to matters that require amendment. However, it is important that this report acknowledge firmly three things. First, the Halls do have some considerable strengths as small bodies wherever they have a clear sense of purpose and a good collegial spirit. Second, there have been recent moves to identify and repair areas of organisational weakness in some of the Halls perhaps most in need of this. Third, the Halls do provide the collegiate University with additional teaching and services at both formal and informal levels, most notably in Theology. The panel hopes that the provision of brief reports on the Halls individually (Annexe E) will help to draw attention to those features.
117. The concerns that the panel has identified can be traced for the most part to the small size of each Hall. This renders them more dependent upon the quality and wisdom of individuals in the conduct of their affairs. It makes them more vulnerable to significant shifts in the contexts outside the University to which they respond. It makes them financially more rapidly at risk from changes in their circumstances. An awareness of these vulnerabilities should inform the University's future thinking about the licensed Permanent Private Halls.
118. The panel has no doubt that a number of its recommendations will require substantial and challenging changes in some, if not all the Halls. It believes them to be necessary, but expects that a period of transition will be required for the implementation of some recommendations.
119. The panel wishes to record its appreciation of the real spirit of cooperation and the courtesy with which its enquiries and visits have been received at all levels in the Permanent Private Halls.
120. Finally, the panel desires to express its gratitude to Mr Alasdair MacDonald for all his practical support of its work in both organisation and drafting.

Colin Lucas  
Susan Gillingham  
Christopher Haigh  
Judith Maltby

Oxford  
July 2007



## Annexe A

### List of Recommendations

#### Governance of the Halls

1. The University should continue to license the Permanent Private Halls, but should attach conditions of licence that should be met by the existing Halls, and in the case of applications for new Halls.
2. The University should immediately review the terms of the existing licence of each Permanent Private Hall, and, where appropriate, attach new conditions.
3. The University should amend the Council Regulations for the Establishment and Maintenance of Permanent Private Halls in order to take account of the other recommendations of this review.
4. The University should require that the by-laws of each Permanent Private Hall are consistent with the statutes and regulations of the University, particularly in respect of the employment of staff, equal opportunities, harassment, and the protection of freedom of opinion and speech.
5. The governance arrangements of the Permanent Private Halls should contain adequate representation of the stipendiary staff in the decision-making processes of their Hall.
6. All the Halls should review their governance structures to ensure they have clear mechanisms and appropriate structures for the resolution of complaints or disciplinary issues, and that these conform to those established elsewhere in the collegiate University. Where these structures are not in place, the Halls should move quickly to establish them.
7. The University should have cause to re-examine an existing licence:
  - (a) if in the case of the four Catholic Halls there is any modification within their statutes that diminishes the commitment or other support of their Order;
  - (b) if in the case of the Protestant Halls, there is cessation of recognition by the Church as an institution for ministerial formation;
  - (c) if any Hall shall be shown to be departing from the values of a liberal education conducted in the spirit of free and critical enquiry and debate to which the University holds;
  - (d) if any Hall, or unit within or associated with a Hall, shall teach for a certificate, diploma or degree, other than those recognised or delivered by the University of Oxford (with the exception of any accreditation awarded to visiting students from overseas);
  - (e) if the financial circumstances of any Hall shall give cause for belief that it cannot sustain the teaching and support of students at an acceptable level either at the time or within a foreseeable future.
8. There should be a supervisory committee appointed by the Vice-Chancellor which shall make an annual report to Council through the Educational Policy and Standards Committee (or its successor). Such a report should cover academic matters (including admissions), and administrative and financial matters, and make recommendations for regulatory action if appropriate. The Senior and Junior Proctors should both sit on this committee.

#### Administrative structure of the Halls

9. The Permanent Private Halls should collectively maintain a single administrative office to ensure that student administration, insofar as it affects the students' relationship with the University and its administration, is managed with more efficiency. The remit of the office should include managing issues that arise over the Long Vacation.

*Continued*



### Student numbers

10. The Permanent Private Halls should not admit to undergraduate study a subject cohort whose annual size is unsatisfactory or incapable of achieving critical mass. Entering cohorts should not be less than three in a FHS (including joint degrees where one half is not necessarily in a subject for which the Hall admits undergraduates to read as a single FHS).
11. A Hall may admit a smaller entry in a subject where there are conditions to ensure proper integration of different year groups by means of
  - (a) the provision of an adequate infrastructure for student interaction within the premises of the Hall; and
  - (b) an adequate provision of living accommodation in or close to the premises of the Hall, available to a substantial proportion of students beyond their first year, so that a collective identity across year-groups can be stimulated readily.
12. In terms of the general population of undergraduate students, provided that the two conditions set out above are maintained, each Permanent Private Hall may apply for permission from the Vice-Chancellor to exceed or alter the number of Home/EU students that it may admit to BA, BTh, BFA, or for a second Honour School, as set out in Council Regulation 12 of 2002. Council and the Educational Policy and Standards Committee should examine any such application having regard to the general structure and distribution of the student body across the collegiate University and the academic strategies of the University.

### Undergraduate admissions

13. The Permanent Private Halls should continue to recruit and matriculate students for undergraduate degrees of the University of Oxford, on the same basis as the Colleges of the University under the Common Framework. Given the time constraints in which they have to operate during the December admissions exercise, the Halls should be able to call students back for interview in early January.

### Undergraduate teaching arrangements

14. In terms of the teaching arrangements at the Halls
  - (a) there should be a Director of Studies for each of the subjects for which each Hall recruits; it is preferable that the Director of Studies should be located within the Hall, although it is recognised that this may not always be the case;
  - (b) unless a member of the Hall's religious order (in the case of the Catholic Halls) Directors of Studies should receive an appropriate stipend, in order to be identified within the Hall as a responsible person able to devote significant and sufficient time to academic, intellectual and pastoral development of the students, including responsibility for admissions;
  - (c) in addition, each Hall should have at least one stipendiary lecturership in each subject offered;
  - (d) each Hall should maintain a library containing a collection of recent publications sufficient to provide core reading in the subjects in which it delivers teaching;
  - (e) each Hall should have adequate provision of accommodation for academic administration, and of tutorial teaching and seminar rooms, and should also maintain an adequate IT infrastructure.

### Graduate students

15. The Permanent Private Halls should give consideration to the distribution of graduate students across discipline, ensuring that there is critical mass, either by subject area or in terms of overall numbers. Best practice within the collegiate University requires that there should be a senior member of the Hall in the same discipline. Hence the Halls should conform to this practice.
16. PGCE students in a range of disciplines should have the opportunity to be placed in the Permanent Private Halls. Placement in the Permanent Private Halls should not be restricted to PGCE students in Religious Education, nor should PGCE students in Religious Education be restricted only to Permanent Private Halls.

### The Church of England Theological Colleges

17. The Permanent Private Halls that admit candidates for the MTh should work with the Graduate Studies Committee of the Theology Faculty to ensure that MTh candidates undergo a similar admissions procedure as candidates for the MSt, the MPhil, and the DPhil.
18. For the BTh
  - (a) all admissions should use the system of gathered fields (recognising in view of the selection procedures of the participating denominations that one of these should take place in the summer vacation);
  - (b) candidates should be admitted through a meeting of admissions tutors from participating institutions; and
  - (c) Theology Faculty representatives should be present at those meetings.
19. An admissions date for Second BAs in Theology should be instituted in Trinity Term, with a meeting of admissions tutors from participating institutions with Faculty of Theology representation to ensure that candidates are being admitted who meet matriculation requirements and are being compared within a gathered field.
20. The Faculty of Theology should assert a more direct responsibility for the quality and delivery of the BTh as a degree of the University, and the University and Halls should move to ensure greater transparency in the character of other diplomas and certificates that bear the validation of the University.
21. The Faculty of Theology and those Halls teaching for the BTh should establish a working party to consider the issue of strengthening the academic standard of the BTh, through common teaching of a number of papers which would be selected from the BA syllabus. There should be at least three common papers, one to be taken in Part I, and two to be taken in Part II of the course. The working party should also give consideration of the implications for teaching for the BTh at Ripon College.
22. The Faculty of Theology should seek to prevent too great a transfer of responsibility for the teaching of the BA in Theology into the Halls, as this risks the diminishment of the student experience. Three of the papers should be taught by Faculty members outside the Halls, as is generally the common experience of students in Colleges.
23. The right of those Permanent Private Halls which are principally communities of mature students to matriculate school-leaver aged students should be withdrawn.

*Continued*

24. Given that this reduction in undergraduate numbers would have a critical effect on the size and shape of the Faculty of Theology and its access initiatives, the Faculty should appoint a co-ordinator for undergraduate studies whose brief would include the addressing of these issues within the context of the academic strategy of the collegiate University.

### **The role of the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education**

25. Discussion with the OUDCE reveals discrepancies in the arrangements made for the delivery, administration, and costing of the DBTS and A/DBTS between the two Halls, and the panel believes that OUDCE should review these arrangements. Further, it should consider a greater involvement in the delivery of the teaching for the courses.
26. Full consultation should be undertaken with the University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee, at an early stage, over any proposal to offer a new qualification within the Permanent Private Halls.

### **Student life**

27. Since the Permanent Private Halls are now part of the Conference of Colleges, their students should benefit from the rights of appeal that are accorded to students elsewhere in the collegiate University.
28. The Halls should ensure that they have explicit formal statements of the rules governing the conduct of the junior members of their communities.

### **Visiting Students**

29. In the matter of visiting students
- (a) the Permanent Private Halls should give attention to the needs of their visiting students, and ensure that visiting student programmes do not diminish the academic effort and other support for students matriculated for University qualifications; and
  - (b) the University should review the extent of visiting student programmes across the collegiate University.

### **Academic staff**

30. Those called upon to teach or supervise on behalf of a faculty or department should be members of the relevant faculty or department. This can be achieved either
- (a) by having been appointed to the staff of a Hall by a panel that contained a representative appointed by the faculty or departmental board, or
  - (b) whose membership has been considered by a faculty/departmental committee.
- Membership of a faculty or department should in all cases be accorded after an assessment by a departmental committee, unless the person was originally appointed by a faculty or department.
31. The University should apply this requirement generally, and membership of faculties and departments should be subject to more formal and rigorous scrutiny.
32. The University should not consider the possibility of establishing joint appointments with any Permanent Private Hall unless the Hall in question should be able to demonstrate that it has complied with the

recommendations of this review. Where this has occurred, the University should explore the possibility of allowing these Halls to bid for association with departmental lectureships.

**Finances of the Halls**

33. As part of the work of the supervisory committee (see Recommendation 8) the University should monitor the finances of the Halls, and where appropriate provide administrative support and advice.
34. Where the academic priorities of the Halls match the academic and development priorities of the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions, the University Development Office should provide appropriate resource and advice to enable the Halls to address their fundraising aspirations.

## **Annexe B**

### **Review of Permanent Private Halls: University of Oxford**

#### **A joint submission**

As Heads of House at the Permanent Private Halls, we welcome this review of our life and activities by the Council of the University. We are all eager to explore the ways that we can better play our part within the Corporate Plan of the University, and we hope that this review will give the opportunities for us to reflect together on the aims that we have for our students and staff.

We have each offered submissions which describe our particular identity, and what we feel are the strengths of our particular contribution to the life of the University. We would like in this short statement to go beyond the statistics and self-analysis which were requested of us, to offer some common proposals about our cooperation with the wider University. We hope that the review team, as well as examining our provision for students and for research, might be prepared to talk about the following issues with us.

1. We believe that the concern of the University for the quality of teaching offered can be best met by including our staff within the regular review processes of the relevant Faculties, acting for this purpose as if our staff were University postholders. We suggest that staff, however they have originally been appointed, should meet the demands of these procedures if they are to teach and supervise at Faculty level, and that there should be some kind of accreditation to signify approval of them. Of course, this process would have to apply to all College-only posts across the University, not only to posts in PPHs.
2. We suggest that a number of titular joint-posts with the University should be gradually established at some or all of the PPHs, with equal participation of the University and the PPH in their appointment. We would expect that the creation of such posts would be followed by funding in due course, as it became available. We anticipate that room will be found within the process of appointment for proper sensitivity to the particular nature and identity of the PPH in question. We further believe that a mixed situation should obtain, in which some staff are appointed in this way, while others who have been appointed in a different way should nevertheless still satisfy the review procedures of the University.
3. We hope that the Humanities Division (and possibly also the Social Sciences Division) might make it a priority of funding to establish two or three joint appointments at the PPHs in the short term, to reactivate the three “special non-CUF lecturerships” that were assigned by the General Board to the PPHs in 1981 but which have not been made available for the last ten years.
4. We welcome the Admissions Framework document, and we aim to operate the best practice, as described there, for our admissions procedures. We affirm the criteria for admissions contained within the Framework. At the same time, we hope that Faculties will actualize the principles contained in the document in such a way that the best fit will be achieved between candidates and the particular ethos offered by our Halls.
5. While between us we make a contribution to several Faculties and Divisions in the University, we are glad to play an especially substantial part in the Faculty of Theology, enabling it to carry through its work in teaching, research, examining, supervision and administration. We hope that the University will keep this in mind when deciding about establishment and association of posts. In addition, we hope that the University will note the strong contribution which some of the PPHs make to the teaching of the BTh and the MTh courses, far beyond the proportion which colleges offer to the BA and other PGT degrees, and will make appropriate provision in resource allocation mechanisms.
6. We believe that, between us, we have developed skills in fostering and assessing the ability of students to reflect upon practice, in several professional areas. We have also gained an expertise in the teaching and supervision of part-time students which is unusual among collegiate communities in Oxford. We would like to work with the wider University in the development of courses where these skills can be drawn upon, in the context of rigorous academic standards.

7. We ask that members of our Halls will have increasing opportunity to serve on central University committees.
8. We hope that the Development Office of the University will have an awareness of our particular needs for funding, and will be willing in principle to work with projects originating from the Halls as well as from the Colleges.

Leo Chamberlain, St Benet's Hall

Paul Fiddes, Regent's Park College

Richard Finn, Blackfriars

Peter L'Estrange, Campion Hall

Nicholas Richardson, Greyfriars

Richard Turnbull, Wycliffe Hall

Robin Ward, St Stephen's House

27 October 2006

## **Annexe C**

### **List of those seen by the Review Panel**

#### *The Review Panel met:*

Dr Stephen Goss, Senior Proctor 2006-07  
Dr Sally Mapstone, Junior Proctor 2006-07  
Dr Brian Gasser, Clerk to the Proctors  
Ms Helen Carasso, Acting Director OCAO, 2005-06  
Mr Mike Nicholson, Director of Undergraduate Admissions  
Professor George Pattison, Chairman of the Theology Faculty Board  
The Very Revd Christopher Lewis, Dean of Christ Church  
Dr Hazel Hagger, co-ordinator of the PGCE Religious Education  
Professor Elizabeth Fallaize, PVC Education  
Dr Philip Healey, Deputy Director (Public Programmes) Department of Continuing Education  
Professor Marilyn McCord Adams, RAE coordinator for the Theology Faculty  
The Revd Dr Jane Shaw, Director of Graduate Studies, Theology Faculty  
Mrs Sue Bennett, Head of Graduate Admissions  
Mr Alan Strickland, President OUSU  
Ms Helen Bagshaw, Vice-President Access and Academic Affairs, OUSU  
Dr Robert Ellis, Regent's Park, Coordinator for the BTh  
Professor John Barton, Oriel College, Coordinator for the BTh

#### *and held discussions by telephone with:*

Dr Richard Rex, Chair of the Faculty of Theology, University of Cambridge  
Dr Janet Tollington, Cambridge Theological Federation

## Annexe D

**Table One: total numbers of undergraduates in residence over the last three academic years**

Year	Regents Park			Wycliffe <sup>1</sup>			St Stephen's <sup>2</sup>			Greyfriars <sup>1</sup>			St Benet's			Blackfriars <sup>1</sup>			Campion <sup>1</sup>			
	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	
Classics	1	2	1							0	2	4	4	6	7							
CA&AH	1	1	0																			
English	22	17	16							12	11	10	2	4	4							
Geography	8	8	7							2	0	0	2	2	1							
Human Science	2	2	1																			
Law	4	5	5							7	7	6	2	2	2				1	1	0	
Modern History	8	7	6							6	9	8	10	10	10							
AH & MH										1	1	2										
MH & Pol	0	0	2							2	3	3	2	2	1							
MH & English										2	3	2										
Mod Langs	2	2	1							1	0	0										
Oriental Studies										1	2	1							0	0	1	
PPE	7	9	9							0	0	0	4	5	5	3	0	2				
PPP									1	1	0											
Phil & Theo	11	9	8			2				0	0	2	2	2	2	0	1	1				
Theology	16	21	17	28	26	23	6	4	6	3	6	6	11	11	12	4	3	2				
BTh	4	6	9	34	29	27	13	16	14				2	2	0							
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
Reg Max *	85	85	85	55	55	55	36	36	36	30	30	30	37	37	37	24	24	24	9	9	9	
<b>Others:</b>																						
A/DBTS	13	12	12	54	55	68																
Cert. Theol	0	1	1	7	5	6																
Visit. studs **	11	8	10	112	117	129	0	1	0	10	4	8	1	1	0	12	13	12				

\* Under Council Regulation 12, there is a set maximum for each Hall of the number of Home/EU students studying for the BA, BTh, BFA, or for a second Honour School. The maximum numbers for St Stephen's House includes students matriculated at Ripon College; those for Greyfriars include 7 overseas students in 2004-05, 11 in 2005-06, and 11 in 2006-07.

\*\* For the number of visiting students at Wycliffe Hall at any one time, the total should be divided approximately into two cohorts, studying in Oxford for one semester each Blackfriars Hall

1 Senior Status: Wycliffe: 13, 16, 15 • Greyfriars: 1, 3, 3 • Blackfriars: 4, 1, 3 • Campion: 1, 1, 1 • Regents: 0, 0, 1 • St Stephen's 5, 3, 5

2 For the number of visiting students at Wycliffe Hall at any one time, the total should be divided approximately into two cohorts, studying in Oxford for one semester each



## Annexe D

Table Two: total number of graduates on course over the last three academic years

Year	Regents Park			Wycliffe			St Stephen's <sup>1</sup>			Greyfriars			St Benet's			Blackfriars			Campion		
	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06
PGD in Theology	2	0	1	1	4	1	2	1	0				1	0	0	0	0	1			
MTh	17	19	18	9	8	8	13	13	6							0	0	0	2	2	1
MSt	4	1	2	4	6	4	1	0	0				0	1	0			1	1	0	3
MPhil	2	3	2	0	2	3				0	0	1							1	1	1
MLitt	0	1	1	0	1	2															
PRS		4	4	0	0	0	2														
DPhil	20	25	28	3	2	5	0	2	1	3	3	4	1	0	2	2	3	3	6	6	4
EMBA	0	1	1																		
MBA	0	0	1																		
Cert. for Theology graduates							0	2	1												
PGCE							0	6	11												
MSc										0	0	1									
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
Recognised student															2						
Visiting Student	0	0	1										0	1	2	0	0	2	4	5	6
Non Oxford qualifications				27	34	34	9	11	8												

<sup>1</sup> Part time MTh: St Stephen's: 6, 7, 5

## Annexe E

### Notes on the individual Permanent Private Halls

#### Blackfriars

Blackfriars became a Permanent Private Hall in 1994. It is located on three sites in the middle of the city (St Giles, Beaumont Street, and St John's Street). The Hall is governed by the English Dominican friars. It aims "to promote an understanding of Christian theological enquiry as rooted in the Word of God and in the rich inheritance of the Church's tradition, but as requiring reasoned and critical reflection, intellectual as well as moral integrity, and engaging with contemporary thought and concerns."

There is a number of strands to its activities through which it seeks to achieve its aims: the research and scholarship of senior members and postgraduate students, as well as a number of visiting scholars each year; the teaching of matriculated postgraduate and undergraduate students, as well as a body of visiting students; the Aquinas Institute; and its extensive library facilities in Theology and Philosophy. Membership of the Hall consists of the friars of the English Dominican province who are assigned as administrators or teachers at the Hall, friars who are studying at Oxford, and also lay men and women "of varied religious affiliation or none, who respect the ethos and aims of the institution". Apart from its visiting students, drawn from eight partner colleges in North America, it has a very small number of mature undergraduate or senior students, reading for degrees in PPE, Theology, or Philosophy and Theology.

Also located at the St Giles' site is the Blackfriars Studium, a small study centre in Catholic theology and philosophy. Its purpose is to train Dominican and other ordinands for the diaconate and priesthood in the Catholic Church, and to offer teaching either in academic theology not offered elsewhere in Oxford, or to men and women who are otherwise unable to read for an Oxford qualification. The Aquinas Institute in Beaumont Street exists specifically to further research in Thomism.

The Hall has a clear vision of itself and its contribution to the University. It is currently very well-run, although, in common with other small institutions, it has a delicate infrastructure that could be undermined by one or two key staff changes. The quality of teaching for visiting students is high, as it is for undergraduates, with a Director of Studies for PPE from St Hugh's. In such a small community, there is much informal pastoral support, as well as access to a number of designated post-holders. The quality of the undergraduates is high, and as mature students they show both a high level of commitment to their study and to the ethos of the Hall. They mix easily with the visiting students, and JCR identity is strong (it is part of OUSU). The facilities at the Hall are good, particularly the exceptional library resources, although there would be difficulty with teaching space were undergraduate numbers to grow. Students are unable to dine with other members of the Hall (apart from by invitation), but there are arrangements for JCR members to eat at St Benet's, and for postgraduate students to eat at St Cross.

Such concerns as the review panel had about the Hall rest on its financial fragility, the disparity between numbers of visiting students and the undergraduate body, and the lack of continuity in the student experience, because of the pattern of undergraduate recruitment. The panel notes that a confessional course validated by the University of Wales, Lampeter is delivered in the Studium, which, being institutionally separate from the Hall, does not fall within the operation of the licensed body. The panel makes recommendations on this matter in the main report.

## **Campion Hall**

Along with St Benet's, Campion Hall is the oldest Permanent Private Hall, licensed in 1918 almost immediately after the new University statute. It had previously existed since 1896 as a Private Hall licensed to the Reverend Richard Clarke SJ. In 1935, it moved to its present site and into buildings designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Of all the Halls, Campion has stayed closest to its original purpose. It was founded as a house of study for Jesuits. To a large extent, it remains this today. However, changes have occurred since the 1960s. On the one hand, the Society has moved to teach and study Theology in universities. The senior members of the Hall engage productively in the teaching of Theology in Oxford – as well as Biblical Studies, Philosophy, History, Byzantine Studies and English Literature. On the other hand, the pattern of recruitment to the Society changed in the 1960s. The Hall has come to serve as a house for the formation of Jesuits, principally as graduate students studying for doctoral degrees in preparation for the Society's teaching in higher education worldwide. There are also a small number of priests or members of other orders and the occasional layman matriculated with the University.

It is a small community with approximately thirty to thirty-five resident members. The recruitment of students is by recommendation from the Provinces of the Society and increasingly turned towards a teaching vocation in the Third World. Their research interests range across a wide spectrum of disciplines. It is clear that the Hall's guiding principle is the need of the Society and the availability of good quality students.

In many ways, this is a small operation run in an apparently informal manner. The Master deals with the recruitment of students and their admission to the University. There is a consultative council to advise him, which contains both senior and junior members. However, the impression is that essentially the Hall is run by the Master. There are no statutes, nor are there formal procedures of appointment for senior members who, strictly speaking, are not employed by the Hall.

Indeed, Campion operates as an integral part of the Society of Jesus – it governs itself in accordance with the rules of the Society; the Master is appointed by the Provincial of the British Province to whom he is accountable and who visits the Hall annually for review. Furthermore, the Hall's finances are well subsidised by the Trust that finances the British Province. There is every sign that the Trust is committed to Campion and its purpose. Hall accounts for the last three years give no cause for anxiety.

Despite the lack of a separate institutional apparatus, the panel considers that Campion is well managed. There is evidence of a strong community culture and collective relationships. There is a preoccupation with intellectual matters and the research output of the Hall is at a good level of quality. The Hall has strategic objectives in the area of international collaboration, the creation of a new research centre, and the publication of journals.

## Greyfriars<sup>1</sup>

Greyfriars became a Permanent Private Hall in 1957, began to admit lay male students in 1959 and has admitted women since the early 1990s. Its stated mission is “to support academic excellence and the pursuit of learning in a Roman Catholic and Capuchin Franciscan context”. It is licensed by the University to have thirty matriculated Home/EU undergraduate students: currently it has forty-four undergraduates (of whom eleven are from overseas – a significantly higher proportion than for the overall undergraduate body within the collegiate University) and six postgraduates. There are a further eight visiting students. The Hall is moving to concentrate its undergraduate admissions into five subject areas, Classics, English, Law, Theology, and History and its joint schools, and the Hall will aim to admit at least two students a year in each. In the opinion of the panel, there are currently healthy numbers in English (ten) and History and its joint schools (fifteen); Geography, Modern Languages and PPE have been abandoned, although there has been some teaching in PPE and Political Science for visiting students in the last two years. There is a Director of Studies for each of the five subjects, two of them shared with St Benet’s. In some subjects at least, there is energetic involvement in a Faculty’s admissions processes. There is no religious test at admission, and the undergraduate body is ecumenical. There is pastoral support from a Dean and a Chaplain, drawn from the resident friars, together with a lay Warden, Senior Tutor, Women’s Officer and Tutor for Graduates. FHS results are at least respectable, and in 2006 there were five Firsts out of thirteen students who completed the examinations.

In the panel’s opinion, the Hall is struggling to find a sense of direction, despite recent reviews. The Governing Body of the Hall consists of the five national Definitors of the Capuchins (plus, for some purposes, the lay Warden), but the commitment of the Order to the Hall seems uncertain and the academic staff would value greater independence. The administrative arrangements seem fragile, with key staff serving only part-time. The Hall has twelve teaching Fellows, three of whom hold main appointments outside the University, and eight college lecturers: the Fellows are each paid a small retainer, but they rarely meet together and the panel could not establish that they have a significant collective role. The appointment processes for academic staff seem to lack rigour, based on individual recommendation, scrutiny of a CV and a meeting with the Warden and Senior Tutor, followed by approval by the Definitors.

Greyfriars is the only Hall where the review panel encountered discontent among the students, especially the UK undergraduates. The visiting students were happier. In the view of the panel, facilities at the Hall are in some respects inadequate, though improvements are being made. Except in Theology and perhaps Law, the library provision is poor: for the historians, the largest subject group, there are no journals and only three-quarters of a bay of dated texts. Teaching space is limited. However, the JCR, which is open to graduate students (there is also a small MCR), is comfortable and looks out over a pleasant garden. The Hall and the JCR both organise celebrations and social events, to which numbers of students and academics from outside Greyfriars are invited, although afternoon tea is the only frequent communal activity. Almost all students work in university libraries, and sporting, society and social activities mainly take place elsewhere. Sixteen students are accommodated virtually on-site, and the Hall rents accommodation elsewhere for another ten.

Despite the enormous goodwill of individual friars, the Warden and the academic and support staff, the Hall appears to be struggling against the odds. The previous Warden produced an ambitious Strategy Proposal in May 2004, but it was not clear to the panel how progress was being made. The students have a relatively poor experience for the fees and battels they pay, Hall staff are poorly rewarded, and its administration is stretched. If Greyfriars is to meet the aspirations of its staff and its students, it will require a considerable investment from somewhere.

<sup>1</sup> From recent representations the panel understands that there have been some changes in the provisions in the Hall since the time of its visit in Hilary Term. However, it has not been in a position to take full account of these in the final stages of writing its report.

### Regent's Park College

Regent's Park College moved from London to Oxford in 1927 and became a Permanent Private Hall in 1957 – the first of the Protestant Colleges to do so. It is a member of the Baptist Union, and regards itself as an “ecumenical Christian community of learning”. It has the largest and most eclectic graduate and undergraduate intake of all the Halls (about 160 overall). About twenty are in training for the Baptist ministry, mainly studying for the BTh, MTh and DBTS: these are delivered almost exclusively in-house. Governance is undertaken by an external consultative council comprising sixty-six members, of whom seventeen have to be Baptist ministers or appointees of Baptist organizations, and twelve must be ordained ministers of any denomination. The Governing Body comprises some twenty-nine members, of whom six (including the Principal) have to be Baptist and four others must be ordained ministers. The panel believes that Regent's Park operates competently in all major respects, and that it affords a good and well-resourced academic and pastoral environment for its junior members.

Its JCR and MCR function like those in Colleges, with the MCR offering a good system of pastoral care towards JCR members. Three JCR/MCR members serve on the Governing Body. Undergraduate accommodation is adequate, with students living in-house in their first and third years, and their contribution to university life suggests their experience corresponds with those in Colleges. The focus is on Humanities and Social Sciences, with some ten each year in Theology or Philosophy/Theology (about four more than any College) and some four to five in English. Other prominent subjects are Law (two), Modern History (two to three), PPE (three), and Geography (two). The Principal and eight Fellows have regular Fellows' Meetings (although the small number of staff means that the Senior Tutor is also Tutor for Admissions). The nine part-time stipendiary lecturers help organize the teaching. There is good collaboration with a number of Faculties in admissions, and the College applies the standard of grades for offers as practised by the Faculty concerned. As the College says in its self-evaluation document, “it will accept ‘below offer’ in very rare circumstances, when there is overwhelming reason to do so, and where the admissions secretary of the Faculty has been consulted and is in agreement”.

Fellows and lecturers regularly teach and examine for their respective Faculties. The Centre for the Study of Religion and Culture and the Centre for Baptist History and Heritage provide intellectual diversity, contributing both to interdisciplinary participation within the University and also to the “RAE narrative” for the Theology Faculty. At the time of writing it is probable that four members of staff will be entered for the RAE. The teaching of Theology is critical and open-ended. Computer facilities equal any college: every room has Internet access, with an IT officer serving the needs of the community at large. OLIS access is good, the library resources are good also, especially in Theology, and every room has access to the Oxford telephone service.

However, the endowment is insufficient to stem the deficit in undergraduate teaching, and there is some evidence of using graduate students as a source of revenue instead. The payment of so many staff exclusively in-house further drains limited resources. There was an equal opportunities issue which prevented a possible joint appointment in the mid-1990s; this, alongside the fact that the only special non-CUF lecturership ceased upon that Fellow's retirement, has made the College believe it is at present giving more to the University than it is receiving. Financial constraints result in salaries for academic staff being below the “market rate”, and although the College is as generous as it can be in terms of bursaries and scholarships, Regent's Park is also constantly vulnerable to any proposed changes within the Collegiate University. Fund-raising initiatives are thus going to be vital.

## St Benet's Hall

St Benet's Hall and Champion Hall were the first two Permanent Private Halls to be established in Oxford, in 1918. As the main text of this report states, it was established originally so that Benedictine monks could be matriculated as undergraduates to study secular degrees. In the 1960s, the Hall began to admit laymen, who now form the majority of the student population. Although there is no requirement that members of the Hall should be Catholic, it is suggested on the Hall's website that lay candidates for St Benet's "should be supportive of monastic life and appreciate monastic values and community". The Hall is owned by the Ampleforth Abbey Trust, and it has a Hall Committee that is set up under the St Laurence Education Trust.

The current Master, who is to retire from his post at the end of this academic year, has put in train significant reforms during his time at the Hall, including the drafting of an Instrument of Government, the introduction of a Hall handbook, and the establishment of an education committee. Fellows of the Hall whom the panel met spoke approvingly of the changes in administration, and in procedures and processes. However, it appears that, with a slender administrative infrastructure, there is a significant burden on the Master himself, as Master, Bursar, and Admissions Tutor.

The current matriculated undergraduate population numbers forty-four, seven over the maximum set by Council regulation. Subjects range across English, Classics, Modern History, Law, PPE, Philosophy and Theology, and Theology, and there is one Geographer. Cohort size is reasonable in History and Theology, and in Classics, where cohort size is smaller, there is a common Director of Studies with Greyfriars. There are two postgraduate students and two postgraduate visiting students. The Hall admits male students only.

St Benet's is located centrally, in St Giles', and first year students are able to live in. Almost without exception, second and third year students have to find their own accommodation. Room charges are expensive – towards the upper end of the scale across the collegiate University – but for the most part the accommodation is quite comfortable. Facilities in the Hall are adequate, but most students seem to look outside the Hall for their everyday social life, at least. All rooms are equipped with Ethernet connections, and there is a small and under-resourced library (apart from in Theology). Much remedial maintenance work has been undertaken during the last two years, which, although welcome, has contributed to the financial difficulties of the Hall.

There is a small non-stipendiary Fellowship, some of whom act as Directors of Studies in the subjects that the Hall offers. Other academics act as Directors of Studies for the Hall, and there is a very large number of tutors who teach for the Hall, who have associations with other parts of the collegiate University. In its meetings with academic staff, the review panel was left in little doubt of the commitment and care that they bring to their roles. In particular they responded well to the panel's concerns on cohort size, and were sensible to the need for the Hall to plan undergraduate recruitment in a structured way. Teaching facilities at the Hall are limited however, and the one full-time teaching room is adequate for the size of the student body only because so much teaching is undertaken elsewhere in Oxford.

Overall, the Hall has a good sense of its place within the collegiate University. As with the other smaller Permanent Private Halls, finances and other resources present a problem, and it will remain to be seen how a new Master will attempt to address these.

### **St Stephen's House**

St Stephen's House was founded in 1876 as a Church of England theological college for the training of ordination candidates in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. It moved to its present site in east Oxford, the former monastery of the Society of St John the Evangelist (commonly known as the "Cowley Fathers"), in 1980. It has been a Permanent Private Hall since 2003, matriculating non-ordinands, but its core mission remains the formation and training of men and women for the Anglican priesthood.

The present Principal came from parochial work to take up his post in 2006 and is providing improved management. The core teaching staff is small (only three full time), although they do contribute to teaching and examining within the Faculty. The Senior Tutor is himself a matriculated graduate student. While noting it is a small sample, examination results in FHS Theology are good, although the figures are influenced by the fact that all the candidates are second BAs. The first cohort of school leaver undergraduates are to take FHS in two years' time. However, as the panel discovered in Wycliffe Hall, the BTh is delivered almost entirely in-house which makes it hard to justify its distinction as an "Oxford degree" and under-utilizes the academic and intellectual resources of the larger University.

St Stephen's physical plant is extensive and provides an impressive amount of accommodation for couples and families, groups that are under provided for by the collegiate University. This is particularly important in what is largely a mature cohort of students and is an added attraction to some PGCE students. In the panel's opinion, however, the accommodation for many single students is inadequate – many of the bed-sit rooms are former monastic "cells" and are correspondingly tiny. Attention needs to be given for suitable provision for single students. Indeed the plant in general needs attention, and a programme of refurbishment is underway.

In recent years, the House has been in considerable financial trouble due the low numbers of church sponsored candidates, well below its "quota" set by the Church of England. Recently debts were cleared by sale of property and the House has received a generous benefaction to assist its future work. However, the number of ordinands, the House's core work, remains in the low 20s. It was felt by the panel that the Hall's desire to offer places for PGCE students and increasing the number of school leaver BAs is largely financially driven rather than reflecting a genuine aspiration to diversify. For example, the "greater silence" is observed from 11 pm – a suitable discipline for ordinands but some distance from a typical college experience. The panel questions the suitability of what is largely a mature community of students (over half are pursuing postgraduate study) with a strong vocational and formational ethos as a College for undergraduates of a typical age. Further, the Principal spoke to the panel about targeting recruitment at Church of England state secondary schools in the High Church tradition in order to increase their intake of 18 year olds, seemingly unaware of the thrust of the University's Common Framework on Admissions.

As with a number of Permanent Private Halls, the panel is impressed by the dedication of the Principal and his colleagues but retains concerns about the viability of such a small institution. St Stephen's House remains a fragile establishment in which changes in only one or two staff members can have a dramatic impact on its stability and viability.



## Wycliffe Hall

Wycliffe Hall was founded in 1877 as a theological college of the Church of England. It did not enter into the relationship with the University implied by status as a Permanent Private Hall until 1996. Its current sense of itself and of its vocation undoubtedly bears the imprint of this long period as a theological college not regulated by the University. It is clearly still a theological college principally dedicated to providing ministerial training to ordinands through degree/diploma/certificate courses appropriate to them. At the same time, it now admits school-leavers to study for the BA in Theology, as well as postgraduates for taught and research degrees. The Hall stands unambiguously within the evangelical tradition.

The panel noted during its visit that the Hall occupies a relatively coherent and substantial site and has a busy daily schedule and routine. There appears to be an adequate provision of staff studies, teaching rooms and communal areas. However, there were some student complaints about the quality of the accommodation. The dining hall is probably too small for the population, especially in light of a body of younger undergraduates and another of visiting students.

The operating accounts of the Hall over three years show stability, although the panel notes that some debt is secured on functional Hall property. The Hall depends considerably upon ordinand fees paid by the Church. The income from visiting students (to whose teaching the Hall contributes little) is a significant element in balancing the budget. In comparison with some other Permanent Private Halls, Wycliffe does have a good core of stipendiary academic staff. However, these are paid on a scale which combines the Church of England clerical scale and the University scale and which, we understand from the academic staff, is less than the comparable levels in the collegiate University and therefore represents a lesser budgetary commitment.

The panel felt anxiety about the delivery of the degrees of BTh and MTh as well as other diplomas and certificates. It was led to understand that much is taught in whole or in part entirely within the Hall and it has concerns over the robustness of the monitoring of standards and syllabi (especially in the certificates). This situation is common to other Halls and the panel's anxiety is directed also at the University procedures in this area.

The panel was also anxious about the recruitment of school-leaving age undergraduates to Wycliffe. It was given to understand that the undergraduates are housed together separately within the Hall. As far as the Hall community is concerned, they find themselves in a society largely composed of mature students, the majority of whom are ordinands. Undergraduates are admitted only to read the BA in Theology and are contained within an institution solely concerned with the study of Theology. While the panel appreciates that in many cases such students come from Christian families who are looking for an Oxford education within a Christian context, it does not believe that this resembles an Oxford experience in its essentials or that it is a suitable educational environment for the full intellectual development of young undergraduates.

There is a persistent concern outside Wycliffe about whether the strong emphasis on the evangelical tradition in some way inflects the teaching of theology and ministry into a narrow compass of interpretation. It is certainly the case that the Hall's documentation proclaims its evangelical identity and commitment. It is certainly true also that ordinands graduating from Wycliffe are recognised to have a strongly marked theological character. Nonetheless, those to whom the panel spoke within the Hall consistently argued that the tradition was not exclusive and that a range of opinion existed among both academic staff and students. It may be that some of the tensions that evidently exist between academics inside the Hall derive from the range of opinions held. Nonetheless, the panel feels that Wycliffe Hall does need to make a determined effort to clarify these matters to the rest of the University if it is to achieve manifest harmony with the University's principles of education.



The Hall has a relatively recently appointed Principal (2005). The panel understands that he was appointed by the Wycliffe Council with the intention that he should reformulate the governance, administration and policy direction of the Hall. It is certainly the case that, as laid out in the Hall's self-evaluation document, the formal structures and procedures now in place are coherent and well designed. It may well be that, since they are very recent, they are not yet entirely working in practice and that they have yet to be digested by the Hall's population, as is often the case with reorganisations.

The internal tensions that the panel had observed at its visit to the Hall became public in the last stages of the review, and some specific allegations were made in circulated documents and the press. This caused the panel to reopen its consideration of issues concerning the Hall and to seek further explanation. In particular, following its terms of reference, the panel reconsidered the governance arrangements at the Hall and the procedures for appointing academic staff, matters addressed in our recommendations. The panel also concluded that the situation illustrated the general truth that small institutions are vulnerable to strong differences of opinion and depend considerably for their stability and viability on the handling of internal relationships. The panel feels that all this points to the special importance in the Permanent Private Halls of transparent and adequate formal mechanisms of representation and conflict resolution.

