11.1 General Response

English Heritage have been consulted and is generally supportive of the approach to Herbert Gray College. As part of the consultation it was suggested that Marjorie Hume House, although not listed, was of significant enough importance in terms of setting and its own history to warrant retention and reuse.

Rugby Borough council has also been consulted as part of the design consultation process, and is also supportive of the approach to the existing buildings.

The principal aims are underlined in PPG 15 and concern the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The design of new buildings alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general it is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the working community. This can be done, provided that the new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principals of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials. This does not mean that new buildings have to copy their older neighbours in detail, but should together form a harmonious group.

The setting of a listed building very often owes its character to the harmony produced by a particular group of buildings (not necessarily all of great individual merit) and to the quality of the spaces between them.

Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings.

It is important to note that the buildings, as they stand, have been heavily modified with a number of 20th century accretions which are unsympathetic to their situation. We believe that the changes, both in use and to the existing fabric, that are proposed, balance any effect of the change against the special interest of the building. The economic prosperity of such a development can ensure the continued vitality of the buildings with sustained use and maintenance.

11.2 Herbert Gray College

The response to the Grade II listed building, is of particular importance for the scheme. The two primary elements of historical significance have been identified as the 18th Century Rectory to the
Detailed Approach to Listed and Significant Buildings

north, and the 19th Century Garden House extension to the south. The remainder of the current building comprises later extensions of no historic value.

Our approach to the building has been to retain where possible the historic fabric. This has been achieved by the proposed removal of the newer elements to get back to the original form, and the insertion of a single new element.

The new addition to College House is lightweight and subservient to the historic composition, an approach which successfully maintains the primacy of the original by separating the two historically diverse parts of the original building in order that they can be seen as distinct entities in their own right.

Through this approach, the fundamental characteristics of the existing elements are maintained: their footprint, fabric and elevations remain and are clearly legible and allow a reading of the historic development of the buildings.

The linking foyer/corridor space adds a sense of dynamism to the design, and also facilitates access into the existing elements that sit at different heights. The “street” carves out new vistas, spaces and rooflights in the existing building and provides the means by which it is revitalised by a dramatic, generous and sensible reconfiguration.

The use of the existing buildings has been specifically chosen to be compatible with the original rooms and layouts. Because these are cellular, the northern wing is utilised for administration rooms, and the southern for conference rooms. This approach minimises the impact on the internal layouts of the buildings, and ensures that there future legibility is maintained. Changes are minimal and reversible.

Upper floors are used for hotel rooms, which again provides a compatible use for the exiting room sizes. Where possible the identified historically important elements are retained, such as the fire places and the attic of the 18th Century rectory building. The existing walls will be lined internally to accommodate concealed structure and services. This creates an abstract, massive quality to the door openings and serves to underpin the relationship between the new and the historic.
Detailed Approach to Listed and Significant Buildings

Precedent study for College House - The Sackler Galleries, Royal Academy, London
11.3 Marjorie Hume House

Marjorie Hume House is not a distinguished piece of architecture, it is understood that retention of the building fabric of this building would be seen favourably as it makes a contribution to the character of the conservation area. The rear of the building has been extensively altered to provide secondary means of escape.

The design concept has been to pull the new building areas away from the existing building, helping to reinforce its form and memory. A double height separating void and glass roof are key components of the response.

This creates a triple height space within the building and allows for an unbroken view of the window openings and an interior space with the scale of the exterior streetscape. The existing walls will be lined internally to accommodate concealed structure and services, and to create an abstract, massive quality to the window openings.

We propose a distinctive new glass roof which replaces the 1970’s roof which covers it at present and provides a direct relationship with the scale of the new building and the set back of its highly glazed top floor. It acts as a twin block set apart from the existing and provides a more engaging face to the park, screening views of rather plain backs of buildings.

The new building to which Marjorie Hume house is attached will have a considerably more assertive presence in the townscape, but its directness is visually effective, with a complimentary volumetric relationship. Its appearance is also considerably more attractive than that of the Church House which it replaces.

Although Marjorie Hume House is not listed, it contributes to the setting, especially in views from St Andrews Gardens, rather than having its own special interest. Although the proposals are unusual and include major works to its fabric, the areas in which the works are to take place are of no architectural or historic interest. Furthermore, we believe that the proposals will create exciting spaces both within and around the building and re-establish its position within the town centre.
Precedent study for Marjorie Hume House - Louise T. Blouin Institute, London

View from the interior of Marjorie Hume House