



"It was the lock of the door which had been closed ten years and she put her hand in her pocket, drew out the key and found it fitted the keyhole. It took two hands to do it, but it did turn. And then she took a long breath ...

She was standing inside the secret garden."

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

a doorway into somewhere magical ...

The Story Museum site comprises three linked buildings and a courtyard. We are gradually learning about the early history of this area: this was the heart of the medieval Jewish quarter (and St Aldates was called great Jewry Street in those days). In the 13th century this site was the location of the very first purpose-built student accommodation.

1899

The first building, Rochester House itself, is Victorian, part of which was a pub listed in the 1846 Oxford Directory. Merton College built Rochester House in 1899 to provide residential accommodation, naming the building after the Bishop of Rochester who had founded Merton College.

It was built next to a public house, The Leden Porch Hall, part of which was listed in the 1846 Oxford Directory and was rebuilt. The rest of the site at that time comprised stables and a barn.

1921

In 1921 the site was sold to the Postmaster General for £6400, whilst the pub was being rented out for £6 per year. Additional buildings were constructed for a sorting office and other uses and, later on, a telephone exchange as well. A further three-storey building was added in 1934.

2003

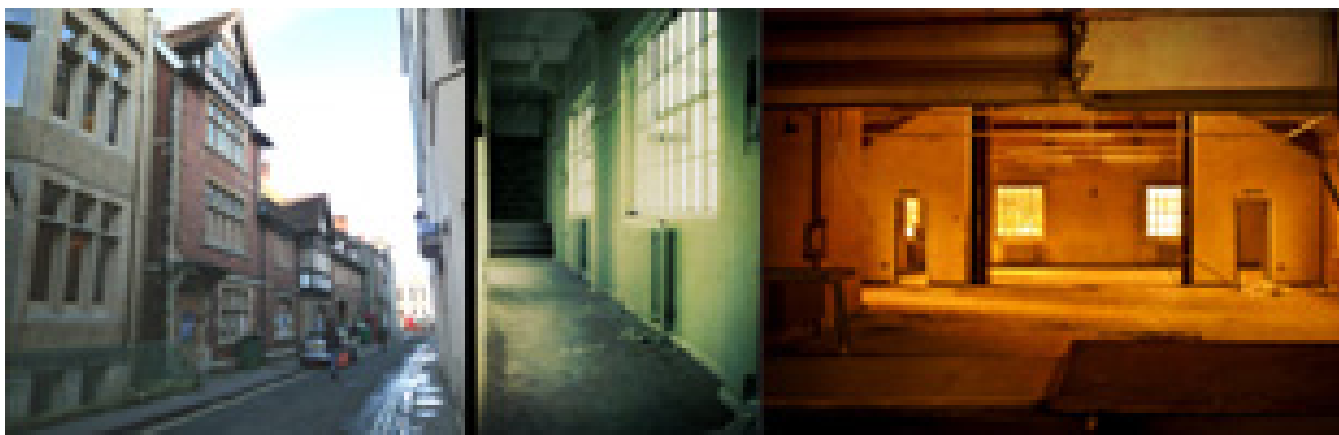
Merton bought the site back from Royal Mail in 2003, leasing it in 2006 to the Carlyle Group, as part of a larger site for a retail development, and the building has stood empty since this time.

2009

In 2009 the plans for this retail development were reduced in size, and a portion of the larger site became available: The Story Museum acquired an 130 year lease in November of 2009, thanks to an anonymous private donor who contributed £2.5m.

thestory
museum





"Children's story has many preachers. It needs a cathedral."
David Fickling, children's publisher

the Story Museum

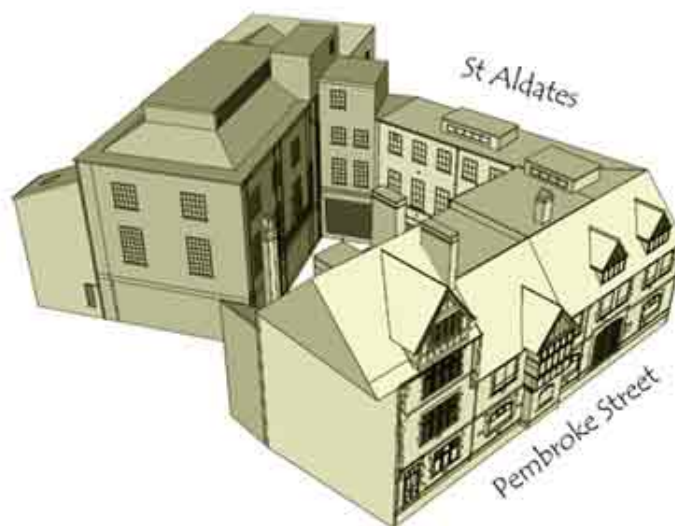
The project, founded in 2003, aims to highlight the importance of story for learning, particularly for children, and show a range of exciting ways of engaging people with story in its many forms, including traditional storytelling, literature and digital media. It currently has an active education programme taking performances and exhibitions into schools and communities.

The Story Museum also coordinates Alice's Day, an annual celebration of Alice in Wonderland and Lewis Carroll across the city.

The next step is to translate the Story Museum's imaginative vision into an exciting, world-class museum.

Renowned for language and learning, home of many famous children's authors, illustrators and publishers, past and present, Oxford is a world centre of children's literature, and the project has been welcomed by Oxford City Council and is part of its planning framework for the city centre.

The Story Museum is now preparing for a major capital campaign in order to open the Museum by 2014. The building will contain galleries, public space, theatre, café, shop, education rooms, storyteller's studio, children's play house, offices and storage.



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