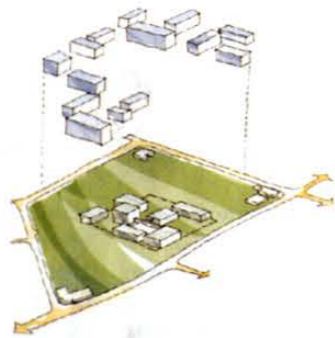


Section across the whole site

PARDEY'S LESSON IN LIVING



Above: typical elevation of the new housing. Right: 17 new blocks are added to the site. Below: Oaklands College before the canopy and pool were removed



John Pardey Architects and PRP Architects have released the first pictures of their plans to transform a Grade II-listed school into a housing development.

If the proposals get given the go-ahead, Oaklands College, completed in 1960 by Hertfordshire County Architect's Department (John Wakely) in St Albans, would be converted into 40 one- and two-bedroom flats. Another 277 apartments would be built in the surrounding parkland campus.

According to John Pardey, the design of the 17 new blocks, clad in materials such as pre-weathered zinc and cedar panels to complement the existing classrooms, will 'echo rather than mimic' the seven listed buildings.

The school's original entrance canopy and reflecting pool, both removed years ago, will be rebuilt and the external walkways between blocks renovated and retained. The listed hall and gymnasium will be opened for community use.

With the vast majority of the school now empty – the college has moved most of its facilities to another site in the town – Pardey believes the best way of securing the future of the buildings is to give them a new use.

'Our aim is to create a place with variety and choice,' he said. 'The conversion of the buildings into contemporary homes, combined with a variety of villa apartments, will provide a rich mix of housing.'

The planning application was submitted just before Christmas and, despite local authority opposition, it is hoped work can begin on site within six months.

Richard Waite

