

BaxterStorey partners with the University of Oxford's new Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

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BaxterStorey has been awarded a five-year catering contract for the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities at the University of Oxford – the university's largest-ever building project and one of the most significant cultural developments in the city's history.

The landmark partnership will see BaxterStorey provide a comprehensive range of hospitality and dining services for the Centre, which brings together seven humanities faculties and research institutes under one roof.

On a peak day, with at least one lecture or seminar in each faculty, the building welcomes around 1,000 students per hour, alongside an estimated 400–500 staff, making it a dynamic hub for study, collaboration and cultural exchange.

BaxterStorey will operate a café offering breakfast, lunch, a salad bar, and a grab-and-go deli; a coffee shop serving an extensive barista-crafted drinks range and a selection of savoury and sweet treats; and a variety of hospitality and fine dining experiences, including conference catering, pre-performance dinners, afternoon teas, drinks receptions, and festival events.

The Centre will also feature a bar providing a relaxed social space for students, academics, and guests.

Menus will highlight fresh, seasonal produce sourced from local suppliers, reflecting BaxterStorey's commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

As part of its local partnerships, the team will also participate in the Adopt a School programme, working with St Frideswide C of E Primary School to inspire young people about careers in hospitality and healthy eating.

Designed by Hopkins Architects, the Schwarzman Centre is set to become the largest Passivhaus-certified building in England, setting new standards for environmental performance in higher education.

BaxterStorey's operations will complement this ethos through waste reduction initiatives, energy-efficient kitchen technology, and responsible sourcing practices.

The new centre unites Oxford's faculties of English Language and Literature, History, Linguistics, Medieval and Modern Languages, Music, Philosophy, and Theology and Religion, alongside the Institute for Ethics in AI, the Oxford Internet Institute, and the new Bodleian Humanities Library.

The building also features a 500-seat concert hall, 250-seat theatre, recital hall, and exhibition spaces, establishing it as a cultural hub open to the wider public.

"It's been a real pleasure working with BaxterStorey as we've mobilised catering operations for the Schwarzman Centre," says Gillian Smith, commercial director, Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities. "Their professionalism, energy and experience have been invaluable in getting the service up and running so swiftly. We're confident their enthusiasm and commitment will make them an excellent long-term partner for this exciting new building."

"We're incredibly proud to be partnering with the University of Oxford on this exceptional project," added Louise Denton, managing director South-West, BaxterStorey. "The Schwarzman Centre represents a new chapter for the humanities and for Oxford's cultural life, and we're thrilled to play a part in creating inclusive, sustainable, and inspiring food experiences for students, staff, and visitors alike."